

GETTING STARTED

There are so many different ways to write. Some writers work a consistent fifty hours a week and set a word target, some create in brief and fierce flurries of activity. Some writers know their plot exactly and walk their characters through it and some watch their characters run off in all directions and struggle to keep up with them.

There's no right way of writing but there are simple things you can do to improve your chances of writing something others might want to read.

1. Read contemporary work. Weirdly people write and don't read much. Knowledge of your industry and the writers who have already succeeded is vital.
2. Understand that you are writing for an audience. Look for opportunities to get opinions on your writing. Professional writers, tutors, and members of your writing group will offer informed critique but motivated readers will be your customers if you get to print.
3. Take every available opportunity for professional development. Workshops, training, tutorial and readings will arm your practice. Forums, author talks and other industry related events are invaluable. Working in a bubble is not healthy for you or your writing.
4. Get qualified. Generally, most creative writing courses are pretty good. There is an industrial aesthetic where you may find more opportunities and networks. It proves passion, effort and investment if nothing else. Any writer, like any artist, needs to invest time and resources into learning and honing your craft. 'Natural talent' is rarely enough. All writing courses are a good way of focusing and refining the craft of writing.
5. Find your voice. You may be influenced by loads of brilliant writers who you fall in and out of love with as you develop. It can be hard to find a unique voice but you are unreadable unless you do.
6. Try different forms and experiment. A writer for screen can fall in love with stage and then the short story. Novelists become poets and writers are allowed to switch forms if they are prepared to do the leg work.
7. Write. So many writers find excuses not to write. If you can't find time to write you don't want it enough.

8. Beware of rules. There are loads of rules repeated verbatim in classrooms, on writing websites and in writers' groups. People are told to edit out half the adjectives, never use words with more than three syllables, only use short paragraphs.

9. Have a thick skin. You will be rejected. You might have the qualification, the unique voice, be loved by your peers and even written a very marketable work and still no publisher is remotely interested in you. You have to have a bit of faith in your ability and keep going.

10. Enjoy it. What else is there to do?

