ABSTRACT & GOALS
Adoption is more common than people realize, this is because the topic is not part of everyday conversation, it infrequently finds its way into newspapers, and it is seldom the topic of books, especially children’s literature. Books play a critical role in teaching children topics that are hard to talk about, including complex issues such as adoption. Because of my personal experience with the adoption of a sibling, I had a passion to write and illustrate a children’s book that incorporated learning about the many different kinds of adoption as well as a personal narrative that would engage kids. Combining the research of books on adoption, age appropriateness of adoption topics, and my hobby of writing and painting, I was able to write, illustrate, and produce a children’s book that not only tells my story, but informs elementary age children about the issues involved in adoption.

RESEARCH QUESTION
What books on adoption are available to children? How do I write and produce a book?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Before I could write or illustrate, I had to determine my target audience. I researched the books available on adoption. The categories I sorted my findings into included:
- Open adoption
- Books geared for adults
- Books for teens
- Memoirs
- A focus on foster care
- Books for kids below 3rd grade
- Books for kids above 3rd grade

RESULTS & REFLECTION
Because of my major, elementary education, and my research showing a lack of books geared towards upper elementary children about adoption, I decided to focus my book on that audience. I included information and terminology that would be age appropriate for the target age group.

METHODS
Writing process
The writing process started with an outline, mapping out the parts of my story that I wanted to share as well as the kinds of adoption I wanted to include. After a writing slump, I revamped the whole idea to include more of my story and to keep the definitions of adoption in their own section. Plenty of re-writing was involved in the technical part because I needed to communicate honestly about the unglamorous side of adoption as well as wording it in a way that is understandable to children.

Illustrating process
This was the most challenging to start because I have high expectations and I knew I would feel like what I painted wasn’t going to be good enough. With my only artistic training coming from high school, I jumped in with watercolor, my favorite medium, which is somewhat forgiving on paper.

Publishing process
This was a fun part for me because I liked seeing it all come together, words with pictures, into one cohesive display of art and information. This process was totally new to me, so I used the company Blurb, which was recommended by a family member. I also learned how long it takes to print, ship, and proof a book, which was longer than anticipated; however, more time put in yields a greater outcome.

OUTCOMES
- I would definitely write another book, taking with me what I learned from writing this one.
- Getting feedback from the book’s target audience is a major boost to finish writing.
- Plan a timeline backwards from ordering the book, including time to proof the book.
- I am not a professional author or illustrator, but that did not stop me from doing either to share my experience with everyone.

LEARNING POINTS
- The writing process is trustworthy and necessary.
- Don’t be afraid of failure.
- Writing and illustrating a book is fun and rewarding and ultimately a skill that I now have.