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WRITING TO EXCEL

By **ARTHUR ZULU**

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Word Count: 600

Web Address: <http://www.1stbooks.com/bookview/10975>

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WRITING TO EXCEL

By Arthur Zulu

"Of all the arts in which the mind excel", says one writer, "nature's chief masterpiece is writing well". But before we begin writing our best seller, I will ask you to re-read the beginning of this book. Or do you still remember those negative questions often asked by novices?

Well, I would want to assume you have outlived the "nattering nabobs of negativism" (by Spiro Agnew), and are now set to write. Some, however, have asked the following questions, and the answers will help you get started.

What Do I Need to Write?

Simple. Use the traditional materials -- pen and paper. I prefer them. The reason is that it is easier for me to put my thoughts in writing as fast as they come. It makes the work more natural, honest and unpretentious. And you also know that a notebook and a pen, are very portable. You could be doing your thing while seated in a bus, train, or plane (without the terrorists).

But if you can type as fast as you think, a typewriter or even the computer is okay. So, what is sauce for the goose, may not be sauce for the gander. The important thing here is, use a writing means that

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can get your thought down as fast as it comes. Shorthand and pictographs are excellent.

What is the Best Time and Place to Write?

You know what is best for you. Some write in the morning, others prefer late at night. Some like quiet, lonely places, while others would not mind the radio on! Some have even tried to rouse their imagination through drugs and alcohol! And they say it works fine for them.

Well, I don't require any intoxicants to write. And I wouldn't ask you to take them in order to excel. What you need, however, is a conducive place and time. As for me, I write anywhere, anytime I get the muse.

You would have to know that the muses transcend borders and physical disabilities. Some have written books in prison— ask Wole Soyinka, the Nobel laureate. He did one in prison, titled *THE MAN DIED*.

What About Sources?

"Writing is thinking, and thinking is work," says Robert Bolt who wrote *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS*. Yes, you are going to think— think a lot. You will go into meditation and see "visions", (I don't mean to make you a prophet.)

Now, do you know how Mary Shelley came to write *FRANKENSTEIN*? She was holidaying in Switzerland with her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, the poet Lord Byron and another named Polidori. After familiarizing themselves with ghost stories, Lord Byron came up with the proposition: "We will each write a ghost story".

Then each went to dream dreams, and Mary Shelley thought that to excel, she had to dream up the scariest story ever. And she beat them all with *FRANKENSTEIN*, the weirdest story before *HARRY PORTER*. Even Joseph, the dreamer, couldn't have dreamt better. And her story became a classic!

So, having chosen the genre you want to write about, think of the best-selling book in that category. And aim to smash its record! Persevere in your dream, and when it has taken form, put it down in writing.

But you cannot dream in abstraction. Your first source of material is reading. Yes, be a voracious reader. You may read for pleasure, or on purpose. Read anything that interests you -- newspapers, magazines, story, and scientific books.

And as you read, ask yourself: What is the writer saying? Why is he saying it? How is he saying it? The answers you get will help you comprehend, interpret and appreciate the book, together with the writer's use of language.

You also have another source -- observation. How do you observe things? Do you look at them closely? Or do you just take a cursory look? You may have missed a great discovery.

Now, come to think of it. Which invention was ever made without a keen observation followed by an

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inference -- from cause to effect, or from effect to cause.

Remember Isaac Newton observing a falling apple (gravity), Archimedes jumping out of a pool of water and solving the riddle of the king's crown (Eureka!), or Mungo Park following the river course and "discovering" the River Niger (I saw with infinite pleasure the great object of my mission....)

So, in your daily activities, make it a habit to observe closely; who knows, right in your garden, you may discover the remains of an extinct dinosaur!

Third, you would have to draw materials from your personal life experiences -- what you have seen or heard of people, places and things. Who was it that said experience is the best teacher?

He was probably right. People have written masterpieces and autobiographies based on their life experiences. Like Charles Darwin. Like Nelson Mandela.

