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# My Current Writing Routine... And Why it Rocks!

A writing routine, complete with pens and keyboards, that you might want to adopt



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I sat down to work on my current WIP novel, but then decided in a split second to write this instead. Not very disciplined of me, sure, but I'll get back to my book after dinner or something. For now, I'm going to give you a glimpse of my current writing process, hoping maybe some of what I do will work for you and your writing.

I know some YouTubers will mimic some famous author of the past or present, and use their writing routine for the video and as a personal experiment. I don't think I could do that, because my mind is filled with too much chaos to shove it into the Stephen-King-routine-box or the how-Arthur-C.-Clarke-plotted-a-novel-box. What I did, however, is pick some ideas from multiple sources to see what works for me.

And since my mind is such a little chaos agent, who knows how long I'll stick with my current routine? It's a bit like my cooking, I suppose. I learn how to cook a dish from a recipe, but then every subsequent cooking I do something different. Maybe

different spices, maybe weird substitutions, or maybe I just feel like winging it with every part of the dish.

Maybe I'll do that with my writing routine. For each book, I'll toss some practices in and others out. I'll be an ever-evolving writing maniac person. A chaos agent behind a keyboard and pen.

### **The Seed**

Each of my stories, novels, and articles starts with one brief flash of a vision in my mind. It could be a word, a quick scene, or an exchange between two people. It's a flash unlike a normal thought that just pops into one's head. It's more of a not-at-all-formed-yet-still-a-movie scene in a story that is fully formed in the dark recesses of my subconscious. It's as if I've already written it, but cannot see or recall the story beyond the scene.

But I know it's already there, so it's time to dig.

### **The Pen**

I use a fountain pen to dig into the solid piece of granite that is my brain and I push into the darkness to uncover the story. There's something visceral about writing on paper with a pen or pencil that typing on a keyboard cannot replicate.

I don't know if it's a personal thing, or if there's some scientific evidence suggesting keyboards are too far away from one's mind when compared to how close pen and paper sits. What I know is that it works for me. Picking up my freshly filled (with some fun ink color) fountain pen and bound journal of the German or French variety, I'm ready to coax that story out of the dark.

Sometimes I just dump my brain out in a stream-of-consciousness journaling session about the story. I'll write questions and their answers, often without thinking about either for very long. I'll write a whole-ass idea and then scrap it in the next sentence, sometimes with a reason and other times without. Bullet lists, pros and cons lists, and sometimes I even doodle on the page. Sometimes I even write out entire scenes by hand, exactly how I would type them.

Writing in this analog way does something to my brain. The pen I hold in my hand works as a conduit, providing a direct link from my brain to the pages of my journal. As the pen moves, it tugs on the connection, coaxing more words from all levels of my brain and subconscious onto the page.

Why use a fountain pen? Maybe I just love writing with them. Yep, that's it! I was curious about fountain pens one day, so I got one. From that moment forward, I would happily bear the title of *Pen Snob*.

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up one or more journals with brilliant prose mixed in the muck. Now it's time to join the present age and get this — book, short story, article/rant — into my computer and also two clouds to create redundancy and protect my sanity.

I sometimes spent my time at the keyboard in the creative space, bringing a skeleton of a scene idea to life on my refurbished giant computer monitor. Other times I've just acted like an old-fashioned Xerox, being a good typist and copying my hand-written wonders into binary code stored on a drive. I find both fulfilling and useful, because it's all part of writing a story. Though even when I'm just copying what I already wrote by hand, I still do edits as I type.

So really, it's all writing and revising as I go until it's all typed in and fully created (in a very unfinished state). Even when it's done, though, it's not done.

### Wait & Repeat

I try to give myself time after finishing the draft before I go back for reading and revisions. The time I put between myself and my work — it's giving yourself a fresh set of eyes after taking your mind off that work of writing — depends on how big the work is. If it's a novel, at least a month, but preferably three to twelve. If I'm working on a short article or short fiction, I might give myself only a couple of hours before I jump back into it.

With my head thusly cleared, I begin the revision step. This is usually just reading and thinking and taking notes, so I know where to look for or how to fix something.

Then I do it all over again. I'll set the work aside for a time and come back to it with a clear head. On each revision pass, I'll do things like a developmental edit, fleshing out scenes or fixing inadequate description, general feel pass, grammar check, proofreading, and so on. The time each of these takes purely depends on what I'm writing. A 1200 word short story about a robot that burns cigars onto you in no discernible pattern probably doesn't even need the developmental edit pass. The story is right there in your face.

The amount of times I do this entire wait & repeat loop depends on if my writing is good enough to ship.

## The End



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The work might never be done, but there comes a time when it's ready to ship. Whether it goes out to an editor for publication, or if I self-publish it on Kindle or Medium, or pack it away never to see the light of day again, there comes a time to end it.

The story. End the story.

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