

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Top Ten Tips For New Writers

By Elaine Currie, BA (Hons).

Top Ten Tips For New Writers

by: **Elaine Currie, BA (Hons).**

Golden Rules For Writers – Things you need to know before you begin.

Rules govern everything we do in life; even if those rules are of the unwritten kind we abide by them and expect other people to do the same. Why should writing be any different? It shouldn't be and it isn't. The following rules are the basis for good writing. If anyone tries to tell you that rules are made to be broken, remember that you have to learn those rules before you try to bend them or break them otherwise you are just being sloppy, not radical.

The following rules are essential if you want people to take you seriously.

Be yourself
Know your subject
Be interested
Punctuate proudly
Respect the apostrophe
Get great grammar
Spell well
Keep to the point
Read and revise
Sleep on it
Pay attention to detail

Be yourself

Write from the heart or the head or the gut, depending upon the type of writing you are doing. You can let your heart pour passion into a love letter but your head is better for the contents of a business letter and the gut feeling should never be ignored. Never try to imitate somebody else's style, no matter how

Top Ten Tips For New Writers

much you might admire it, you will always appear fake. Find your own unique style, your own voice.

Know Your Subject

Write on topics you know about. Although that sounds obvious you don't have to look very far to find masses of people publishing articles when it is clear that they have very little idea about their subject matter. This type of writing appears thin, limp and unconvincing even to the untrained eye. You should aim for writing which has substance; a rounded, healthy thing with a life of its own. If, for some reason, you are obliged to write about a topic which is alien to you, make the effort to research it. If you can't get to the library, there is always the internet. There is no excuse for ignorance. There is no excuse for trying to foist a poorly researched article on your readers. Do you want your readers to point you out as someone who does not know what s/he is talking about?

Be interested

Write about things which interest you. If you are not interested in your subject matter, you have little hope of catching the interest of your reader. If you are in a situation where you simply have to write about a subject which holds no real interest for you, try at least to find an original angle; this could stimulate you as well as your reader. If you cannot spark even faint interest in your subject, your writing will be flat and boring.

Punctuate proudly

Don't be one of those people who pretend they don't think punctuation matters: it does. Ask your self this: if these people really believe that, why do they bother to punctuate at all? Why don't they just write on and on without any dots or commas? That, surely, is more logical than putting in dots and commas in the wrong places. The truth is, they are too lazy to learn the rules of punctuation and think they can get away with this by brushing punctuation off as unimportant. Punctuation has had a very bad time over the last forty years or so but I believe it is about to undergo a revival. These things go in cycles and it seems that punctuation is about to have its day at last. Correct punctuation could be the new black. If you don't believe this, how do you explain why so many thousands of people bought "Eats, Shoots & Leaves"? Even if you have no interest in creating elegant prose, you should learn about punctuation . Without it your writing will at best be difficult to read and at worst not make sense. You will be left wondering why people are laughing at your serious work.

Respect the apostrophe

I know, I know, this is part of punctuation. I happen to think that apostrophes have spent so long being either ignored or abused they now deserve a mention of their own. I can cope quite well with commas and full stops appearing in the wrong place but an incorrectly inserted apostrophe makes me see red. Why do so many people insist on using the apostrophe when they clearly have no idea of its function? Beats me. An improperly placed apostrophe is to writing what a huge, ugly wart is to the nose on a beautiful face. Cruel people will point and laugh at you. You think I am exaggerating? If I am part of a minority on this point, why did so many people buy "Eats, Shoots & Leaves" that it became Book of the Year? Perhaps they thought it was a story about a panda.

Top Ten Tips For New Writers

Get great grammar

The rules of grammar are not difficult. In the olden days even little kids were taught grammar at school. Like mathematical tables, grammar is no longer treated as an important subject. Most people can get through life without missing the tables which were once memorised by every child who ever went to school. People now have electronic calculators to do their mathematical thinking for them but nothing has replaced the need to understand basic grammar. Please don't make the mistake of relying on the "grammar check" on your word processor: I am not saying that this tool is entirely without merit but, if you do not know the rules yourself, you can create hilarious results by going along with the recommendations of your word processing package. Another good thing about the rules of grammar is that they don't keep changing so, once you learn the rules, they will stand you in good stead for the whole of your writing career. Along with punctuation, it is grammar which determines whether or not your writing makes sense. If you don't know the rules, you will not know if your writing makes sense but other people will, believe me. (Back to pointing and laughing again.)

Spell well

You need to be able to spell in order to write properly. If punctuation is the putty in your windows,

spelling is the bricks out of which your house is built. If you don't have bricks, you cannot build yourself a house. You will probably find this hard to believe but spelling used to be taught in schools in the olden days. Nowadays most people who write do so on a word processor with a spell check function. It is apparent that many of these people do not bother to use their spell checker. This sort of laziness cannot be excused. At the same time, you should not rely entirely on the spell checker: it is only a machine trying to guess what word you have scrambled. If you are not sure about a word, look it up in a dictionary: it never hurts to know the correct meaning of words as well as the correct spelling. Never forget that spell check will take your words out of context: if you type "He sold his soul to Santa", you can't blame the spell checker for not knowing you really meant "Satan". People would snigger cruelly if you failed to correct this.

