

Become A Writer



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Purpose:

I wrote this e-book to help writers feel like writers. There is a lot of vague information out there. So, I wanted to give a guide to those who love detail. This is primarily for beginners. However, if you have already started your writing journey and feel lost, overwhelmed, and unorganized, then this e-book will be able to help. Use this e-book in combination with the 6 bonuses it came with so you can implement what you learn.

Take Note: Any advice you receive is relative. Please do not feel overwhelmed by all the writing tips and advice you see on the internet, in books, and elsewhere. Instead, take it with a grain of salt and only use what works for you.

Disclaimers:

The information contained in this guide is for informational purposes only. These are my professional opinions and recommendations.

Users of this guide are advised to do their own due diligence when it comes to making decisions. By reading this guide, you agree that me and my company are not responsible for the



success or failure of your writing projects relating to any information presented in this guide.

Who am I?



My name is Alexis and I help self-publishing authors who love to read and write fiction by providing book recommendations and writing advice so they can create stories they are proud to put on their bookshelf.

To say I love reading is an understatement. I understand the impact a story can have on a person. Escaping into a fictional world for a while is like a release. I get to relax and be adventurous at the same time! There is no better combination.

However, I quickly realized that people who want to write fiction are often crippled by self-doubt, confused about where to start, and lack an organized system that supports them in their writing journey. To help, I created Become A Writer so people could find a balance by integrating their passion for writing with their busy life.



Chapter 1: Commit to being a writer

Once upon a time, I asked writers in a Reddit forum what fears they had when it came to writing. Here were some of their responses:

“Always boils down to me writing something, liking it, coming back days later and hating it. Learning to love what you bring to the table”

“For me it’s the fear my writing is just not good enough, and my story not interesting”

“I second the fear of not being good enough. Who am I to write a book? I love it, so I don’t let it stop me. It’s a little voice I can ignore. The big one is, I guess, I fear nobody will ever want to read my book”

“Not being as good as my favorite authors”

“I’m worried that people will criticize me for what I write”

“There’s the fear that I’m not good enough and people will not buy my book”

Being a writer is difficult. You won’t always get raving reviews and you won’t always feel good enough. The writer’s above have all published or would soon be publishing books. Yet they still experience self-doubt. But they keep writing.



Before you can make plans, set up systems, write consistently, and publish books, you must first commit to being a writer. So simple right? I know it isn't. But don't overcomplicate things. If you want to be a writer, then you must start calling yourself one.

There are two parts to being a writer. The first is mental. Take yourself seriously and believe in yourself. Then and only then, can you move on to the next step, which is taking action. So, let's start with step 1: commit to being a writer. You can get to know this new side of you by answering some questions about yourself on paper or in a word document:

- What does "I am a writer" mean to me?
- Why is writing important to me?
- What do I want to be a writer?
- What kind of writer do I want to be?
- What authors would I like to be like? Would not like to be like?
- In a perfect world, what would my writing journey look like in the next 5 years?



I hope those questions helped you to cement this new part of you. Now, here are some rules I want you to remember about yourself. When you ever have the following thoughts:

I am not a writer

I feel like I have no support

I'm not good enough

I feel guilty about not making my goals, making writing a priority, etc.

I want you to return to this book and read your own answers to the questions from the very beginning of this chapter. Then I want you realize the following:

You are a writer

You are a writer. The moment you bought this book you became a writer. If you have ever written any form of fiction, you are a writer.

I also want you to take some accountability, and this might sting a bit so be warned. Only you can decide if you are or will be a writer. Even if you have had people in your life tell you that you aren't a writer. It isn't their fault if you aren't putting pen to paper or click clacking away on your keyboard.



You control the thoughts inside your head. If they are negative, it's time to tell your brain to stop. Literally. If you think, *I'm not a writer*, immediately stop what you are doing, take a deep breath, and say, *no, I am a writer*. Then pick yourself up by your bootstraps and start writing again. The more you do this, the less those pesky thoughts will pop in your head. I have used this method for my own anxious thoughts, and it has since worked wonders. This won't cure your anxious or negative thoughts completely, but over time you will most likely see a difference.

Having no money or time is also not an excuse. If you take yourself seriously as a writer, you will find the time and the resources to write. This may be the sign that you need to find a job that pays more. Or you need to find some pen and paper or a library. Or a friend's laptop. Or save some money to get a laptop of your own. Chapter 3 will cover the issue on time as well. But to put it simply, people make time for what they truly want.

You have support

Find at least one person other than yourself to get support from. It could be family, a significant other, or a friend. If you don't have any of that, go online. I can't even tell you how many online communities there are for writers. The number is far too large.



The key is to find at least one community and to stay active on it. You can find these communities on all the social media sites, on forums, and on blogs. A responsive community I like a lot is on Goodreads. The two communities are “Goodreads Authors/Readers” (my favorite) and “World, Writing, Wealth”. And of course, you can always leave a comment on my blog, the Purple Shelf Club or send me an email. I reply to every blog comment and try to do the same with email.

