



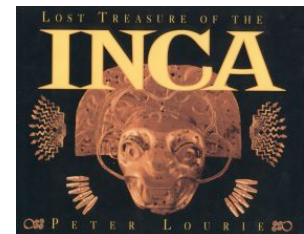
Peter Lourie bio

Peter's adventure books come directly from his travel journals. In order to write a book about a place - its history, geography, people and culture - he likes to experience it for himself.

As a child, he loved collecting rocks and wandering the countryside of Connecticut. When his parents split up, he, his identical twin brother Jim, and their younger sister Ann moved to Ontario, Canada. In the fourth grade, deep into the Hardy Boys, Peter wanted to be a bush pilot in Canada's Northwest Territories. He also wanted to be an archaeologist, to travel the world to delve into ancient cultures.

When he graduated from college, Peter studied early human bones with Margaret Leakey in Kenya and observed Colobus monkeys in the Usambara Mountains of Tanzania. He was all set to become an anthropologist when suddenly, while surveying monkeys in the jungles of Ecuador, Peter heard the mysterious [story of an Incan treasure](#).

In 1533, seven hundred and fifty tons of gold were buried in a strange and haunting cloud forest in the Andes Mountains. That gold is still hidden in a dangerous chain of misty mountains only seventy miles from Quito, the capital of Ecuador.



It was this [fantastic story \(audio\)](#) that made Peter drop his plans to get a Ph.D. in anthropology. For the next five years, he remained in Ecuador to research the story of the Inca gold. Finally, he hired three guides from the small village of El Triunfo in the cloud forest and climbed into the high jungle to search for the gold. He returned not with riches but with a desire to write an article for Highlights Magazine ("[Inca Treasre in the Cloud Forest](#)") and a book for adults ([Sweat of the Sun, Tears of the Moon](#)).

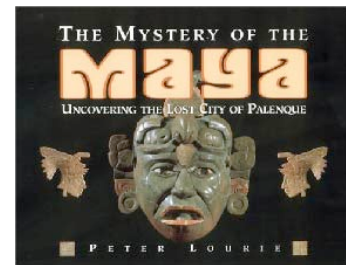
After his experiences in Ecuador, Peter began to write adventure-travel books about many places, rivers, and ancient cultures, both for children and for adults. His journeys have taken him to remote parts of the world, including the jungles of Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Panama, Peru, and Africa.



A few years ago he realized a boyhood dream when he explored [Tierra del Fuego](#) at the tip of South America, known also as "*El Fin del Mundo*," or the End of the World. This remote island is located at the southern end of Patagonia and in 1520 was named "Land of Fire" by Ferdinand Magellan. Only seven hundred miles from Antarctica, it is a wild and

desolate place, filled with penguins, sea lions, and wild guanaco, a llama-like creature that the natives depended on for food and clothing.

When he recently returned from the jungles of southern Mexico where he was working on a story about the [ancient Maya](#), Peter admitted that although it is important to read books in preparation for a journey, just as crucial are his observations while traipsing through jungles or following rivers.



"Hearing the roar of howlers and the whine of cicadas in the long, hot jungle afternoons in Chiapas, Mexico, is an important part of my research into the ancient Maya civilization," he says. "The mystery has to come alive!" he says. "Readers should feel, hear and smell a place."

For Peter, research is another word for exploration!

It is Peter's love of mystery and of what he will discover that compels him toward his next adventure. A recent book about an [Arctic whale scientist](#) who works with the Inupiaq Eskimos on the

North Slope of Alaska ([Whaling Season: A Year in the Life of an Arctic Whale Scientist](#)) was followed by another book ([The Manatee Scientists](#)) about manatees in West Africa, the Amazon, Mexico and Florida. He is now finishing up another Houghton Mifflin Scientist in the Field book on polar bears. This past summer Peter headed back to Lake Turkana in northwestern Kenya for a second visit with the [Leakey family](#).

Peter holds a BA in classics from New York University, an MA in English Literature from the University of Maine, and an MFA in creative writing from Columbia University. He has taught writing at Columbia College and the University of Vermont. He now teaches at Middlebury College and makes his living traveling, writing, and photographing. He [visits schools](#) to share his adventures with students and [teachers](#).

He and his family live near Middlebury, Vermont.

[Author Profile at Edutopia.org](#)

Books on the way:

Polar Bear Scientist (Houghton Mifflin)

**All in the Family: A Scientific Biography of the Leakeys
(Houton Mifflin)**