

# FREE FIRST STEPS WRITING COURSE



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[\[Download My FREE Introductory Creative Writing Course as a Zip file \(42kb\)\]](#)

Nice to hear from you and welcome to our FREE First Steps writing course - as far as we know the ONLY one of its type on the internet by a prolific writer. A couple of teaching institutions (even a film school that teaches scriptwriting) in the States have been very encouraging about our CREATIVE WRITING COURSES. I see more learning institutions around the globe linking to our site. This has been very encouraging and exciting for my technical "geek" associate Bill and I based here in "Sleepy Hollow" in "Godzone" (as New Zealand is affectionately known).

There has been great interest in our courses since we started about four years ago (the "ORIGINAL AND FAMOUS" online creative writing course) and it has been extensively developed. Far better, I think... even if I say so myself! We are offering the first Course FREE and the Twelve lessons of the Introductory Creative Writing Course will be accessible on payment. We are requesting a nominal (funny word that 'nominal') fee of U.S \$69\* for the INTRODUCTORY COURSE of 12 lessons.

You can pay directly by credit card on our secure site. It's perfectly safe (and painless too. OUCH!). Otherwise a bank draft made out to C.Lock can be forwarded to me at:

Eagle Productions  
2 Elm St  
Gisborne 3815  
New Zealand

You can do the lessons at any time which suits you and forward to me. We realise all of you have different time constraints to do the course. Therefore please feel free to do each lesson at your own pace.

We have had many participants from all over the world since starting the first course about four years ago; however I am committed to responding to every submission. I have put my own books aside to give my undivided attention, time and energies to this course. My technical associate, Bill and I do appreciate hearing from you and reading your work. I believe everyone has a story to tell within themselves... just waiting for the time and opportunity... but most of all, we have to have the drive and dedication to get it down on paper.

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I firmly believe we can use all our experiences in life to our benefit (financially and otherwise), but most of all to reach out and touch others. That is what I have tried to do in my various books.

We all have unique styles and individual ways of getting our messages across - sharing through the written word.. You give me the inspiration to keep developing the course, so that we can all learn and grow from each others life experiences.- through sharing and interacting (big word, eh!). It's through YOUR participation and submissions that make this online writing course worthwhile. Phew! .. Well, your turn now...

Hope this helps you in stimulating your creative juices, and I look forward to hearing from you again soon. I'm sure we'll have fun getting to know each other and learning from one another as we go along the course.

"Whatever, you want to do or dream you can do, the hardest part is making a beginning. Once you take that first step in following your passion, the rest will follow naturally ... and lead to who know's where." -- me-

### **How it Works and What Next!**

Great you have made it this far! Well this Course is taste for our main courses.

**Introduction to Creative Writing**

**Advanced Creative Writing**

**All you need to do is to Print out the lessons or read them on your Browser.**

Then complete the Homework Assignment and Submit to [clock@xtra.co.nz](mailto:clock@xtra.co.nz) for Craigs expert advice and encouragement.

The Course will work on most computers (PC and Mac) from 486 and running windows 95 onwards as long as you have some sort of WWW Browser such as IE 3.0, NS Communicator 3.0, Opera 3.0 or Neoplanet or better. The course works offline as well as online, however to take full advantage of the interactive parts of the course you need access to the Internet.

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Last updated on January 4, 2001

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## Lesson 1: Introduction

What is creative writing?

I believe ALL writing is creative (a nice short sentence to get the ball rolling).

Journalism is a different form of writing in that it merely reports the facts of a particular event.

However, I believe even journalism can fall under the banner of creative writing; because it still utilises one's imagination in HOW you **choose** to report an event and the **style you choose** to write in (more on style coming up in a later lesson).

Journalism is meant to be completely objective, yet often the biases of reporters come through in their writing.

It is very hard to avoid that.

To be a published writer is one of the most rewarding occupations and pastimes - both financially and creatively.

I find it a very satisfying and enjoyable activity.

What do you want out of this writing course?

A few points please!

I can't teach you how to write, let alone how to be a writer.

I don't have all the answers.

All I can do is give you some tips and guidelines that I've learnt over the years (starting from the beginning of my writing "career" with writing "stirring" letters to newspapers in South Africa), which hopefully will make it a lot easier...

if that is what you really want to do.

They are all based on what I have learnt by doing it myself - usually through the long process of trial and error.