Virtual support is guaranteed, you just have to go out there and find it. If you want to have a more in-person experience, try to make friends at writing workshops, book readings, or even creative writing groups in your area.

You are good enough

You are not alone. Just like the writer’s self-doubt I talked about at the beginning of this chapter, you too may be feeling like you aren’t good enough. Too many writers think this way. Too many people think this way, no matter what field they are in.

First, try to figure out why you think you aren’t good enough. An awesome tip that I got from God knows where is to keep asking yourself “why” and answer with “because”. Here is a sample of what I mean:



Q: Why do I feel like I am not a good enough writer?

A: Because I haven't written a book yet.

Q Why haven't I written a book yet?

A: Because I don't have a good idea.

Q: Why don't I have a good idea yet?

A: Because I'm not creative enough.

Q: Why am I not creative enough?

A: Because I overthink and then get overwhelmed.

The idea is that you keep asking yourself questions until you get to the root of the problem. Then, find a solution to that problem so you can move forward.

A simple solution (just so you know), is to practice. Write short stories, long stories, try different techniques, use prompts to get those creative juices flowing. Any practice is good practice. I will talk about this more in Chapter 5 as well so you can have more guidance.



You can make mistakes

Stop beating yourself up about not reaching your goals in time or putting your writing time on the back burner. You aren't the first and you're not the last. Here are some tips to help you achieve your goals and put writing higher on your list (discussed further in Chapter 3):

- Use a planner (see Additional Resources)
- Set short (90 days) and long term (1 year, 5 years) goals and check in with yourself on those goals once a week.
- Set mini goals for yourself once a week
- Purposefully schedule in writing time
- Start the habits you want to form at a slow pace.
 - Example: write once a week for 30 minutes, then twice a week for 30 minutes, and keep increasing until you get to five days a week



Commit to being a writer checklist

- I reflected on writing and being a writer
- I committed to being a writer
- I reflected on my self-doubts
- I found a support system that works for me and my writing needs
- I have set at least one long term and short-term goal
- I completed Step 1 in my workbook
- I commit to learning and implementing Steps 2-5 to become an efficient writer who writes fiction consistently



Chapter 2: Set up your writing space

I don't know about you, but this is one of the most fun parts of becoming a writer. That is, if you like weird things like organizing and having lots of paper and pens and pencils. Yes, I am one of those people that has an odd love for hoarding notebooks and sticky notes (though I plan to change this soon by getting an electronic notetaker). Anyhow, the point is I want you to have fun with this too.

Pick a spot in your home and dedicate it to being your writing space. This could be at your desk in your office, or in a corner with a beanbag or chair and a laptop, or in your bed with a reading pillow as support.

Or there are solutions if you are the sort of person that knows you won't be strict within your own home. You could choose a dedicated coffeehouse to go to, or a specific spot in a library.

Once you have picked your spot, decorate, and set it up for success. If in your home, I suggest the following:

- Writing utensils
- Paper
- Laptop or computer
- A hard surface to write on (desk, laptop tray, etc.)
- Decorations that make you feel creative or inspired to write.



- A timer
- Something to keep focused (access to music or white noise machine for instance)

