



Gatekeeper's Checklist

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This checklist will help you screen kids' novels for quality, clean and traditional in five minutes or less.

- Clean Check:** Read the jacket copy, or back cover blurb. Are there social agenda buzzwords mentioned? Is the storyline appropriate for your child's age?

- Clean Check:** Flip through several pages throughout the book. Do any vulgar words or situations jump out?

- Quality Check:** Look at the first few pages. Does it have sentences and paragraphs of differing lengths? Look at some pages in the middle. Is there a good mix of dialogue and non-dialogue? Do lots of paragraphs begin with "I" (this is a sign of weak writing)?

- Quality Check:** Read the first few pages. Does the main character appeal to you? Do they seem like they could be a real kid, or does the character feel forced?

- Traditional Check:** After reading the first few pages, what words would you use to describe the type of person the main character is? Now read the last few pages. Does the main character seem to change in a good way? Would you want your child to spend time with them?

- Traditional Check:** Does the main character belong to a family? Find a page with family mention. How are they portrayed, remembered or visualized? Does the family perception change at the end?

- Does the book pass the test?** Remember, the books your child reads will shape their perception of the world. If a character changes for the better through the events of a story, you and your child will be cheering at the end.