I hope this information is interesting and helpful to you in your quest to be a writer and getting published.

Firstly (and most importantly)...

There are no ABC's in writing - there is no set formula, which guarantees success.

Everyone is a unique individual with their own gifts: their experiences, perspectives and highly individual style of writing.

I believe having the ability to put words down on paper is only the beginning to writing.

There is a great deal more to be learned on the techniques, which I've developed over the years. Hopefully, by the end of this course, you'll be able to look back and see how much your writing has progressed (nearly all participants on the course say this, which gives me great gratification - nice long word that, like marmalade!).

We all have our own particular style of writing. As you'll see, I use a particular style in this course, however the style in my novels is completely different. In this course I try to inform and entertain at the same time, through "light, breezy" writing (no wind, please!).

My main aim in this course is to help develop your unique style of putting words to paper, as well as giving you some practical tips that I've learnt (especially from writing full-time for the last six years).

I believe that writing courses and workshops (such as offered by the polytechnics here in New Zealand) can improve your writing - as long as the basic talent, your gift is there. Online courses through the internet can be a great educational tool (at a greatly reduced cost). Well I have to say that, don't I?

All writing courses can help develop your skills by enhancing your creative powers, if you have the DESIRE to

learn and grow (even dwarfs!).  
I hope this course does the same for you.

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### Why do you want to be a writer?

What is your biggest motive you think?

Write a few sentences on this to clarify your thinking and give you something to aim for in your writing.

For example do you want to write for pleasure or for profit... or perhaps both

I find writing my thoughts down, focusses my thinking.

What are your attitudes to writing and what are your writing ambitions? What would you like to achieve in the future?

It's fine for your writing ambitions to change over time. Mine have changed drastically, as well as my “styles”; however right from the start I only wanted to write for publication.

For example, you might just want to "dabble" in a bit of writing for your own eyes, for pleasure; then write items for close friends or family members. Then a few years down the track, you might decide that you want to write articles on your particular hobby for magazines - for MONEY. *Wow!* Later perhaps even a book, as I believe we all have a tale to tell deep within us.

Write briefly (a paragraph or two) in answer to this question.

A few words on this subject, please. “Manners maketh man”. What kind of writer do you want to be?

Do you want to write for pleasure and/or for profit?

I believe if you write for pleasure, you’ll be happy doing what you like... and it often leads to profit naturally.

Because when you do something you are good at, it gives you enjoyment (or when you enjoy some activity you become better at it).

This can often lead to financial rewards.

Many top writers and other artists (yes, it is an art) earn very good money from doing what they love.

You’ve done well to get so far.



So take time out for a coffee break or a puff (no weed please!)

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Back to “work”...

What special skills, strengths and unique life experiences do you have to write about?

Do you think they are likely to be of interest to the readers out there?

I first starting writing , because I thought through my sharing of some unusual life experiences I may be able to help others in similar situations. My first manuscript (not yet published) was on *How to Cope with Stress and Nervous Tension* (a far cry from my present writing. Sob sob!).

Incidentally, the internet is a wonderful medium for instantly reaching people throughout the world.

The French and English developed steam technology at the same time; the

French created playthings for the aristocracy and the English created

the Industrial Revolution (but at least the "Froggies" have passion and

won the World Cup. So we can all use the internet to build a better

world. That is one of my missions.

Enough philosophising... this is supposed to be a creative writing course ...

Get back on track “fella”... Write **something on your areas of interest, hobbies and most importantly, your passions.**

What DRIVES you? Ford, Chevrolet or Mitsibushi?

I'm a very passionate type of person, so get driven to write about my passions- one of which is helping people (lucky you!).

In this internet writing course I hope to help you build on your natural writing talent by encouraging with positive and constructive advice (are they the same words?) .

What it takes to be a writer?

Write down the personal qualities you think are most essential to success.

What do you believe is the single most important one?

Now that you've done that, here are my thoughts...

Writing is probably the world's most solitary occupation. No wonder I've gone a trifle insane, stuck here writing in "Sleepy Hollow". But then, aren't the weirdest people those who think they are "normal". Anyway, what's normal? My dear mother often used to say to me the craziest people were those out of the "looney bin" (most un-PC, but I can say it, cos it's MY course). Enough digression... Stick to the point - the first rule of good writing! ... but you can break the rules occasionally (story of my life).