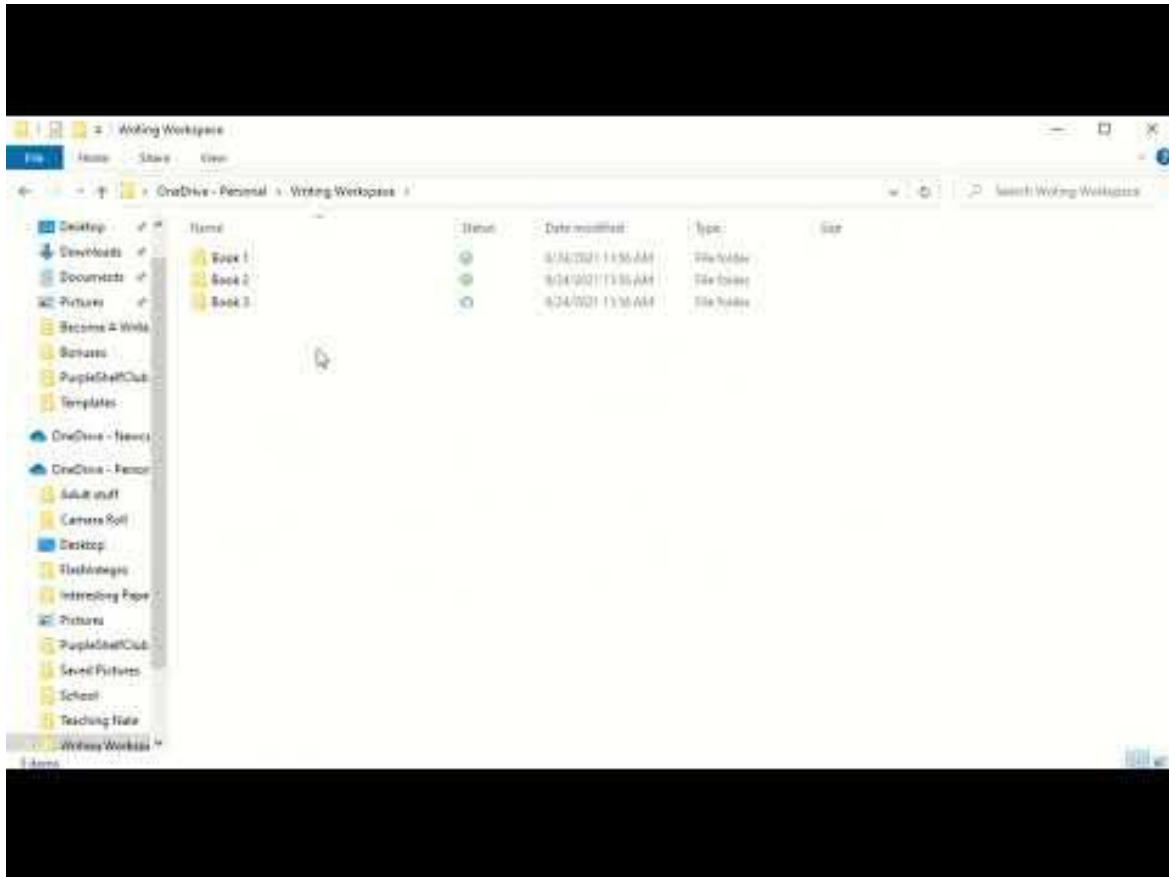
If you are going outside of your home, then decorate your laptop or the background of your screen to motivate your writing time.

You can also set your laptop or computer up for success by doing the following:

- Find the writing platform that works best for you
- Use a tool to block distractions (explained in the next chapter)
- Organize your filing system (ex. Create a main folder called something like “Writing workspace” and then create a subfolder for every new story you write in the future)



Video showing an example filing system:



Set up your writing space checklist

- I decided where my writing space will be
- I found out what tools and resources I would need in my writing space
- I found out what tools and resources I would need to set up on my laptop or computer
- I committed to a filing system on my laptop or computer to stay organized and focused
- I set everything up for my writing space
- I completed Step 2 in my workbook
- I commit to learning and implementing Steps 3-5 to become an efficient writer who writes fiction consistently



Chapter 3: Create a plan

It will take you far longer to become a writer and eventually an author without a schedule. Every writer is different. Some write every day, while others write only a couple times a week, while still others write non-stop followed by a “vacation” to rest and recover.

However, the one thing they all share is that they have a schedule that they follow. You see, it doesn't matter if you want to become a writer and hit the ground running by publishing a book in 3 months, 6 months, a year, or even 2 years. What you need is a schedule with goals to keep you on track. I'm going to share my system with you so that you have an example of what a creating and maintaining a schedule looks like.

My way may work for you, and it may not. Try it out. If it works, great. Glad I could help. If not, try another system for creating a schedule. Use the additional resources guide if you find that my system doesn't work for you. There are 3 alternative listed there.

Alright, on to my planning system.



First, I set 90-day goals for the following areas in my life:

- Personal goal
- Work goal
- Health goal
- Writing goal

My personal goal could be for my lifestyle, wellbeing, my household, or self-improvement and self-care. My work goal could be for my job or my blog. My health goal is to constantly work at eating better and taking care of my body. Lastly, my writing goal is for fiction or non-fiction works.

Feel free to use the same categories as me, make up your own, or stick to just the writing goal for now. This is not a sprint. Choose what you know aligns with who you are as a person.

Here is an example of one 90-day goal set that I had:

- Personal goal: relax, do not work on the weekends
- Work goal: take 3 blogging courses from a bundle I created
- Health goal: Cut down on dessert and go for a walk every day
- Writing goal: write this eBook that you are reading now

You see, these goals are not too complicated. They are mini goals if you will for who I'd like to be as a person.



To come up with your goals, I suggest answering the following questions:

- Who do I want to be in 5 years?
 - *Example: I want to be a successful author. I want to feel confident in my writing skills. I want to own a home that feels cozy to me and my family. I want to be organized and creative. I want to be worry-free financially.*
- How would I become that person?
 - *Example: I will need to publish at least one book, write consistently, learn to manage my money, learn to decorate, find out what homestyle I like the best, consistently use a planner and keep a schedule, try other creative hobbies, and organize my home.*

The next step is to get a yearly planner. You can use a physical one like I do or use outlook/google calendar.

