

Famous Quotes: Writing

We would like to offer a list of famous quotes dealing with issues related to writing.

They are meant to provide a source of advice and inspiration.

Enjoy.

Thinking

First, I do not sit down at my desk to put into verse something that is already clear in my mind. If it were clear in my mind, I should have no incentive or need to write about it. We do not write in order to be understood; we write in order to understand. - Robert Cecil Day-Lewis

Writing crystallizes thought and thought produces action. - Paul J. Meyer

I never know what I think about something until I read what I've written on it. - William Faulkner

I write to teach myself what I already know. - Duane Alan Hahn

NOT Writing

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by. - Douglas Adams

It takes an awful long time to not write a book. - Douglas Adams

"Talent is long patience." -- Gustave Flaubert

"What's more important: Talent or Persistence? Talent is more important, but useless, in the majority of cases, without persistence." -- Unknown (to me)

If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There's no way around these two things that I'm aware of, no shortcut. -- Stephen King, On Writing

The scariest moment is always just before you start. After that, things can only get better. -- Stephen King, On Writing

Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can see only as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way. -- E.L. Doctorow

My older brother was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write, which was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird." -- Anne Lamott, Bird by Bird

A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit. - Richard Bach

Pen, paper, perseverance, and proficiency. - Duane Alan Hahn

Rewriting and Revising

The first draft of anything is always shit - Ernest Hemingway

Put down everything that comes into your head and then you're a writer. But an author is one who can judge his own stuff's worth, without pity, and destroy most of it. - Colette

A book should be luminous not voluminous. - Christian Nevell Bovee

There's a great power in words, if you don't hitch too many of them together. - Josh Billings

I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil. - Truman Capote

Review. Reread. Rewrite. - From the book How to Write Better in One Hour by George Mair

Rereading reveals rubbish and redundancy. - Duane Alan Hahn

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do. - Thomas Jefferson

Good things, when short, are twice as good. - Baltasar Gracian

It is my ambition to say in ten sentences; what others say in a whole book. - Friedrich Nietzsche

Rewriting ripens what you've written. - Duane Alan Hahn

Inspiration

No, it's not a very good story - its author was too busy listening to other voices to listen as closely as he should have to the one coming from inside. - Stephen King

I write when I'm inspired, and see to it that I'm inspired at nine o'clock every morning. - Peter De Vries

The world is not made up of atoms; it's made up of stories. - Muriel Rukeyser

Amusing

Some editors are failed writers, but so are most writers. - T S Eliot

I think I did pretty well, considering I started out with nothing but a bunch of blank paper. - Steve Martin

The reason why so few good books are written is that so few people who can write know anything.
-Walter Bagehot

Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing. - Benjamin Franklin

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork. - Peter De Vries

It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous. - Robert Benchley

If you describe things as better than they are, you are considered to be a romantic; if you describe things as worse than they are, you will be called a realist; and if you describe things exactly as they are, you will be thought of as a satirist. - Quentin Crisp

If you steal from one author, it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research. - Wilson Mizner

Writing Style

One gains universal applause who mingles the useful with the agreeable, at once delighting and instructing the reader. - Horace

Never be so brief as to become obscure. - Tryon Edwards

Writers should be read, but neither seen nor heard. - Daphne Du Maurier

Good prose is like a window pane. - George Orwell

Anyone who wishes to become a good writer should endeavour, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous and lucid. - Henry Watson Fowler

We are as much informed of a writer's genius by what he selects as by what he originates. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

The secret of good writing is to say an old thing in a new way or to say a new thing in an old way. - Richard Harding Davis

The most original of authors are not so because they advance what is new, but more because they know how to say something, as if it had never been said before. - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Selling Your Ideas

If you want to inspire confidence, give plenty of statistics. It does not matter that they should be accurate, or even intelligible, as long as there is enough of them. - Lewis Carroll

Writing is not the lottery. New writers have to be realistic about what it takes to get published. But there is one similarity to the lottery: You have to play to win. - Lori Perkins, literary agent

Understand, too, that things get rejected for a lot of reasons. Your writing may be wonderful - it may be your timing, your subject, or an editor's quirks that get between you and a sale. -- Elizabeth Berg, *Escaping into the Open*

To write what is worth publishing, to find honest people to publish it, and get sensible people to read it, are the three great difficulties in being an author. - Charles Caleb Colton

General Writing Advice

Keep in mind that you're more interested in what you have to say than anyone else. – Andy Rooney

While tight with concentration on what is being written, the writer has a thought, an insight, a partially articulate concept. The natural response is to think, "I can't stop what I am writing. I'll remember the idea," and continue writing. The writer is wrong. He will not remember it. The thought, the insight, the concept will disappear. It may return, but you will not need it then, or recall when it might have been appropriate.

Insights and perceptions pass through the mind like fleet fireflies. Lit for an instant, then gone back into the dark. They are precious, irreplaceable. Stop what you are writing and write them into a notebook, onto a napkin, a scrap of paper. ANYWHERE. They are more important than what you are writing now. What you are writing now is there. It is visible, tangible. You will not lose the mood, the flow, the roll.

From the book Dare to be a Great Writer: 329 Keys to Powerful Fiction by Leonard Bishop

Write it, even if you think it's terrible. Don't prevent yourself from jotting down a word, phrase, or paragraph just because it "isn't quite right" or "it won't work." Maybe it will, maybe it won't, but it's better to write it down, you can always edit later. And you don't want to stop yourself before you even get started! The point isn't to use everything you write. You can't be expected to pop out perfect prose your first time out! Write now, edit later. - Cristine Grace (adapted)