



# How to Evaluate a Book

## What makes a good book about someone with a disability?

The story isn't just about being disabled, but has an interesting and engaging plot. The disabled characters make their own decisions. They have friends. It doesn't just show hard parts of being disabled, but good parts and regular parts, too. The book doesn't make a non-disabled reader feel lucky for not having a disability.

### Questions to ask about the book:

Is the character's disability shown to be something that needs to be fixed or overcome for them to be happy?

Can you name personality traits about the character besides "disabled"? Do they have any flaws, or are they meant to be "inspirational"?

Is the story talking about or watching the disabled character, or is the disabled character telling their own story?

Are ordinary activities done by a disabled character considered heroic or amazing? Or, is there mostly a focus on what a character can't do?

Is the disabled character always thinking about their disability and wishing they were "cured"?

Does the reader feel bad for the character who has a disability? If so, why?

Are disabled characters accepted as friends from the start or early in the story, or is the story about realizing that disabilities don't matter and everyone can be friends? Are kids considered special just for spending time with disabled kids?

Is the book written for kids who do not have disabilities to learn about disabilities? A good book will be inclusive of readers who have the same disability as the characters, and other disabled readers, too.

---

More information for grown-ups:

--<https://autistrhi.com/2019/02/09/writing-autism/>  
--<https://booksforlittles.com/disability-normalization/>  
--<http://disabilityinkidlit.com/category/reviews/>  
--<https://propornounblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/on-wonder/>  
--<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/evaluating-children-s-books-that-address-disability.pdf>

Children's/4-19/SH