If you opt for a physical planner and don't yet have one, I suggest using a refillable binder so that all you need to do is buy printable planner inserts on amazon or Etsy (or use the printable planner that came with *Become A Writer*). Use the additional resources guide to see my list of suggested refillable planners including the one I use every single day. I absolutely love it and will be using it for many years to come.

In addition to a planner, I suggest devising a system to keep track of your writing goals. This can be done using excel or a physical



piece of paper to create a tracker for word/page count, getting a journal to record your progress on where you are in your writing journey and to reflect on each week as you go through your 90-days. See your bonus Productive Writer Planner which comes in multiple sizes so you can print it in the size you need for your refillable planner.

Another tip I would suggest if you like video games is to treat your writing journey like it were a game. What you would do is create levels and rewards. See your bonus A Whole New World game sheet with instructions attached to try this method out.

If you don't like video games, then break your 90-day goal(s) into manageable weekly chunks.

Either way, you will want to make sure you limit the time you spend planning so you can spend more time doing. I suggest setting timer for 15-30 minutes.

Directions to create your plan

Step 1: Choose either Friday or Monday to reflect on your previous week and plan for your next week.

If Friday, do the following at the end of the day. If Monday, do the following before you start your day.



Step 2: Review your 90-day goal(s).

Example: *Writing goal: I want to come up with my book idea, develop it, and outline my story.*

In the future, you will also review what you accomplished/didn't accomplish the previous week and reflect on what worked and why and vice versa to make the next week even better. When I started this process, I realized I was putting too much on my plate and had to find ways to lessen what I was putting on my plate. This is a work in progress and your reviews will help you create better goals with better plans week by week.

Step 3: Brain dump.

Write out on paper or in a google/word document everything you need to get done for the next week. Write/type everything that comes to mind for your personal, work, writing, etc. parts of your life.

Example: *I need to come up with a story idea, run errands A, B, and C, do the laundry, vacuum, and take the dog out for a walk, cook dinners, and pay my upcoming bills.*

Step 4: Choose 1-3 goals to accomplish for the week.

No more than 3!



Example. I want to commit to one story idea that I will write this year. I want to eat healthy. I want to exercise by taking my dog out for a walk at least 3 times this week.

Step 5: Plan your week out according to your weekly goals, 90-day goal, and your brain dump.

Here is an example of what your week could look like:

| Sample Weekly Schedule | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| To do: -get kids ready for school -go to work -grocery shop for dinners this week -pay upcoming bills Dinner: Creamy Spinach Artichoke Chicken | To do: -get kids ready for school -go to work -complete One Idea workbook while kids do homework -walk the dog after dinner Dinner: leftovers | To do: -get kids ready for school -go to work -complete laundry -walk the dog after dinner Dinner: Swedish Meatballs and broccoli | To do: -get kids ready for school -go to work -run errands A, B, C Dinner: leftovers | To do: -get kids ready for school go to work -vacuum house -walk the dog after dinner Dinner: Oven Roasted Autumn Medley |

Now that you have your planner, it is time for you to take action. One final tip is to limit distractions as you complete your tasks every week. This is a work in progress for me as well so you're not alone. See chapter 5 for more information on avoiding procrastination. Lastly, follow the checklist to make sure you create a plan for your writing journey.



Create a plan checklist

- Get a refillable binder and a planner with helpful sheets for writers or use outlook/google calendar to create my weekly schedule
- Get a journal
- Answer the questions about who I want to be in 5 years
- Set my 90-day goal(s)
- Break my 90-day goal(s) into manageable chunks each week and/or try the A Whole New World Game
- Create my plan using the 5-step process every single week
- I completed Step 3 in my workbook
- I commit to learning and implementing Steps 4-5 to become an efficient writer who writes fiction consistently



Chapter 4: Read

Reading is a hobby just like fishing, drawing, karaoke and many others. And just like any other hobby, something sparks the desire to start and continue doing that hobby for years to come.

For me it was not a something, it was a someone. My first and second grade teacher to be precise. He instilled in me a love for learning and reading. He would take our class on several field trips, throw holiday parties and birthday parties for every student. He was truly invested. He cared for all of us and encouraged us to not only learn but to have good manners and be good people.

I believe he had such an influence on me that if he hadn't been my teacher those two years, I would not have been the same person. I would not have loved to learn or read, I wouldn't have had pride in being kind and trying to be the best I can be to this day, and I would not have the same push for personal success. The influence that a teacher can have is astounding. I have had many great teachers of which I will never forget their names and the influence they had on me.

On a shelf next to his desk was a section of science books. Anytime we had indoor recess I would walk over and pick one of those science books to read. Those books made me want to be a scientist when I grew up. Back then I thought "scientist" was the only title. As I got older, I understood there are many types of scientists.



