Dedication

This is for my grandchildren, Mason, Mariya, Emily, Sarah, Lily, Ella, and Gabriella, and to the memory of Tookie and Bryan Woods
About the Author

David L. Russell is a professor of English at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan, where he teaches children’s literature and folk literature. He is the author of Patricia MacLachlan and Scott O’Dell, both published by Twayne Publishers, as well as Stuart Academic Drama: An Edition of Three University Plays by Garland Publishing. He has also published numerous scholarly articles on children’s literature, and was a contributor to The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature, The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature, and The Cambridge Guide to Children’s Books in English. He is currently co-editor of The Lion and the Unicorn.
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Revisions always pose both opportunities and risks. Certainly, just being asked to do a revision is an honor, but it is more importantly a responsibility. One wants to preserve the features valued by loyal users of the previous edition while making changes that might appeal to a wider audience. Perhaps most importantly, a revision allows for the updating of material to keep pace with the dynamic world of children’s literature.

As so often happens, this revision turned out to be more dramatic than I had originally envisioned, and a generous publisher has made it possible to have full color throughout the book. This, I trust, will make the overall design more visually appealing. The chapters have been reshuffled, and, more importantly, reduced in number. Logic and efficiency were my motives for these changes. Katherine Paterson famously said, “I love revision. Where else can spilled milk be turned into ice cream?” It is with this spirit that I have entered into this ninth edition.

New to This Edition

Perhaps most noticeably, the entire book is now illustrated in color, which I hope makes for a livelier and more pleasing presentation.

- All chapters have been rewritten and updated where necessary to keep abreast of developments in the field.
- All resource lists have been updated.
- Chapter 1 (The History of Children’s Literature) now includes material on twentieth–century theories of child development (Piaget, Erickson, and Kohlberb), which were formerly in a separate chapter. This move is to emphasize the development of modern children’s literature as it addresses new attitudes toward childhood.
- Chapter 2 (Reading the World: Issues in Children’s Literature) combines materials from former chapters 3 and 4, including the social issues of diversity and inclusion, the personal issues of sexuality and death, and the harsh realities of war and violence. In addition, the chapter concludes with a discussion of intellectual freedom, which is often called into play with books on all these issues.
The new Chapter 4 constitutes a shifting of the literary and critical materials originally in Chapter 9. Because this information applies to all children’s literature, its placement near the beginning of the text probably makes the most sense. Additionally, the discussion of critical approaches has been enhanced considerably.

The new Chapter 5 (Picture Books), which begins Part II, combines the discussions of all picture books, which in previous editions had been divided between two chapters. This should avoid some redundancy, and the inclusion of more full-color illustrations should strengthen the discussions on art.

The new Chapter 6 (Poetry) opens with a discussion of Mother Goose rhymes, which had originally been placed in a chapter on books for the very young. Using Mother Goose as an entrée to the discussion of poetry may make more sense.

In my own classes, students spend most of their time reading the primary material—the picture books, the poetry, the folktales, the fantasies, the realistic fiction, the nonfiction—which is as it should be. This book is intended as a supplement to that reading, and the focus is always, I hope, on the literature itself. Finally, I offer no apology for my approach, which is decidedly literary, reflecting my own background as a teacher of English literature. My hope is that all who use this book come away with more than just ideas about how to make reading fun in the classroom (however important that is). Children’s literature provides an excellent opportunity for us to develop an appreciation for the art of literature and an understanding of how literature reflects our world and ourselves.

As always, I close with a quotation from Ecclesiasticus, a question that goes to the heart of education:

*If thou hast gathered nothing in thy youth, how canst thou find anything in thine age?*