"Read to Me...

“Read to me riddles and read to me rhymes, read to me stories of magical times.

Read to me tales about castles and kings, read to me stories of fabulous things.

Read to me pirates, and read to me knights, read to me dragons and dragon-back flights.

Read to me spaceships and cowboys and then when you are finished—please read them again!”
— Jane Yolen

Jane Yolen was born in New York City on February 11, 1939. As a child, Jane was always a “gold star kid” at school. She worked hard and tried her best. From a very young age Jane knew that she wanted to be a writer. She used to write poems (although not very good!) and she created a newspaper with her brother for the people in her apartment building and sold it to her neighbors. Jane attended Smith College in 1956 and after college she moved to NYC where she became an editor and continued to write poetry. Today Jane has written over 300 books in all different genres and for children of all ages. She is one of the most successful authors of all time.

Some of Jane Yolen’s most popular books are the “How Do Dinosaurs...” series. These books are wonderful for toddlers up to elementary school. Younger children can learn important lessons through these books such as manners, bedtime routines, counting and colors, and being responsible. Older children will love learning about the different types of dinosaurs represented in the books (each picture labels the name of the dinosaur in the drawing). The fun topics and interesting rhymes will appeal to all children.
The Creative Process...

JANE YOLEN'S CREATIVE STYLE...

“I have over 250 books out. I know that sounds like a lot of books, but I remember writing them, each one at a time. There are picture books, and there are rhymed books, and there are alphabet books, and there are counting rhymes, and there are board books, and there is middle-grade fiction, and there's nonfiction, and there's young adult fiction. There are music books, and there are adult books, and there are pedagogical books. And there are books of essays, and there are books on how to write. And the only books that interest me right now are the books I'm working on.”

JANE YOLEN'S CREATIVE PROCESS....

"My process is quite simple, really. Cup of tea. Computer. (It used to be a typewriter.) Start writing. Sometimes what comes out is a poem. Sometimes an essay. Sometimes a story."

“I never, ever, ever get writers block. And the reason I never, ever, ever get writer's block is that I work on more than one thing at the same time. And so if something is blocking over here, I turn to this. And if that one doesn't work, I turn to the next one.”

- Jane Yolen
In Depth Review

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Owl Moon is the story of a young girl’s personal narrative of going “owling” with her father late one snowy night.

Literary Quality
The experience is told from the perspective of a young girl silently overcome with excitement and joy as she ventures out into the cold, dark woods with her father. The story is told in short, simple, poetic prose narrates the story and the full-spread, colorful illustrations bring the reader into the woods with the father and his daughter by adding vivid descriptions and details about the child’s inner experience of the adventure. Wording is rhythmical and appropriate for the intended audience of children in elementary school. Any young child will relate to the girl’s yearning and nervous excitement as she goes on a late-night adventure with her father. “…this is a verbal and visual treasure, perfect for reading aloud and sharing at bedtime.”

Artistic Quality
The illustrations show the depth and darkness of the forest, the brightness of the moon, the excitement of the characters and the magnificence of the owl. Schoenherr uses ink and watercolor to create double-paged pictures with details such as elongating shadows and hidden animals.

DID YOU KNOW? Jane Yolen has written several award winning books?

Teaching Tip: The Commander Toad series are early readers that will appeal to younger students, but older students will also get a kick out of them because they are filled with puns. Commander Toad in Space is a Junior Literary Guild Book. All the Commander Toad books were on Reading Rainbow and all six in the series won Golden Duck Awards, as best children’s SF Recommended Books.
**Additional Resources/Helpful Websites**

Jane Yolen’s Official Website (a rich resource containing descriptions for all her books as well as links for teachers):

http://janeyolen.com/

Interviews with Jane Yolen:
- http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/intrvws/yolen.htm
- http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/yolen/transcript
- http://blaine.org/sevenimpossiblethings/?p=1415
- http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/jun02/yolen.htm
- http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/authorsillustrato/a/janeyolen.htm
- http://www.ipl.org/div/asauthor/Yolen.html

About the writing process:

Myth’s writing workshop:
http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/mythswshop_index.htm

Jane’s writer’s journal:
http://janeyolen.com/telling-the-true-a-writers-journal/

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**QUOTE ON WRITING:**

"Exercise the writing muscle every day, even if it is only a letter, notes, a title list, a character sketch, a journal entry. Writers are like dancers, like athletes. Without that exercise, the muscles seize up."  
— Jane Yolen

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**Author Study Activity:**

**What types of books does Jane Yolen write?**

**How might her books be used in a classroom?**

Books will be placed in piles around the room and groups will be assigned to each station. Groups be asked to look through the books at their station and determine the similarity, or the GENRE of the books and also how some of the books might be used in the classroom. This activity is meant to show the class what a diverse writer Jane Yolen is and how many of her books can be used for classroom lessons in writing, poetry, and content areas.

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**Do you have any words of wisdom for writers?**

No, but I have seven rules:

1. Write every day.
2. Write what interests you.
3. Write for the child inside of you. (Or the adult, if you are writing adult books.)
4. Write with honest emotion.
5. Be careful of being facile.
6. Be wary of preaching.
7. Be prepared for serendipity.

Finally I would remind you of something that Churchill told a group of school boys: "Never give up. Never give up. Never, never, never give up."

-JY