

Seven Essential Elements of a Young-Adult or Middle-Grade Novel  
Turtle Cove Press

**YOUNG ADULT**

1. Protagonist is a young adult (14-18 years old) with a unique and authentic voice.
2. Point of view: First person or very limited third person.
3. Present or past tense. (Present tense lends an immediacy that draws in the reader.)
4. Subject matter that affects teens and that teens care about. This can take place in a realistic or fantasy setting; and in a contemporary, futuristic, or historical timeframe.
5. Strong characters.
6. Protagonist must solve (resolve) the conflict him/herself. Can have help from secondary character(s).
7. Few barriers to language/situations.

**MIDDLE GRADE**

1. Protagonist is 12-16 years old (a few years older than the target audience) with a unique and authentic voice.
2. Point of view: First person or very limited third person.
3. Present or past tense.
4. Subject matter that affects “tweens” (10-12 years old) and that they care about. This can take place in a realistic or fantasy setting; and in a contemporary, futuristic, or historical timeframe.
5. Strong characters.
6. Protagonist must solve (resolve) the conflict him/herself. Can have help from secondary character(s).
7. Language/situations must be acceptable to the gatekeepers (parents, teachers, school librarians).