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### **What personal qualities do you need to be a writer?**

I think some of the most important ones are:

Motivation

Diligence

Perseverance

Determination

Organisation

Resilience

Confidence (use rejections to improve your writing by analysing what you could do better)

and

NB. **IMAGINATION**.

I believe that writing is a skill, which like other artistic skills, you can learn and develop with practice.

Just like an artist, sportsman, potter or artisan, the more you write, the better you will become.

Confidence breeds confidence and success breeds success.

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### **So write as often as you can, whenever you feel like it.**

I definitely feel that my writing abilities have improved dramatically in the last five long years since I have totally dedicated myself to the pursuit. My publishers seem to think so too.

I do not think that an aspiring writer needs any special educational qualifications or background to be a writer.

Writers come from all walks of life and from totally different backgrounds. It doesn't matter where in the world you are, big city or "hick town", you can write and share your thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Because writing is a relatively easy and inexpensive pursuit to get into, nearly everyone has the same opportunities to partake (nice word that, 'partake'. Must try to use it more often.).

Look at me, an insurance "misfit" travelling the world; therefore my writing career had better work, otherwise I'm totally "stuffed"!

A bit about my strange writing background (in case you are interested)...

The only family link with writing was my grandfather Billy who was a sports journalist.

My father was a life assurance salesman then rose to become a top executive.

My family always said that I should write, except being very ambitious for me (hopelessly misguided they were), they said there was no money in journalism (but far more than in writing books- me). My friends said I should write about my life experiences and I'd "make millions" (of the worthless Italian lire probably!).

However, how far you go (does that sound right?) with your creative writing will largely depend upon your own creative talent, IMAGINATION and application, ie. your ATTITUDE. For more on this subject see my books on



motivation, like *HOW TO SURVIVE THE NINETIES AND THE NEW MILLENNIUM* (Plug plug!).  
Also how much you really DESIRE to be a writer and what commitment and sacrifices you are prepared to make.  
N.B:**DETERMINATION** and **PERSISTENCE** more than anything else will get you there.  
Plus big doses of **IMAGINATION**, of course.  
I believe that most people will find abundant amounts of these qualities within them.  
If you look hard enough within yourself and are really tested to create.  
But only once people have found what it is that they really want to do with their lives.  
I've written plenty about following ones dreams in my book STEPS TO SUCCESS, PROSPERITY and HAPPINESS already.  
Hopefully then there'll be more writers around in the future.  
You've done well to get so far.  
Enough on that subject and you've worked hard . Slavedriver!  
Still aboard and ready for lesson two next time.

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## **HOMEWORK**

For your homework today, please send via e-mail some details about yourself, and why you want to be a writer.  
This information will help me to get to know you better, and will remain strictly confidential. Incidentally, your name will not be passed on to any third party, or used for any other purpose. If you'd like to get in contact with other people on the course to correspond, share work , etc, let me know.  
Thanks for joining Bill and I. It's a pleasure to have you in the "class" and I'm sure we'll have a lot of fun working together and getting to know each other better. Hope you stay sane with my weird sense of humour.  
Well then, New Zealand is so beautiful and quiet and I have to do something with my life.  
Till next time  
Happy writing  
Craig Lock and Bill Rosoman  
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E-mail [c.lock@xtra.co.nz](mailto:c.lock@xtra.co.nz)  
A story to end off and tell you something about Kiwis (New Zealanders). Hope it brightens your day... even if it's at my countrymen's "sexpense"...  
Dear Ann Landers,  
I am a sailor in the New Zealand Navy. My parents live in the suburb of Seatoun and one of my sisters, who lives in Palmerston North, is married to an Australian.  
My Father and Mother have recently been arrested for growing and selling marijuana and are currently dependent on my two sisters, who are prostitutes in Auckland.  
I have two brothers, one who is currently serving a non-parole life sentence in Mt. Eden Prison, Auckland, for the rape & murder of a teenage boy in 1994, the other currently being held in the Wellington remand center on charges of incest with his three children.  
I have recently become engaged to marry a former Thai prostitute who lives in Christchurch and indeed is still a part time "working girl" in a Brothel, however, her time there is limited as she has recently been infected with an STD. We intend to marry as

soon as possible and are currently looking into the possibility of opening our own brothel with my fiancée utilizing her knowledge of the industry working as the manager. I am hoping my two sisters would be interested in joining our team. Although I would prefer them not to prostitute themselves, at least it would get them off the streets and hopefully the heroin. My problem is this: I love my fiancée very much and look forward to bringing her into the family and of course I want to be totally honest with her. Should I tell her that I'm a New Zealander?

