



**Lori Degman** writes in rhyme, most of the time – but not always! She is the author of *I Zany Zoo* (Simon & Schuster), *Cock-a-Doodle Oops!* (Creston Books), *Norbert's Big Dream* (Sleeping Bear Press), *Like a Girl* (Sterling), and *Travel Guide for Monsters* (Sleeping Bear Press). Lori was a teacher of the deaf and now divides her time between writing children's books, doing kidlit-related stuff (like being a #PBChat Mentor), and babysitting her grandson! She lives in a suburb of Chicago with her husband and two dogs. Visit her at [Loridegman](http://Loridegman.com).

**Lori will be accepting applications for:** humor and/or rhyme

**1. If you could be in any movie or tv series, what would it be and what character would you play?**

The Dick Van Dyke Show and I'd be Laura Petrie.

**2. If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be and why?**

I'd want to be able to teleport myself so I could go visit my son and grandson in Austin whenever I want.

**3. What are your five favorite picture books not written, illustrated, and/or edited by you?**

It's hard to pick only five but here are the first five I thought of: *MISS NELSON IS MISSING*; *THOMAS' SNOWSUIT*; *WHAT DO YOU SAY, DEAR*; *ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS*, and *IT'S ONLY STANLEY*.

**4. What writing and/or publishing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I think I'm most proud of the fact that I didn't give up! I'd started writing and then had to stop for about 10 years when my kids started school and I went back to teaching. There was no internet at the time (yes, I'm that old – not to brag), so I was out there on my own and I couldn't justify taking the time away from my kids and job. But, when my kids were in high school and didn't need me as much, I decided to give it one more try. Even though I received a lot of rejections, I kept going until I got published.

**5. What about mentoring excites you most?**

It's exciting when you give a writer feedback and she runs with it and creates something better than either of you ever imagined! It's even more exciting when mentees sign with an agent and/or sell a manuscript!

**6. What are your strengths as a mentor?**

I'm pretty easy to talk to so I think my mentees feel comfortable discussing things with me. I'm honest, so if I say something positive, you can believe it. Also, when I do point out something that isn't working, I will explain why and try to help come up with a remedy.

**7. What is your feedback/critique style like?**

I point out the things I think are working and the things that aren't. I help guide the author through revisions and continue until the story is submission ready. I give thoughtful, honest feedback – there's nothing worse than saying something is good, just to avoid making the author feel bad.

**8. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?**

My ideal mentee would be someone who writes funny picture book manuscripts – preferably in rhyme. I'd like to work with someone who has been writing for a while, so we don't have to spend too much time on the mechanics and can get through more manuscripts. I'd like to work with someone who can take constructive criticism without being defensive, but who will also not make every change I suggest if they don't truly agree with it.

[Feel free to talk about anything from personality traits to technical skills to types of stories they create, etc.]

**9. Who are you not the best mentor for?**

I wouldn't be very helpful to authors who write nonfiction or serious prose.

**10. How will you help your mentee and their stories develop?**

I will help my mentee develop multiple manuscripts and get them submission ready. I'll focus on tightening text, word choice, story arc, rhythm/meter, poetic devices, and editing while keeping illustrations in mind. I'm happy to help with pretty much any aspect of the writing/submitting/post publishing process the mentee wants.

**11. What is your style of communication like?**

I like to email because it's nice to have a written record of what we've talked about and I typically reply to emails within a day or two. I'm also happy to talk on the phone or do a Skype visit to help with communication. I'm a pretty casual person so it's usually anything goes.

**12. What are you looking for in the applications you receive?**

I'm looking for someone who has invested in learning the craft of writing. Someone who has attended classes, conferences, workshops . . . to improve his/her writing. I'm also looking for someone with a good sense of humor – and if they're a pun nerd like me, that would be a plus!

**13. Any tips/advice for applicants to make their applications and/or manuscripts shine?**

Submit the manuscript that best exemplifies your writing style. Even if it's not your most polished manuscript – I want to get a clear idea of your writing style.

**14. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?**

Write the type of stories that you would want to read – both when you were a child and now. Write an opening so alluring that the reader will want to turn the page and an ending so satisfying and/or surprising that they want to read it all over again.