Today, I still aspire to be a scientist, a neuroscientist. One day I want to be a research scientist and own my own lab. If I didn't have a desire to read and learn and if I hadn't had such amazing teachers early on like him, I may not have chosen the same path and I may not have known what I wanted to do or who I wanted to be.

In part, I have him to thank for loving books so much that I started the Purple Shelf Club blog. Now I get to talk about the books I love and help amazing people like you along your writing journey.

If I could say one thing to him, I would say: Thank you. Thank you for trying and being the best teacher that you could be. I owe a part of who I am to you. I hope you know the impact you had on me as a child and how that has carried with me into adulthood.

Just like my teacher had an impact on me, you too could make an impact on your future readers. There is power in literature. To prove a point, here is a list of how books affected me:

- I was inspired to become a scientist
- I am multi-passionate
- I had a place to escape after a bad day
- I had characters as role models
- I fell in love with love and imagination
- I started the Purple Shelf Club and now help writers like you



Just like books have helped me, they can help you to. Reading for you is important. It's like studying. The more you read the more you learn. Reading books gives writers a chance to use different styles, voices, and forms to develop their own. This practice will help them by expanding their vocabulary and refining their technique.

There are two forms of reading. There is reading strictly for the purpose of enjoyment, and there is reading critically to learn and gain insights on what you like and don't like and what you should and should not do.

Some will suggest that you shouldn't read because it will block your creativity. To this I would say you should read anyways. If you find that reading does block your creative juices, then only read critically rather than for fun. This also applies if you absolutely detest the idea of reading all the time.

TIP: If you enjoy reading but you find it blocks your creativity, then utilize creativity boosters such as writing prompts and activities that force you to think outside the box.



Read to enjoy

You can get burnt out. So, to help, I want to remind you that reading is supposed to be enjoyable. **Only read the books that really interest you.**

If you read a book and you don't like it, put it down! It's okay to DNF (did not finish) a book. I always recommend reading one book a month, but how often you read is ultimately up to you.

There are so many benefits that come with reading.

For example, reading can help with memory, sleep, and with concentration. When you read, you are focusing on only one thing. Today, everything is about multitasking. As a result, many people find they get distracted easily. Improving your focus will help you in the long run so you can not only write but write better.

Reading will help you understand why people enjoy cozying up with a book. You are stepping into their shoes and seeing what it is a reader is looking for when they read a book like the one you will write. Fiction is entertaining and stretches your imagination. You can see the world differently and be put in someone else's shoes. It is a chance to escape from your reality and jump into someone else's.

You also get instant access to a better understanding of

- plot and story structure
- genre
- character development
- world building
- writing styles



- literary techniques
- and more.

It is also possible that the books you read will give you more ideas of your own because you can see what is overused and underutilized.

Lastly, hopefully it will plant the seed of falling in love with reading and writing with the excitement to write a book you'd be proud to put on your bookshelf, brag to your friends about, and read over and over.

Now that you understand what reading can do for you, go through your bookshelf, and find the books that are the most interesting to you and start reading them!

Then use other resources to find books you'd enjoy. These books can be any genre, not just the one that you write. Some examples of where you can find books are:

- Book clubs
- Friends
- Book blogs like the Purple Shelf Club
- PSC Top Rated Newsletter (get one 4 or 5 star rated book recommendation a month)
- Goodreads
- Forums or groups online specifically discussing books
- Libraries
- Book stores online and at physical locations



Read critically

Reading is an essential part of the creative process. The best way for a writer to improve their skills is to read well written books. Reading introduces you to many different styles of writing and helps you learn what works best for you. Reading also helps improve vocabulary and critical thinking skills, which are crucial for any writer.

Reading fiction improves empathy and understanding of other points of view, which are crucial skills for fiction writers. It's also a great way to learn about new cultures and experience places without leaving home.

To read critically means to become acutely aware of the mechanics behind the story you are reading. It is your chance to be a critic and take a deep dive into analysis. Here are some questions you can ask yourself while you are reading or after you finish the book:



Critical Thinking Questions Sheet

- What was the plot line? What story arc do they have?
- What parts of the story resonated with me emotionally?
- Were there discrepancies, inconsistencies, or plot holes within the story?
- Could I relate to the main character? Would the readers that this book targets resonate to the main character?
- Did the main character play an active role in the story or did events simply *happen* to them?
- Could the antagonist(s) be more interesting/menacing/etc.? How? Or, in what way did I feel the antagonist was a threat or a well written bad guy?
- Were there too many characters to keep track of?
- If there was a relationship (romantic, platonic), was there a connection? Did I feel the chemistry?
- Did the descriptions seem vivid? In what way?
- Did I have to reread any paragraphs to understand what was going on?
- What was the purpose of each character? What were their motivations?
- Did the characters change because of the events in the story? If so, how?
- What characters did I like/dislike and why?
- Did characters feel realistic? Were there actions believable? Can I pinpoint what made this so?
- Was the dialogue good? Why or why not?