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## Lesson 2: Making a writer out of you

Welcome back and good to see you again still “hanging in there”.



Grab your cup of coffee, then let's get 'cracking'... without the fireworks please.

What do we need to get started in writing?

### The Tools of The Trade

Anyone with reasonable literary skills can write, but not many people can write really well.

Yet we all have the opportunity to use this means of expressing our creative energy.

You don't need much: no money- only time and IMAGINATION.

To start writing, all you need is a place, a pen, paper and an idea (which comes through the amazing power of the human mind).

Firstly, work habits: Organise yourself (my big difficulty in all areas of life!). Decide WHERE you want to write.

Which room will enable you to concentrate and lift your spirits the most? I find writing outdoors enables me to be most relaxed and therefore at my most creative?

Then

Allocate a few hours a day when you won't be disturbed.

Then stick to it with total COMMITMENT (remember the qualities of a writer from lesson one?).

What other tools are there to help you?

The local library, dictionaries, like a Thesaurus. What's that dad?

And especially, a dictionary of quotations. Can you start a sentence with an “and”?

All of these resources are extremely helpful to a writer.

I find the local library especially helpful.

Get to know your way around, to find out where things are.

Using this resource saves a great deal of time and frustration...and most of all money, not having to buy books (“El cheaposkate”, like me).

Well being a “poor writer”(yet rich in spirit), I am constantly using the facilities of the excellent HB Williams Memorial Library here in Gisborne.

What other resources are easily available?

Dictionaries: Such as the Oxford Dictionaries of Quotations.

They'll always come in handy when you're looking for a good quote.

Incidentally, good grammar and punctuation, together with presentation, is very important in getting published. I cover more on this subject in subsequent lessons.

As my English teacher at school said, READ, READ, READ. It develops vocabulary (another nice long word).

Typewriter or Wordprocessor?

Once you've got this clear in your mind, ie. place, time, tools (like pen and paper), later comes the decisions about whether to buy a typewriter, wordprocessor or computer.



Wordprocessors and computers make life so much easier for writers: you can quickly rewrite by moving words around or simply cutting them out altogether. They even have a spell check for those not too confident in this area.

All writers continually revise their work many times to make the words flow better (don't say 'continually' and 'many times' - they mean the same thing!).

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Do you need one?

If you want to be published, no editor will consider handwritten work... so you will need to make that decision someday. If you want to write purely for your own pleasure, no “hassle”!

My simple advice is to take your time regarding purchasing decisions.

Don't rush out and buy now, but wait and see how your writing develops.

You may soon lose interest in writing (and this course!)

Perhaps you have an old typewriter in the attic to start on, or you may be able to borrow one from a friend in the meantime (“cheapskate”).

This advice is based on what I did...

Start off with a typewriter, because all your work should be typed - unless you're writing purely for yourself.

Later you can progress to a word processor, if you really get caught up in the writing 'bug'.

I bought my word processor just before I left work after being made redundant as a Life Assurance Manager.

It was the best investment I have ever made in my life!

Of course, I left my wife to learn how to work it while I went on a six week holiday to South Africa.

Slave driver!

Then I progressed to learning computers. This was no easy task for me, but now working every day with one, I’ve got quite good (even if I say so myself!). However, I still use my wordprocessor to work in the hot sun outside.

Hedonistic sun freak!

What other tips are there?...

Keep a work diary of your projects underway- keeps one on track.

Also keep a record of your writing expenses - for the tax man.

Any expenditure you incur in producing income from your writing is usually deductible from your taxable income.

I'm sounding like an accountant now - sorry!

More on this subject in a later lesson.

Have a ***clippings file*** of things that interest you...because those are the things you are likely to write about some day in the future. I keep them on about ten different subjects, from stress to the South African economy (which leads to more stress!).

Handy!

Keep a note book handy by your bed.

We often get our most creative ideas, whilst sleeping when the mind is relaxed.

I used to wake up with a great idea in the middle of the night. EUREKA!

... but by morning it was forgotten.

You can even use a small tape recorder.

I have resorted to taking my dictaphone (“dick-to-phone”- disgusting) along my beach walks.

I get lots of funny looks, but at least it stops me having to turn back before I forget my inspirational thought for the day.

