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A common dream for creative people is to make a living by selling poems or short stories. Unfortunately, it is also a difficult career to break into. Some habits can help increase your chances of success, as can careful study of your market and the buyers in it. If you are willing to work hard, handle rejection well and are eager to improve your skills when people give you advice, you are ready to succeed in the difficult world of publishing. Learn your market. Focus what you write directly on what your chosen market wants. Write what you love and write every day. Develop a great writing style with passion and practice. Establish a habit of writing at any given time with a specific purpose each day. Edit to perfection, then seek unbiased advice prior to submitting your story or poem. Brush your writing after others have given candid reviews. Make a list of target markets that pay. Please note the editors' names, any entries, publication addresses, formatting details and special notes. Always send manuscripts exactly as the market asks them. Subjects to paying markets. If you get a rejection, don't dwell on it. Instead, submit to the next market on your list. As soon as you post a submission in the mail, sit down and write the next story or poem. Always working on a new story or poem. Market yourself. Establish a fan base among those who have read your stories and poetry. Try to connect with those people using social networks or a website, and make sure they are aware of every new publication. Tips Once you're safe in your talent, writers' conferences and conventions can help you network and give you insider information about what's hot. Discover emerging markets. For example, Amazon offers a simple self-publishing platform for writers, and a few new short works are primarily marketed as iPhone apps. If your dream is to be a writer, look for other writing sites to bring income while you develop your fiction career. Warnings Don't give up your job. Writing poetry and short fiction rarely brings a stable income. JGI/Jamie Grill Christmas is such a magical time of year. Everyone, including the adults, is enchanted by hanging the stockings on the mantelpiece, decorating the Christmas tree, picking presents, and decking the house with garlands, twinkling lights, and arches. One of our favorite fun Christmas activities to do during the winter with the whole family is watching a Christmas movie for kids, or play a Christmas game for kids, but something that is even more special is hugging by the fire to one of best Christmas books for children to read. The beautiful illustrations and sweet stories leave you and your children feeling full of the holiday spirit. Babies and toddlers will enjoy some of the hard-backed picture books, while those who learn to read can practice on stories like *The Night Before Christmas* or *The Polar Express*. There are a few interactive options on the list, too, so all ages to get involved if they are interested. No matter which option you choose, we strongly recommend that you hold this year after year. You will find that showing them and reading together as a family will be some of the most treasured Christmas traditions you hold dear. Check out these funny Christmas quotes, Christmas jokes and Christmas poems for kids! Discover the perfect gift for the little ones with this hand-picked selection of great ideas chosen by our Deputy Home Design Editor, Alaina Binks. 01. Growing up This stylish printed heavyweight paper height chart (above), 140cm x 30cm, features a colourful illustration of clouds and is perfect to hang in a child's bedroom or in the hallway, £18, Rastall & Daughters. 02. A child's best friend From a selection of cute unique handmade felt toys by Amica Accessories. Choose from a Beagle, Schnauzer and Fox Terrier (shown), along with a donkey. This Fox Terrier comes in two sizes, the smaller dog seen above, is 11.8cm x 4.13cm and costs £15 and the larger size is 13.2cm x 4.21cm, at £30. Available from the Country Living General Store. 03. Colorful and creative Perfect for a young girl who loves to write or draw, this scrapbook kit includes a rose floral notebook, stamps, ink and a selection of stickers, £18, Cath Kidston. 04. Teatime fun Donna Wilson's new playful collection of melamine crockery is decorated with quirky characters, including this flying fox (above), a bear ready for dinner and a squirrel due to tuck into a pear, on an array of plates, bowls and cups. Fox and Balloon plate, £6.90. 05. A skip and a jump A modern take on this classic toy, Geoffrey Fisher's rustic skipping ropes are individually handmade from colorful rope with solid wooden handles. Choose from a variety of bright rope colours, from green, red, yellow and cyan blue, £27 each, The New Craftsmen. 06. Creature comforts A charming bunch of hedgehog kisses for adding character to a child's room - as well as a friendly toy to play with. This sweet handmade linen cushion from Robin & Mould, 26cm x 17cm, is available in green, mustard (see above) and burnt orange and is printed with 100 per cent water-based solvent-free inks, £18 each from Howkapow. 07. Back to nature Encourage curious youngsters to dig, weed and sow with special garden equipment designed specifically for their small hands. This collection, available from the Natural History Museum Shop, includes a set of gardening gloves, £8, hand tools, £18, a watering can, knieler and a starter patch seed and planter set. 08. Craft and make in this natural cotton drawstring bag, you will find plenty of crafting essentials of glue, string, dolly pins, pipe cleaners, feathers, buttons and scraps of van for making something from peg dolls to collages - this should keep the kids amused for an hour or two! £9.95 from Poppy Treffry 09. Charming character This beautiful 32-page book is full of dollhouses ready to colour in. Illustrated by Emily Sutton, each page features a room based on those found in dollhouses at the V&A Museum of Childhood, £5.99, V&A Shop. 10. Fun and games Imaginative children will love these cheerful handmade