- Were the first paragraphs and first couple of pages compelling? If not, why?
- Did the story continue to hold interest through the first few chapters?
- What were the most engaging/dry scenes? What made them engaging/dry?
- Did every scene have a focus or purpose? Did it move the story along?
- Were there any rushed scenes or scenes that took too long?
- Did anything feel forced?
- Did the end of each chapter hook me in some way that I wanted to keep reading?
- Were there any subplots? How many? Did they add to or detract from the story? Were they interesting?
- Was I able to visualize the story? Why/why not?
- What was the theme of the story? What was the tone? What were the moods throughout the story, what made that so?
- What made the beginning and end of the story good or bad?
- What was the point of view of the story?
- What was the author's writing style? What can I say about their word choice (particularly in important scenes)? Was the pace consistent? Was there enough dialogue? What was the ratio of active and passive voice?



- What was the ratio of telling vs. showing? How did they show and how did they tell? Can I pinpoint these techniques to use later in my own writing?
- Were there clichés, overused phrases, and descriptions? Were there confusing/poorly written/poorly executed scenes?
- Is the genre suited to the story? What elements of the story made this so?
- What other books and movies does this book remind me of?
- What type of reader is this story best suited for?
- Were there any characters that could have been cut out?
- Was there anything missing that would have made the book clearer or fluid?
- Would I recommend this book to a friend or fellow reader? Why or why not?
- What would I rate this book on amazon? What reasons would I give for this rating (likes/dislikes)? What were the main strengths and the main weaknesses?



Tips to become a better reader

1. Don't set a designated time to read

Many people think that if they set a time of the day to read every day that they will read more. I tried this, and it didn't work for me. If you set it at night, you could trick your brain into viewing reading as a bedtime routine. This will start to make you feel sleepy and you won't get as far as you want in your book.

If you set it in the morning, you are limiting how long you can read as you will have to stop to get ready for the day, go to work, or take care of the kids. Then there is the added difficulty of being strict with yourself to get up earlier just so that you can read. Setting a designated time is a pleasant idea, but it just doesn't pan out the way you think it will.

Instead, read when you notice you have the chance. Put in your schedule that you want to read for at least 30 minutes once a day or 3 times a week. This will not only make you more aware of your schedule, but also help you read more. You might find time in the morning one day only to find that the next day you have time after lunch or right before bed. For most people, every day is different, so your reading schedule would be too!



2. Follow along with your finger or a pen

This is the ultimate tip if you want to learn how to read faster and better! This has helped me tremendously and is honestly my favorite tip to you. It's my favorite because it works the best for me. I don't remember where I learned it, but I found out that when you read you end up rereading the sentence you are on without noticing it, which slows you down (I believe it is called back-skipping).

So, say you are on the **word** that is in bold in this sentence. What happens is you read that word, but your eyes look back to the rest of the sentence and then continue to the next word. It's natural and everyone does it.

But this slows you down quite a bit. It's also the reason you sometimes get lost on where you are on the page.

When you read by following along with your finger or a pen, you are forcing your eyes to focus on the word your finger is on, thus speeding up how much you read and improving your concentration. Once you get used to doing this (and it does take some getting used to) start speeding up how fast your finger/pen moves along the page. You'll find that you can keep up and you'll start reading even faster! Neat trick, huh?



The only problem I have with this is that it isn't as easy to do with electronic books like PDFs, e-books, and kindle books.

3. Don't sub-vocalize

This is big too. When you read, do you move your lips as if quietly saying or pronouncing the words you're reading? Or are you saying the words in your head? If so, you are sub-vocalizing, and this can slow you down exponentially.

From now on, read and keep your mouth closed. And don't read with an inner monologue. I promise your mind can comprehend the words without you pronouncing them or reading aloud!

This is probably a habit for those of you that do it but make yourself aware and every time you notice yourself doing it, just stop for a second and then try reading again. Another trick is to try reading faster than the pace you are comfortable with. This will force you to stop sub-vocalizing because you won't be able to keep up when you pronounce the words inside your head. Lastly, you can try listening to books. This eliminates the problem entirely since you are listening rather than reading the book yourself. No matter the trick you try, once you get used to reading only in your head, you will notice your reading speed picking up!



4. Reread

This is bizarre, but it will help you to read faster and better. Even though, it may not seem like it at first. Once you have finished reading a book, go back and read it again.

You will get through it faster the second time around and you will become a better reader for it too. Rereading a book helps you read faster because you already know what happens and because you are reading more.

Remember the first trick I spoke about? Yeah, reading one book twice is just like reading two books. So, the more you read, the faster you get! Yay, two tips in one!

Rereading also helps with comprehension because since you already know what's going to happen, you can pay attention to things you didn't notice the first time around. You might pick up on foreshadowing, or appreciate a clever sentence, or learn an unfamiliar word you brushed by the first time.