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Getting Started

Now we have all the tools, time to get started.

I believe the best training for new writers is to write as often and as much as you can.

So write about ANYTHING that tickles your fancy.

It doesn't matter, as long as you WRITE.

It is practice and experience (and life experiences) that counts. As the tourist in New York asked : “How do I get to Carnegie Hall?”  
and the cabbie replied:  
“Practice, mate (or the Yankee equivalent of this New Zealand and Australian expression), practice, practice”  
When I look at my first manuscripts, I can clearly see how much I think my writing has improved in the last six years.  
At least I think so!

What else can you write about?  
Write letters.  
This is becoming a forgotten art.  
You could also keep a daily diary.  
Write about your thoughts, your feelings, your daily experiences, your hopes your fears, your dreams.  
Doing this regularly hones your writing skills.  
You can take courses at universities, colleges, polytechnics, or this one.  
As well as the course content, I think that writing courses have a definite social function; because they keep you in touch with other like-minded people... and always remember writing is such a solitary occupation.  
It's certainly a great lifestyle change for me, because before I was in very much a "people's business", socialising and interacting with life assurance brokers each and every day in big cities.  
Until then I'll join “Rent-a Friend” here and you can be my friend on this course.  
I do greatly miss that human contact...but perhaps it will come...one day.  
Meanwhile having my good friend and working colleague, Bill Rosomann working with me on this course has been very helpful.  
He keeps me organised and motivated... and sane here in “Sleepy Hollow” in the beautiful tranquil South Sea paradise that is “Godzone” (New Zealand).  
Hope I do with him too, although I have my doubts sometimes!

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Take a coffee break...

Back to the lesson...

Generally seek out information about writing and make the effort to meet people involved in writing. Those earnest “intellectual arty farty types” with berets, who read out their work to bored listeners. How dull listening to a boring old fart like me reading my damn books, in which nothing happens! Far better to do something physical and worthwhile, like press-ups to raise money for charity.  
Time to get serious and back to the point I was trying to make. Another attempt. What was I saying?  
Always remember ...  
It's very very (don't repeat yourself- redundant words) hard work with usually very very low pay.  
I've been working solidly for five years now on my writing, five books have been published to date\*, yet I still haven't earned enough to pay the bills ... and I have no idea what I'll earn in the future . So writing is definitely not the best way to become a millionaire!  
\*Since writing this some time ago, things have changed drastically and many more of my books are being published and sold. Some people must like my humour then!  
So after all this...  
Are you sure you still want to be a writer and continue with this course?  
Well done, nice to have you still on board.

What to Write About?  
This is the writer's principal dilemma.

I definitely think that it is best to write about what you know about and what interests you - rather than what you THINK will sell. Write about your experiences and feelings from ***Your World***. Just because you have a collection of poems published in magazines, doesn't mean a book of poems will sell well. Don't know why I put that in there, but I might as well leave it in. I only write from the heart about subjects that have a deep meaning (significance) for me. I could never write a Mills & Boons romance, just because it is what the market wants. Not even if I was to be kicked out in the street to live in a paper bag.

How to get started?

Start with an idea.

Then ask yourself: How do I get it into print?

Develop your imagination and try to create your own individual style of writing.

In my self-help, uplifting and “inspirational” works I've written about things which have been said many times before, but I've tried to put them in my own words - in a light, “unique breezy” style with my “wacky humour”.

Because I believe the role of the writer is to entertain, as well as inform.

Perhaps even inspire!

So write about what you know and what interests you.

Writing about your passions will usually have most feeling and power ... because it's the real you speaking from the heart. My novels on South Africa (*THE END OF THE LINE*, *THE NEW RAINBOW* and *ANGOLAN DAWN*) are far more serious than my non-fiction “work”. They have been written in a totally different “moving” style with tales told through the eyes of a reporter, to perhaps reach out and change (or just consider) new perspectives, beliefs and values in a positive way. In my novels I try to write uplifting stories with themes of hope and forgiveness.

An intimate way on which to end this lesson and that's enough about me (thank goodness).

