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Gathering Ideas for Brilliant Writing

By Linda Elizabeth Alexander

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Subject: Business, Writing

Number of Words: 557

Website: <http://www.write2thepointcom.com>

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Gathering Ideas for Brilliant Writing

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I always seem to be asking as well as answering the question, "How do you get your ideas for writing?" Chances are everybody you will ask will have a different answer. Ideas are everywhere and there are many ways to collect them. Follow these tips to get the ideas flowing.

1. With the holidays just past us, use ideas from your holidays to write about. Stories about holiday fights can be turned into articles on people skills or coping with interpersonal relationships. Tell about the presents you got. Talk about how much you love outdoor sports. Or hate the snow. Or fear the snow. Write about the car accident you avoided on New Year's Eve.

2. Take a notebook and pencil wherever you go. Keep one on your desk, one in your purse or briefcase, and one in your jacket pocket. If you think a lot while driving, keep a mini tape recorder with you.

3. Write down every idea that floats through your mind, whether it's one word, a phrase, or a whole paragraph. Continue to add to your notebook every now and then. When you need an idea, first scan through your notes to see if you have anything you can use. (If you prefer, do this on your computer and add new files as you get new ideas.)

4. Develop ideas from things you read. Keep that pencil and paper handy while you read the morning news or a favorite novel or history article. Whatever pops into your mind, write it down.

5. Eavesdrop. (Don't get caught!) You don't want to pry into others' lives of course, but whatever they're discussing may spark an idea in your mind for an article.

6. Ask yourself questions. "Why is the girl running in the rain?" "Why is that man slumped over his computer fast asleep?" Write down whatever comes to mind, then ask some questions about what you just wrote.

7. Keep working on your notebook or files. You might only jot down one word at a time, but eventually you will add to it. Write notes. Add to your thoughts. Print out a series of related ideas or paragraphs that you write, sit down with a cup of coffee, and begin to connect those ideas into something a little more structured.

8. Keep revising and rewriting until you have a solid idea. Then, you can plan your article and begin to write your first draft.

9. Keep an "always open" file on your computer. No matter what you name it -- "ideas" or "notes" or "scribbles" -- keep it open. Anytime you are distracted or have a minute to daydream, record some notes in this file.

With a little perseverance, keeping track of any thoughts or ideas you do get will be easy. Eventually you'll have enough material to scan through and find a solid idea to

use in your writing.

Anyone Can Be a Writer...But

By Patricia Deere Ring

Anyone Can Be a Writer...But by Patricia Deere Ring

How many times have you seen it in ads, ezines, and articles? ANYONE can be a writer! Right. But the question is do you want to read what they write? I was not always an "A" student in school or college, but I do know how to hit *spell check* on the computer or typewriter. I also know how to use a dictionary to check the meaning of a word. Anyone ever try looking in a reference book to learn how to use commas or quotation marks properly?

There are many people in the world, especially the Internet world, with brilliant ideas and huge warehouses of knowledge within themselves. But not all of these people can express these ideas to others in a way that is informative and easily understood.

As a *newbie* I don't know and understand a lot about HTML, but I realized my need to learn it, so I recently checked out two different sites with free courses on the subject. The first one I looked at (I will be nice and not mention the name!) was so technical I couldn't find my way out of a paper bag if I didn't already know how. The second site had a printable ebook (free) of the same info that appeared on the site. Needless to say, I printed out the ebook, which was written in *everyday* language that I could understand. (You have to realize that I'm the Dummy those books were written to.) I learned more in five minutes than I thought possible.

So, its not always WHAT you know, but whether you can TELL others what you know! Having a head full of knowledge doesn't help anyone but yourself, if you're not able to relate it to others. If you don't know how to spell, use *spell check* to correct your writing. If you don't understand the rules of punctuation and grammar, find a good proof-reader to look over what you have written. Let someone else check your writing, someone not as knowledgeable in the subject as you, to see if it's easily understood by others.

There are ways to make your writing something to be read and appreciated by others. Good luck and better writing!

Patricia Deere Ring is a freelance writer living in Tarkington Prairie, Texas with her retired husband. She runs two businesses of her own and can be contacted by email at <mailto:pring@contentbuilders.com> or on her Web site at <http://www.contentbuilders.com>



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