

Resources for Writers

Writing is by definition a solitary endeavor, but that doesn't mean you're in it alone.

Here's a list of resources that will help you every step of the way – whether you're looking for writing tips, information on the publishing world, the support of a writing group, or expert editorial feedback.

Writing Conferences

Writing conferences are a great place to get feedback on your work, make connections with agents and editors, pick up inside writing tips, meet other writers, and come away inspired, rejuvenated, and ready to write. For a comprehensive list of national and international writing conferences, with links to each, check out:

<http://www.newpages.com/writing-conferences/>

Writing Groups

It can be enormously rewarding to be part of a writing group that meets regularly, if for no other reason than that nothing focuses the mind quite like a rapidly approaching deadline. While it's important to find the right group for you, the benefit of getting feedback and encouragement from a group of dedicated, supportive, and insightful fellow writers is enormous. If you're in the U.S., here's a great place to start your search – it's a list of more than 300 writers groups, organizations and associations by state:

<http://www.squidoo.com/localwritersassociationsbystate>

Writers Websites

The Internet is a writers' dream – endless information, thriving communities, and a gazillion blogs. Start poking around and see what's out there that captures your interest (But be advised: it can be addictive.) Some of my favorite writing destinations include:

Publishing:

- Publishers Weekly – The seminal magazine of the publishing trade.
<http://publishersweekly.com/>
- GalleyCat – News, gossip and insight about the ever evolving publishing industry.
<http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/>
- Publishers Marketplace – A fabulous resource for information on what's happening in the publishing world. Also, a terrific source when you begin your agent search.
Publishersmarketplace.com

Writing:

- Writer Unboxed – Essays on the craft and business of writing by contributors from all walks, from the not-yet-published to bestselling authors and industry leaders. <http://writerunboxed.com/>
- Jane Friedman – From the former publisher of Writer's Digest and current web editor of the Virginia Quarterly Review, Jane's easy to navigate site covers everything you need to know about writing, reading, and publishing in the digital age. <http://janefriedman.com/>
- Writer's Digest – One of the best resources for writers on the web, and publisher of the one of the most respected writing magazines – Writer's Digest. <http://www.writersdigest.com/>
- Miss Snark – Okay, yes, this one ceased way back in 2007, but it remains one of the most savvy, entertaining, and informative writing blogs out there. Run by an anonymous agent – aka Miss Snark – it's heartbreakingly funny, and utterly spot on. <http://misssnark.blogspot.com/>

Books on Writing and Publishing

There are hundreds of books on writing out there. Here are a few that you might find especially helpful, whether you're trying to hone your craft, looking for a publisher, or struggling with writer's block.

- *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* by Anne Lamott <http://amzn.to/WbKbAF>
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King <http://amzn.to/UtuUgV>
- *Nail Your Novel: Why Writers Abandon Books and How You Can Draft, Fix and Finish With Confidence* by Roz Morris bit.ly/hdv4zo
- *The Art and Craft of Fiction: A Practitioner's Manual* by Victoria Mixon <http://victoriamixon.com/books/>
- *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide To Character Expression* by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi <http://amzn.to/TzXb6x>
- *The Essential Guide to Getting Your Book Published* by Arielle Eckstut and David Henry Sterry <http://amzn.to/10Wtykb>
- *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* by Steven Pressfield <http://amzn.to/RyWnzU>
- *Wired for Story: The Writer's Guide to Using Brain Science to Hook Readers From the Very First Sentence* by Lisa Cron <http://amzn.to/xKZhHr>

Writing Consultants

At a certain point, every writer needs an expert eye on their manuscript. It's never too early to bring in a seasoned pro to help you make sure your story is on track and stays there. I do story consulting myself and would love to hear from you. I also recommend the following four top notch consultants.

- Caroline Leavitt – Author of nine novels and instructor in the UCLA Extension Writers' Program and Stanford's Online Writer's Studio, Caroline works with novelists and memoirists.
<http://www.carolineleavitt.com/home.htm>
- Elisabeth Lyon – Author of six books on writing, Elisabeth offers guidance, editing, and in-depth feedback on novels, query letters, nonfiction books, and proposals.
<http://elizabethlyon.com/>
- Victoria Mixon – Author of two books on writing, Victoria works with writers working on novels, short stories, poetry, narrative nonfiction, memoir, autobiography, trade nonfiction, textbooks, articles, and essays. <http://victoriamixon.com/>
- Jennie Nash – Author of three novels and three memoirs and instructor at the UCLA Extension Writer's Program, Jennie coaches writers at all stages of development, whether working on novels, memoirs, nonfiction books, proposals, self publishing, or marketing.
<http://jennienash.com/>

Literary Agents

If you are interested in landing a traditional publishing deal, you'll need an agent to get in the door. In order to pitch an agent, you write what's known as a query letter and if they like the sound of your novel, they'll ask to read it. If upon reading it, they think they can sell it to a publisher, they will offer to represent you – for a percentage of the proceeds of the book. Note that reputable agents never request a fee for evaluating a manuscript. Also note that the time to look for an agent is when you have a finished, polished manuscript that's as perfect as you can make it. When you're ready, here are a few incredibly helpful resources:

- The Guide to Literary Agents Blog, one of the biggest blogs in publishing, is run by Chuck Sambuchino, an editor and published author who works for Writer's Digest Books. The site has instruction and information on literary agents, literary agencies, query letters, submissions, publishing, author platform, book marketing, and more.
<http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/guide-to-literary-agents>
- AgentQuery.com is a database that lets you search for agents by keyword, so you can pinpoint agents who represent the kind of work you do. There is an excellent description of how to write a query letter in their informational pages. <http://www.agentquery.com/>

- AgentTracker.com is a similar database with the added benefit of allowing you to track your submissions. You can also search specifically for agents who are accepting new clients.
<http://querytracker.net/>
- PublishersMarketplace.com – Browsing their information laden agent's pages can be incredibly fruitful – take it from me. I found my fabulous agent, Laurie Abkemeier, that way.
<http://publishersmarketplace.com/browse.html>
- Predators and Editors. And finally, just to be sure you're on the right track, use this site to double check whether or not the agent you have selected is, in fact, reputable.
<http://pred-ed.com/>