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## **Homework**

Write down some headings about your interests, hobbies and passions, then write a few paragraphs about them. If you would like to e-mail them to me, that would be nice, but I understand if you feel it is too personal to share. If so, you could simply write a bit about yourself and your successes in life to date. I'm sure you've got plenty! When you write for others to see, you bare your soul; but you also reach out and give something of yourself. That's what I've tried to do in all of my writing, including this lesson. You have to learn to "write and be damned" (did that with my political letters, “stirrer”!) You even leave yourself open to the ridicule of others, as I'm doing with this “wacky” humour. Don't worry, I can take it and I'm happy doing what I want to do. Enough heavy philosophising. Hope you've learnt something and enjoyed the lesson, , but remember your “freebies” are running out soon.

Till next time

Happy writing and enjoy.

Craig and Bill

PS Hope these words will inspire you...

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our Light, not our Darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

You playing small does not serve the World.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to manifest the glory of God that is in us. It's not just within some of us.

It's in everyone. When we let our own Light shine, we unconsciously give to other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson and Nelson Mandela (a man whose generosity of spirit I admire so much)  
Any Comments, need help?  
Why not send me an e-mail.  
I always look forward to hearing from you

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Last updated on January 4, 2001

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**Lesson 1 What is Creative Writing?**

**Lesson 2 Making A Writer Out Of You**

**Lesson 3 Making A Better Writer Out Of You!**

**How it Works and What Next!**

**Introduction to the Creative Writing Course**

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### **Lesson 3: Making A Better Writer Out Of You**

To recap on lessons one and two, as well as one or two new thoughts...

By now you have decided what kind of writer you'd like to be:

You want to write for pleasure or for profit.

To write articles or just to write for your own enjoyment?

Or perhaps just start writing and see what develops.

To perhaps even one day write a book about your life or about the life of someone you know.

To one day write the novel you always dreamed of...and I believe everyone has some tale to tell. We can all reach out and help others by sharing a little of our little (don't repeat 'little' in such close proximity- "yes sir, boss"!) world.

Somebody else said: "No one but a blockhead would write not to be published."... but I don't agree with that one.

I believe writing is for pleasure or profit, but it can be both. That's the ideal to aim (and wish/hope) for. Could I end that sentence with a "preppie" (preposition)?

That was my ideal when I started out in my quest to do something worthwhile with my life after being dropped out of the sky here in "Sleepy Hollow". I try to have a bit of FUN with my writing, because life (together with all the appendages, like mortgages, bills (but not Bill Rosoman), wives, "hubbies", etc) can be ever so serious.

We spoke about making a writer out of you.

Decide where and when to write.

### **Which room is most comfortable and gives you peace and quiet?**

When are you most creative?

Are you a "morning" or "evening" person, when your concentration is at it's highest level?

My body rhythms work best in the early morning, so I'm in bed with my teddy bear and hot "choccie" and pussy cat by 9pm. How utterly boring!

When are you most likely to be undisturbed?

I have the strangest type of people (plenty of "weirdos") dropping in to visit "recluse" me. Must be the lot of an "artist"!

Treat your writing seriously and bar visitors - it is your work or leisure time, yet people don't seem to understand that. "When are you going to get a proper job", ask the locals continuously (should it be 'continually'?), as they can't seem to understand us "strange" writers. Nor even my good Aussie friend, Kaye who is visiting at the moment!

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### **Getting Started**

What to write about?

This is the writer's principal dilemma.

Write what the market wants, but draw on your world, your unique experiences in life.

Ask yourself this:

How can I best inform, entertain, help or perhaps even inspire other people?

### **Where to get ideas?**

The human mind has the most incredible power and your imagination is your greatest asset.

So use the great powers of your IMAGINATION to the fullest by allowing your creative juices to flow.

Then once you have the idea, RESEARCH well, so you are factually correct.

Accuracy in writing is paramount for credibility- you have to be seen to be an authority on your subject..

If you are writing purely for money (nothing wrong with that!), write what will sell. I only write from the heart, either with serious messages (in my novels) or uplifting material for the human spirit in my non-fiction “work”.

Always remember:

There are too many subjects to write about - not too few!

Remember to collect interesting items for later use.

### **How to develop Your Writing Style**

We all have a unique style of writing, in addition to our unique experiences in life... because each one of us is unique, thank God. So just be grateful for who you are , your unique abilities and gifts and count your blessings.

Enough on this subject- this is not a new spiritual book!

Style is our natural way of writing: it can be brief, long-winded, chatty, wacky, breezy, light, heavy and so on - like the way we talk. I try and write like I speak: very much to the point, but with the odd “zany” bit thrown in to startle or get a person thinking (or perhaps just wondering about me and where I’m coming from- Mars!).