So, what you are as a person, called the "persona", and your life experiences must reflect in your work, whether you call it fiction, or non-fiction. And since books are a combination of facts and fiction, some

have invented the coinage--fiction, to represent the middle ground.

You have another last source of information -- interview people, ask questions.

No man is a repository of knowledge, and if you do not have an inquisitive mind, you will continue to wallow in ignorance, which itself is a disease.

So, ask questions to get the information you seek, and follow with more questions to clarify the answers. Do not be timid, shy, or proud, to know. Remember that knowledge is power. Remember also that Socrates, the great philosopher, asked to know. And remember the words of Rene Descartes: "Dare to know!"

At this stage, I must mention the importance of the diary. Yes, carry one about, and make a daily entry of materials you like to use as they come. It may be of what you read, see or hear. And you must learn to be patient. Writers are the most disciplined persons on earth. I wrote a book in ten years!

Do not be frightened at that prospect. I wrote one also in six months. So, have a strong desire, and finish what you start!

Also note as you are going to write, that you are going to be a philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist, all in one.

You are going to invent characters and interpret their actions. You are going to create, and destroy civilizations. That is the might of the pen.

And as we now begin to write our best-seller in the next chapter, remember these words of Sir Francis Bacon: "Reading maketh a man, conference a ready man, and writing, an exact man".

I totally agree with him. What about you?

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About the Author:

ARTHUR ZULU, The Most Controversial Writer in the World, is the author of the best - selling book, HOW TO WRITE A BEST-SELLER. Download your copy and FREE excerpt at :

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For FREE writing helps, [mailto : controversialwriter@yahoo.com](mailto:controversialwriter@yahoo.com)

ARTHUR ZULU, The Most Controversial Writer in the World, is the author of the best - selling book, HOW TO WRITE A BEST-SELLER.

Excelling with Online Marketing

By Richard Kraneis

Do you want to build a successful online business?

Then start using online math and use Microsoft Excel.

I've written an e-book this year that sells at a profit. In fact, I've written 2 e-books that sell at a profit (I'm thankful to all my Internet friends who have helped me.). I can't imagine anyone selling anything on the Internet without using Excel to keep score on profits and performance.

Are you making a profit or running at a loss? A plain old Excel spreadsheet (or Lotus) will get the job done for you. Are there any trends in profits (or losses) for your online venture? Excel graphs make it easy to see (and sometimes predict) trends.

When you started your venture, how did you estimate the demand for your product on the Internet? I did research on Overture to predict the volume of my Google paid click impressions. Using Excel was a key part of that process.

Whenever I make an e-book sale I add it to my Excel sales database. I click on an Excel macro button that automatically re-formats my email sales notification into a record in my e-book sales Excel database.

Over the past year I've used a powerful Excel technique called a pivot table to analyze my e-book sales database. This is what I learned about my e-book sales:

1)Tuesday was my slowest e-book sales day. I corrected the sales problem by mass mailing offers on Tuesdays. Tuesdays are better now.

2)My e-books have sold in over 37 countries. But 90% of my sales came from just 5 countries.

Solution? I adjusted my advertising mix to better spend my advertising dollars.

3)Finally, men purchase about 70% of my e-books. Women purchase 20% and 10% of purchases are from unknown genders (people that use initials only). Solution? None yet. Women just aren't buying my e-book as much as I'd like. But if I find a great copywriter who needs to learn more about Excel I'm in business. We can trade.

Would you like to find an unexpected ally for "Excelling with Online Marketing"? Just check your personal computer. If you have Excel (or Lotus) than you already have a great tool for tracking not only online marketing profits but all kinds of online marketing performance. Build a simple spreadsheet for tracking your weekly profits and then advance to other techniques for measuring online marketing performance.

So, that's it for today. I know that I'm just a first year online marketer and have much to learn. But, I'm

"Excelling" with Online Marketing and you should too.

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Richard Kraneis is a computer training consultant, e-book author, and an aspiring online marketer. Online marketing on the Internet reminds him of his favorite hobby, fishing. His website is

. You can reach him at

. (He's looking for a great, up and coming copywriter for future projects.)

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