Rereading allows you to comprehend the book more than you could have the first time. It's like when you watch a movie for the second time and you think *hey, I never noticed that before*. Yup, the same thing happens in books too.

5. Annotate

Okay, this is my last tip to you. Annotate (write your thoughts as you are reading). This tip isn't really to help you with reading faster, but on reading better.

When you annotate as you read, you are focusing on the story, the writing, and more. Your thoughts can be reactions to the story, defining a word you didn't know before, thoughts about what will happen next, things you like and dislike as you go along. It can be absolutely anything!

Annotating will help you learn more about the book and the author, and you may find you have a stronger opinion of the book once you are finished. I try to do this with every book I read. If it is an online version, this is simple because you can just highlight and add a comment.



If it is a physical book, you can keep a notebook or write in the book like I do (you probably won't like hearing that I do that). How you decide to annotate is completely up to you!



Reading checklist

- Find a book at least once a month to read for fun
- Read nonfiction that helps improve my writing skills at least once every 3 months
- Choose at least 3 fiction books and read critically
 - Annotate while you read
 - Write out my thoughts on the book using the critical thinking questions sheet.
- I added time into my planner for reading
- I completed Step 4 in my workbook
- I commit to learning and implementing Step 5 to become an efficient writer who writes fiction consistently



Chapter 5: Practice Writing

It's not easy to write a novel. It takes a great deal of time, patience, and hard work. But the result is well worth it - hopefully you'll find that your efforts will be appreciated and rewarded.

There are many things that you can do to become a better novelist. One of the first, which we have already covered, is to read as much as you can on writing, fiction, and non-fiction novels alike. The second is to practice writing.

Someone once said something along the lines of “the key to success is implementation, not information”. Basically, you can read all you want, but if you don't apply what you learn, then it won't do anything for you at all. That piece of advice goes for this book as well. Implement the advice within this book, use what works, and ditch the rest. I am fully aware that there is no “one size fits all” to a writer's journey. So, please remember that any advice you receive should be taken with a grain of salt.

Now that I got that PSA out of the way. Let's get into the nitty gritty of it all. Before you write your book, you may want to take the time to practice writing consistently. Refer to chapter 3 to create a plan that includes writing regularly.



Whether you are writing your book or not, you should always be writing. Practice makes perfect, so keep in mind that new writers are most likely not going to produce excellent work when they start out. It might be difficult at first, but with practice, writers will find it easier and easier to write fiction. Let's investigate this some more.

What is creative writing?

“Creative writing, a form of artistic expression, draws on the imagination to convey meaning through the use of imagery, narrative, and drama”

– Duke

Creative writing takes imagination. You can improve your imagination through practice. Creative writing often draws from bits and pieces of the reality that you experience. You can draw from your childhood memories, from relationships you've had, and from good or bad moments within your life.

You can draw from the present, such as people you know, an interesting painting, or even the room that you are in. You can also draw from what you've learned, such as anything from the world's history and the people that have lived within it.



You are the only one who puts a limit on your creativity. If you can think about the future, you are using your imagination. Don't overthink it and have fun! That is the most important part.

Creative writing can take many forms:

- Novels
- Short stories
- Poems
- Scripts
- Screenplays
- Music
- Nonfiction

The format doesn't matter. The important bit is what you have to say and how you say it. So, let's get those creative juices flowing with some creative writing tips!

1. **Get in the habit of jotting down your ideas when you have them.** Keep a pencil and paper with you always. There are several types of small notebooks out there. Find one that you like and designate it as your creative writing ideas notebook. You can use it to jot down any ideas when you have them.
2. **Force yourself to be creative.** When you read, try to picture it. When someone tells you a story about their day or a conversation they had, picture it. Journal out some of your memories and try to recall as many details as possible. Ask yourself hypothetical/theoretical questions. This will take time



to get in the habit of doing. But there is no need to overwhelm yourself. Pick one and start with that.

3. **Try freewriting**
4. **Join creative writing challenges or workshops**
5. **Do something else creative.** Sometimes, you just need to get in the creative mindset. You could draw, paint, build something, or even cook/bake.
6. **Try a new writing technique.** You could learn about a new literary technique. Or write in a different form or genre. Or try a different method like the snowflake method. The idea is to break yourself out of any routines that may have gotten you into a writing rut. It pushes your brain to try something new and to think in a different way.
7. **Write a story with another author.** Step away from your work and create something amazing with an author who will think a little different from you. They may have an approach that you never even thought of before. Or writing with them could spark an amazing idea for your work.
8. **Change your environment.**
9. **Write or rewrite the most interesting scene in your story.** This could be the very end or the climax. It will probably be synonymous with the most interesting part of the book for your future readers. So, you know you will have to be as creative as possible and put in as much effort as you can.
10. **Try creating an outline not only for your entire story but individual scenes.** If you have a basic idea of what you want to happen, then all you must do is fill in the gaps. Start broad and slowly make it more and more detailed.