lamb wool felt masks. There's a rabbit, badger and fox to choose from, £12.95 each, Sew Heart Felt. This content is created and maintained by a third party and imported onto this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may find more information about this and similar content at piano.io Our editors research, test, and recommend the best products; more information about our review process can be found here. We may receive commissions on purchases made through our chosen links. Most kids want the latest toy for the holidays, but don't forget to throw in a book as well. A big Christmas book, whether it's a new release or a classic, can learn about the importance of the season or give great character lessons that can be applied to life at any time of the year. Below are the best children's Christmas books. No Christmas season is complete without the Grinch and all the who's in Whoville who help him find the true meaning of Christmas. With its whimsical images and hilarious rhymes, *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* delivers a serious message about the commercialization of Christmas. With a heart two sizes too small, the Grinch steals all gifts, decorations and food. Those who, however, are not phased, and Christmas goes on anyway. Their simple but still joyous celebration helps the green man see the mistake of his Grinchy ways and realize that Christmas is really about the spirit of the season and being together. No holiday story time would be complete without the Elf on the Shelf! Elf on the Shelf is a naughty, fun-loving elf who helps Santa with his Naughty and Nice lists. After all, most kids don't know about the magical scout elves who help Santa determine who's on the Naughty List and who's on the Nice List every year! If you decide to buy the set that includes the book and the elf, you will find the elf hiding every morning for your child. Reviewers note that seeing how happy this makes their kids is the best gift of all. It's a lot of fun during the holidays or all year round. This book is 26 pages long, so it's perfect for children aged four to eight. In this short and sweet rhyming book for children, little llama and his friends participate in holiday activities such as and decorate holiday cookies. Each Lama Lama book teaches a lesson, and it encourages little ones to spread holiday joy their actions. This board book is great for babies and toddlers because the thick pages are easy to turn, and the bright illustrations will captivate even those with short attention spans. Lama Lama Jingle Bells is sure to get your youngsters excited for the holidays! Perfect for the toddler set, Dream Snow paints a stunning image of an animal-loving Santa Claus. It tells the story of a farmer who dreams of Christmas snow and how he takes care of his animals after the flakes actually start to fall. The animals just so coincidentally are called One, Two, Three, Four and Five, making the book not only entertaining, but also a good lesson in counting. Fans of Eric Carle's other titles like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* will recognize the bright, colorful illustrations and simple, catchy words. Bonus: This hardback version includes plastic sheets decorated with snowflakes that hide the identity of each animal until they are lifted, as well as a button on the last page that offers a surprise musical ending to light up their Christmas dreams. For those who want to emphasize that Jesus is the reason for the Christmas season, *The Tale of Three Trees* is a perfect choice. Aimed at the preschool crowd, it tells the moving story of three trees, who think they know who they want to grow up to. Spoiler alert: They grow up to be wood for Jesus' manger, boat and cross -- not exactly what they thought, but exactly what they had to do in life. This simply told classic folk tale is a nice way to focus on the religious aspect of Christmas. While the trees make it a particularly festive book, the message is one that is relevant all year long and makes a great christening or Easter gift as well. Pure magic fills the pages of the *Polar Express* as it beautifully captures every child's dreams of meeting Santa Claus. It tells the story of a boy who is taken by Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. The Caldecott-winning book makes a great gift that families will enjoy for years to come. It is a great choice for those who are starting to question the season traditions and will put to rest their doubts that the magic of Christmas really is. From the beautiful pastel images to the quiet poignant message, it's a favourite for both children and adults alike. The story of Jesus' birth in that Bethlehem manger is told in this sweet story from the perspective of the animals that were there. It begins when Child Ox welcomes the animals one by one to share his stable on that cold Christmas Eve. There is always room for a little one, he says repeatedly as a dog, cat, and mouse seek shelter. Finally, along comes Tired Donkey along with Mary and Joseph, and they all witness the birth of the baby. It is a parents who introduce the Christmas story to their animal-loving children in a charming and meaningful way. It's short and simple enough keep the attention of preschoolers, but also beautifully illustrated and sweet enough told to captivate older children as well. If/when little minds start asking if Santa Claus is real, this book offers the perfect answers. It is based on the life story of 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon who had her own doubts about Old St. Nick in 1897. Her father encouraged her to write to *The New York Sun* and tell her: If you see it in *The Sun*, so be it. So she wrote the paper asking if there is indeed a Santa Claus. The book reveals the sweet response of the editor, which contains the famous words: Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. His message confirmed to Virginia (and millions of others who have read it since) that Santa and other wonders unseen and unseen in the world are real. Real.

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