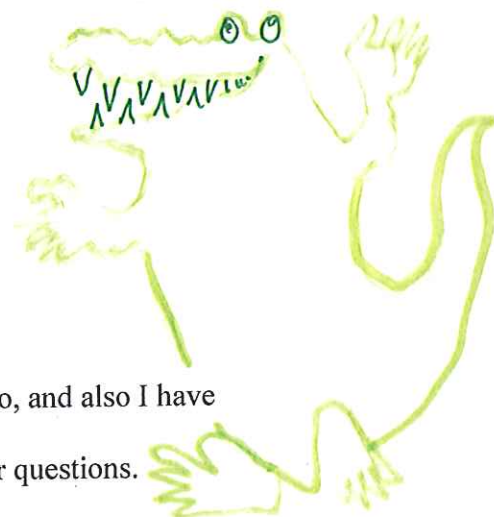


No. 1. R.D.  
Lyttelton



Dear Sarina Hutton and Upper Hutt City Library Book Club Kids,

I am sorry I have been late getting back to you. I have had work to do, and also I have been a bit badly organized – something which happens often. But here I am at last, sitting at my computer and keen to answer your questions.

ELEANOR:- I have had a lot of practice by now at getting ideas for stories (not that they all turn out well). I look at the things going on around me and sometimes I see something going on that makes me think “That might make a good story.” Once I took two dogs for a walk close to the sea when the tide was out. There was a pack of geese out on the mud and the dogs began to run after the geese. I called the dogs but they took no notice. Then suddenly one of the geese turned around and ran at the dogs. Then ALL the geese ran at the dogs, and the dogs were frightened and ran away. When I got home I began work on a story. The story is called “A Summery Saturday Morning” It is written in rhyme but the actual story began with something I had just seen. Not all ideas come as completely as that, but I often get ideas for bits of story from the world around me, and by now I have had a lot of practice at making things up, so the stories I write begin with ideas from outside me, and I finish them by inventing something that will fit in with what I have seen.

GRACE: I think I became interest in writing stories because I loved it when people read stories to me and, later on, when I came to read for myself. I am still an enthusiastic reader.

When we think about the world around us there are a lot of things we are interested in, and every now and then we see or hear something that we would like to try ourselves. There are a lot of things I am interested in...rugby or netball, say...but I like watching other people play those games. I don't really want to play them myself. But when I read stories I think “I would like to try writing a story of my own.” And of course I have written stories for many years now.

CAITLIN: I am not sure how many stories I have written. I know it is over two hundred. Some of the stories are very short. The shortest is only about nine words long and it is part of a reading series for children who are learning to read. The longest book I have written is over four hundred pages long, so there is a lot of difference between the shortest book and the longest one. Still I think that the short books count too.

MILLIE: I don't quite know the answer to that question. I think I have always enjoyed the sound of words, and I did have a lot of rhymes and poems read to me when I was small. The first rhyming poem I ever made up was made up before I could write. I remember, back when I was four, I felt very pleased with myself for inventing a rhyme, and although, as I say, I could not write down because I didn't know how to write, I kept that poem inside my head, and I can still remember it. Mind you, it was not a great poem, but it did rhyme. By now I have had a lot of rhyming practice.

Thank you all for your questions and I hope my answers are useful to you

Best wishes to the Upper Hutt Library Book Club kids...Jayden, Eleanor, Ben, Caitlin,  
Grace, Briana, Millie, Arden, Zane and Isaac!  
Best wishes to your librarian too!

Margaret Mahy

A.S.  
I worked  
for a little  
at Upper Hutt  
Library many  
years ago  
when I was  
at  
Library  
School