Tips from successful authors

"If you're using dialogue, say it aloud as you write it. Only then will it have the sound of speech"

-John Steinbeck

"If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time – or the tools – to write. Simple as that."

-Stephen King

"Always stop while you are going good and don't worry about it until you start to write the next day. That way your subconscious will work on it all the time. But if you think about it consciously or worry about it you will kill it and your brain will be tired before you start."

-Ernest Hemingway

"If you want to write, you need to keep an honest, unpublishable journal that nobody reads, nobody but you. Where you just put down what you think about life, what you think about things, what you think is fair and what you think is unfair"

-Madeleine L'Engle



“You have to get to a very quiet place inside yourself. And that doesn’t mean that you can’t have noise outside. I know some people who put Jazz on, loudly, to write. I think each writer has her or his secret path to the muse”

-Maya Angelo

Embrace knowledge. Besides always writing, you should also always learn. Learning can help you write better stories in the following ways:

- Research can lead to better characters, better descriptions, and a better understanding of the elements of your genre
- Learning unfamiliar words and phrases can help you put your thoughts onto paper
- Trying new techniques can help you come up with fresh story ideas, better scenes, and more interesting plots

So now that you have read through the tips above, it is time for you to start writing and start learning.

Try to keep a journal

Journaling every day is not easy. Trust me, I have tried. But to practice writing, you don’t need to journal every day. You just need to put focus on what it is you are journaling about. Hidden within



your journal will be so many stories you won't know which ones to start!

Here are some journal prompts to get you started and boost your creativity.

1. What are your hobbies?
2. What are your favorite TV shows? Movies? Games?
3. What are your favorite books?
4. What are your favorite topics?
5. What makes you feel fired up inside?
6. What could you talk about nonstop?
7. If you could create your own world, what would it look like?
8. How did you express your creativity as a kid? What games did you play? What stories did you make up or act out?
9. If you could escape to another part of the world or even to a fictional world, where would you go and why?
10. What is an unpopular opinion that you have? Unpopular book/movie that you love?
11. What motivates you on a regular basis? Now think of one of your favorite characters. This could be one of your own characters from a story you've written, or a character from a book/movie/show that you love. What motivated them?
12. What is the best piece of advice you have ever received? Write out 10 different ways of saying that same piece of advice. Be clever, funny, wise, ominous, etc.



13. Describe a defining moment in your life. Turn it into a fictional short story.
14. If you could come up with a language, what would you call it? What would it sound like?

Keeping a dream journal can also be a wonderful way to get some creative writing under your belt. This one is not my idea (not sure where I got it from), but it was too good not to share with you. It's as simple as it sounds too. Anytime you wake up from a dream, write down in as much detail as possible what happened in the dream. Who knows, it could be your first or next bestseller!

Avoid Procrastination Like the plague

Pretty much everyone procrastinates. Yes, you and I both are no stranger to purposeful distraction. As a writer, you are probably procrastinating writing that book by doing at least one of the following:

- Going through email
- Going on social media
- Learning about writing but not taking action
- Cleaning
- Snacking
- Napping
- Embracing another hobby



Whether your procrastination is purposeful or accidental, it most certainly is not helpful. I don't know about you, but I am a squirrely human being. I have 50 tabs (sometimes more) open on my computer and phone; I have multiple emails that I check way too often, and I often use cleaning or other less important tasks as an excuse to take a break from the more important things.

Why? Because I find everything interesting and I can't sit still for long. Plus, let's be honest, procrastinating is a million times easier than the arduous task of sitting down and getting some work done.

Sound like you?

Okay, then here are some tips for you that I personally use.

1. Use a planner every single day and check yourself weekly, monthly, and quarterly (refer to chapter 3)
2. Track your progress (word/page tracker)
3. Set deadlines
4. Schedule breaks
5. Choose the most important tasks and do them first
6. Set up a reward system for completing goals
7. Set up an organization system on your computer and your writing space
8. Avoid using your phone while working on your tasks



9. Use anti-distraction tools

You and I aren't perfect. These tips will aid you in your imperfection. They will not get rid of your procrastinating ways, but I have certainly noticed a difference from implementing them myself.



Practice writing checklist

- I chose how I will practice writing
- I set a goal of how often I will practice writing
- I added time into my planner to practice writing
- I completed Step 5 in my workbook
- I commit to continue implementing what I learned in this e-book to improve my craft and be a writer



Congratulations!

You have officially finished the Become A Writer e-book. Start implementing what you have learned by using the bonuses that came with this e-book:

- Become A Writer Workbook
- Become A Writer Checklists
- Productive Writer Planner
- Professional Authors Habits List
- A Whole New World Game Sheet
- Additional Resources and Next Steps Guide

