

Summary: Book Tasting 2025

Swedish children's and YA book publishing in 2024 remained broad and stable, with 2,182 printed titles received by the Swedish Institute for Children's Books (Sbi). Picturebooks dominated, followed by non-fiction, chapter books, and middle grade. While YA output had been in decline for years, it stabilized in 2024.

Digital publishing showed a decrease in audiobooks and fluctuating e-book trends. However, most digital titles are also released in print. Content spans everyday life and speculative fiction (e.g., fantasy and sci-fi), especially for older children.

Themes reflect contemporary concerns such as AI, youth culture (e.g., EPA tractors), religion, and folklore. AI features both in narratives and as a tool for creating texts and illustrations. Some books were produced entirely or partly with AI, raising questions about authorship and aesthetics.

Publishing remains dominated by a few large houses, but hybrid publishers are growing. In 2024, 268 titles (12%) were issued by hybrid publishers. These are often debut works aiming to increase representation or explore personal experiences.

Reading as a motif appears in about 40 titles, linked to personal growth, magic, or knowledge. Physical books dominate – digital reading is absent. Libraries are depicted nostalgically, with frequent references to classic literature and traditional reader identities.

Books for toddlers (ages 0–3) emphasize interaction and movement. Themes include the body, emotions, and everyday activities, often with sound effects, flaps, or tactile elements. Rhythm, form, and simplicity support early language development.

Witches are featured in diverse roles – monstrous, vengeful, sympathetic, or humorous. They represent power, marginalization, or female identity, echoing both historical and modern interpretations.

Chapter and middle-grade books rely heavily on series, humor, and depictions of children's relationships with adults – particularly fathers. Fantasy, horror, and coming-of-age themes are prominent in middle-grade stories.