

WRITE LIKE WELTY

Background

Before Eudora Welty was a great writer, she was a great reader. Her parents provided her with books and read aloud to her. In her memoir *One Writer's Beginnings*, she recalls, "I was presented, as early as I can remember, with books of my own, which appeared on my birthday and on Christmas morning. Indeed, my parents could not give me books enough."

Her childhood reading included all kinds of fairy tales and myths, a set of encyclopedias entitled *Our Wonder World*, and series books like *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Campfire Girls*. Welty also read to her brother Edward from classics such as *Tom Sawyer* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

Welty also began writing in her childhood; she wrote poetry that was published in *St. Nicholas* magazine and authored a funny book for Edward titled *The Glorious Apology*. It was illustrated with pictures she cut from newspapers and magazines. This love of books and writing would remain with Welty for her entire life.

The following activity allows you to create your own storybook. The length of the pages can be adjusted and you may use blank paper for simple words and pictures or lined or notebook paper for a longer story. Learn more about Eudora Welty and her Jackson, Mississippi, home at <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/welty/>.

Items Needed

Colored cardstock
Lined or blank paper (number of pages is up to discretion)
Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
Picture of child writing the book
Stapler

Directions

1. Place one piece of cardstock on the top and bottom of the lined or blank paper.
2. Staple the papers together using three staples on the left edge of the paper.
3. Decorate the front and back covers of the book.
4. On the inside cover of the book, place picture of the child (a photograph or drawing).
5. After writing a short autobiography of himself/herself adjacent to the picture, write a story like Eudora Welty using one of the following sentences as a jumping-off point for writing:
 - "Today was my first day of school. It was..."
 - "Last night I had the strangest dream."
 - "All the houses on the block looked exactly the same except the blue one in the middle."
 - "For summer vacation, my family and I traveled to..."