### **My advice...**

Build on your own natural style of writing... and the best way to do that is to get into the writing habit. Then just be you.

Incidentally, a word of seriousness (for a change)... Although this road I have chosen is very rocky and financially uncertain, doing this type of work gives me more fulfilment in my life than ever before, as well as feeling this is the real me. And that’s most important.

( Can I start a sentence with an “And”. See the next “gripping” lesson to find out).

Write something daily; because practice makes perfect.

Be open to growth, to try new styles or new directions in your writing. I find after I’ve done a serious book (like a novel on South Africa), I try to write to inform and entertain in a light breezy style. Probably just both sides of me coming out!

You could perhaps try adding touches of humour, your natural humour, of course.

This comes with confidence and confidence comes with more writing. My confidence has increased greatly after my tentative first steps down this track.

I believe the essence of good writing style lies in **precision** and **accuracy**.

Therefore omit unnecessary words. Try to think up some examples of everyday unnecessary words and ***let me know what they are in your homework.***

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One example to get you started: ”actually”.

Lots more on style coming up.

Take an exercise break. Walk around the block, do housework \*(what’s that?) or twenty five press-ups, please!

“Jawohl, mein Herr!”

\* Whilst on this touchy subject...What’s the definition of a South African or Australian male doing the housework?:

Beer in hand, lifting up his legs watching TV, whilst “the wife” does the vacuuming. Say no more, say no more!

**Sorry guys!**



All males get another free lesson.

### How Dabbler Writers Become Professionals

They do it regularly: with **self discipline** and **dedication**.

I may not be one of the best writers around, but I've got dedication and self discipline (which comes from motivation, because I love what I do - although it's very hard work).

I try to have fun, whilst I try to earn a living.

Top writers WRITE AND REWRITE - many times over, so the words flow better each time.

They aim for perfection - very, very hard to achieve; although one can always improve.

Every time I go through a manuscript, I change things (like repetitive words, incorrect grammar and punctuation) to try to get the words to flow better... but one has to draw a halt somewhere, otherwise my books would never get published.

### How To Avoid Common Mistakes

What do you think are the most common mistakes of new writers?



Take a coffee break while you do this short assignment.

My Thoughts:

repetitive words

incorrect grammar

incorrect punctuation

using too many words

The art of good writing, I believe lies in **brevity**, so omit all unnecessary words.

It makes the sentence flow more rhythmically, more swiftly.

I find reading a very cerebral (impressive word) activity, that demands a lot of concentration- so make a conscious effort to write in a style that's easy to read . Try to make your reading so easy on the eye, that a child can enjoy (and appreciate) your writing style.

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### Overcoming Obstacles And Disadvantages

What disadvantages are there to creative writing?

Other than being thought of as an “intellectual loony”, of course!

Write down your thoughts, if you think you have some.

WHY?

Why Not!

Now you have all the tools and the talent there should not be anything to stop you indulging in your creative pursuits.

### How Successful Writers Get Things Done

I've mentioned those 'D' words before: DEDICATION and DISCIPLINE.

Successful writers set goals and work away steadily and unobtrusively (nice long word, like ‘tractor’) each day.

It may be writing a page or an article, or 500 words a day.

I just write and stop when I feel like it - either when I get tired\* or bored.

\* I could have used the word ‘fatigued’, but ‘tired’ was simpler.

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### Just put in the effort.

You've shown you've got it by doing the previous assignments and getting this far in the course.

If not, write two pages about living on the inside of an eyeball.

My friend Donovan wrote about that one... and he wasn't high - he's always just like that (as in wearing two left shoes to work- oops, sorry)- true!

You've heard the term WRITER'S BLOCK?

No, what's that... but I've got it!

It's when your mind goes blank and you can't get going.

You stare at a blank sheet of paper for hours on end waiting for inspiration... but nothing comes... except the cat with muddy paws walks all over your blank masterpiece. It's just happened to me.

You then resort to pulling your hair out (is that why most writers are bald?) or kicking the cat? Is this why most writers are broke paying reparations to the SPCA?

### **How to overcome writer's block:**

Stress and adverse personal circumstances (like financial worries and my past lifestyle) can easily stifle your creative imagination.

### **My advice:**

Take a break and relax (for as long as it takes- perhaps even a few months).

Inspiration will come to you some day. If it doesn't eventually return, then you will know you didn't have the dedication to become a writer.