Keep to the point

Never make the mistake of padding out your writing with unnecessary or irrelevant details. Keep to the subject announced in your title, after all, the title is probably what attracted the reader in the first place. If the body of your work does not relate to the expectation aroused by the title, the reader will feel tricked and nobody likes that feeling – your reader will move on to read somebody s/he can trust. Do not attempt to pad out your writing with unnecessary words: inserting a few adverbs or adjectives to boost the word-count never works and makes the article difficult to read. Keep it simple, whether people are reading for pleasure or enlightenment, they will not appreciate lumpy prose and they are not reading your work to marvel at your cleverness or your vocabulary. If you run out of things to say before your work is the length you wish to achieve, you are writing on the wrong subject or from the wrong angle.

Read and revise

Top Ten Tips For New Writers

Boring but essential. However much we enjoy the writing process, reading the end product over and over and making changes is not what we want to be doing. We would rather be starting the next article which is bubbling up in our brains but we have to read, re-read, revise and revise again. It is easy to make mistakes particularly if you have written something over a long period. If you do not correct your mistakes before publication, you will lose the trust of your audience. (I never got over the fact that one of my favourite authors accidentally changed the date of birth of a main character half way through a novel. How could I ever believe in his people if they had moveable birthdays?) If you were a carpenter, you would not offer your customer an unfinished piece of furniture. If you were a tailor you would not offer your customer an unpressed garment. The author should not dream of offering the reader an unpolished piece of writing.

Sleep on it

Don't be in a rush to publish your work the minute it is finished. Let it rest. If it is ready for publication, it will still be ready tomorrow but, if it is not quite ready, you will have given yourself a chance to make a final amendment. This is particularly relevant when you are writing shorter things. If you have spent months redrafting a novel, you are likely to know if you have satisfactorily completed the final draft but it is easy to knock out and send off short items such as articles or letters and then regret our haste. There is always scope for improvement and what looks like a work of art in the evening glow, might not appear so well in the cold morning light.

Pay attention to detail

If you do not pay attention to detail, you will not discover your errors and there will be plenty of people out there who will be delighted to pick out and highlight the smallest error. Some people just can't help themselves: it is the way they are made (the way I react when a menu offers me a choice of "Salad's" – salad's what?). Other people are just waiting to see you trip yourself up. Don't give them the satisfaction: get things right before they start pointing and you will have the last laugh. If you have realised that this paragraph is number eleven of my top ten and are already laughing – Well Done! If you did not notice – see what I mean?

This is one of a series of articles about working from home and writing published by the author, Elaine Currie, BA(Hons) at

Ten Quick Tips for Inexperienced Writers

By V. Berba Velasco Jr., Ph.D.

Ten Quick Tips for Inexperienced Writers by V. Berba Velasco Jr., Ph.D.

One of the biggest problems that inexperienced writers have is simply knowing how to get started. If you're unsure of your writing skills, then here are some quick tips to help you get started.

1. Get yourself a thesaurus—or better yet, two of them. These can be tremendously helpful tools when

Top Ten Tips For New Writers

you're struggling to find the right word. A thesaurus is no substitute for a solid vocabulary, but it is still helpful in a pinch.

2. Avoid using the same word too frequently. This can make one's work sound repetitive. Again, a good thesaurus can be helpful in this regard.

3. Keep your sentences fairly short, since longer sentences can sound unwieldy. I've found that 17 words or fewer is a good guideline. Do remember that this is just a guideline, though.

4. Even as you keep the sentences short, make sure that they flow together well. Sometimes, unskilled writers will simply chop longer sentences up into shorter segments that don't blend together smoothly. If in doubt, try rephrasing the sentences or adding the proper connective phrases (e.g. "then," "so," "as a result").

5. Get a copy of "The Elements of Style" by Strunk and White. It's a short book, but incredibly helpful. There is no better reference for aspiring writers.

6. Don't rely too much on your word processor's grammar checking features. They can be quite impressive, but their capabilities are still quite limited. Spelling checkers are also limited in their capabilities, since they cannot recognize a lot of proper names and technical terms. In addition, spell checkers cannot detect situations wherein the user has entered the wrong word in place of the proper one.

7. Proofread, proofread and proofread... over and over. When you're done, have a friend proofread your work as well.

8. Remember your target audience. Ask yourself, "What information will my audience require in order to understand what I'm saying?"

9. Avoid clever wordplay unless you're sure that it will work. In most cases, it is best to gain more writing experience before trying something witty.

10. Remember the artists adage, "Practice, practice, practice"? If you want to become good at writing, then write, write and write!

V. Berba Velasco Jr., Ph.D. is a senior electrical and software engineer at Cellular Technology Ltd (

,

,

), where he also has various

technical writing duties.

Related Content:

Read more Content at

Related Products:

: A genuine resource center for Quality Ebooks and Softwares



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!