However, if writing is your job, like mine, I make sure I'm inspired at 7am every morning (it's now 4am), because I have no choice to pay the bills and alimony to my 7 previous wives (and I'm not an African king!)

### **Inspiration comes from discipline.**

When the words eventually come, you run outside naked shouting, 'Eureka, Eureka!'

Then you get locked away for life and have plenty of time to engage in your creative writing talents (and don't have to pay that alimony to your 7 previous wives).

### **What are the "Secrets" of Writing Success?**

Funnily enough, I don't believe there are any magic 'secrets'.

If so, I'm still trying to discover them.

So I'll cover this subject very briefly, because I don't know the answers.

It's really all common sense, following your basic instincts.

However, I think you'll discover some of the "keys" as you go along the course. Hopefully, you'll write better yourself - with confidence, as well as through trying new things, like different styles. That is my mission on this course- for you to improve your writing skills (so you feel good about yourself) and have a bit of fun at the same time.

Just BE YOU and write what your heart, your imagination tells you to write. If it's for publication, just be prepared for 'ordinary' (what's that?) people who do proper jobs, have 2.3 kids, mow lawns on Sundays and drive station wagons to think you're a little crazy.

The writer or author is a **puppeteer**, moulding the clay through the words that you **choose**.

You weave the strands of the article or story together, through use of your creative imagination.

You start your article, short story or novel with an idea.

You decide HOW you will start:

“Once upon a time”. (This could be the little child emerging from the depths of your soul).

You perhaps got the plot from a television programme or a newspaper article.

The plots of some of my novels came from newspaper articles.

Then you make choices as you go along:

to base your story upon fact or fiction, or faction (a mixture of fact and fiction - I like that genre (impressive word that- must use it more often!)).

You choose the track. You are the director, producer and actor: YOU set the scene, decide whether it is to be local or foreign.

It's up to you HOW you describe the landscape or surrounding environment.

You decide on the characters and how you will describe them.

To let them live or die? What immense power you have to determine destinies!

Whether to have a happy or sad ending?

“And they all lived happily ever after....”

A few short words of advice to end off this lesson...

Make your writing fun and get readers (and the editor) "hooked" with a good opening paragraph and an even better opening line.

What do you think of this example by Charles Dickens from "A Tale of Two Cities"?

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”.

I find it excellent and powerful writing, but quite “heavy reading”.

What did you think of that style of writing?

How’s this for an opening line for a novel?

“James walked into the hotel and it was as if he was struck by a bolt of lightning. He instantly went into a state of shock, as the past ten years of his life flashed through his mind as in an instant replay. It was too much to all take in a second. His legs began to tremble, as if they had turned into instant jelly. They could barely hold his slight frame, as he struggled with all his might to hold his body upright. Out of his numbness he could see seated at the end of the bar the face of the man that was indelibly printed on his subconscious, the striking features that had haunted him all those years. It was the same mysterious man who had turned his entire world upside down and consumed James’s every waking thought for the past decade.”

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“Did I need to say “mysterious man”?

Do you want to read on?

Perhaps that could be the first paragraph of my next book?

Or this one from my book **Angolan Dawn**"

It was just getting light with that certain freshness in the air of early morning. Albertina Kangombe saw the figure of her husband Marcelino receding in the distance down the sandy track, walking slowly down the gentle hill. She saw him turn around once to look at her but he could not see the tears of sadness running down her face. She wondered when she would see her dear, strong husband again. He was a tall man but he became smaller and smaller as she saw him gradually receding into the distance on that early January morning. And then he was gone...

Time to end off (I’ve done enough “work” re-writing this lesson)....

Stimulate your imagination to the fullest. then go with the flow.

Observe life and jot down notes about your thoughts and feelings .

Then "make the words dance to your tune".

“Don’t spend your days, stringing your instrument- start making music NOW”.

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

"Oh no, please sir!"

Write about half a page on your family. I could write an epic, like War and Piece. Well, it would probably cause World War Three!

If you've got more than one family, perhaps you can try another style describing each one.

In addition write a good (**imaginative** and **creative**) opening paragraph for a book about "The Life and Times of an Ordinary Person".

Just let your creative juices flow and HAVE FUN.

See you next week, when we'll talk more about style and grammar. Oh no, not another boring lesson!

Keep smiling and thanks for all the effort.

Any Comments, need help? Why not send me an e-mail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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