



Writing Tips

Due to time restraints, I do not tutor writers or do editing of other people's work. However, below are some basic tips I found helped me get started in freelance writing.

- **Locate magazines and books at the public library about writing and publishing.** Use the words “writing” and “publishing” for subject searches. Some sources I have used:
 - *Writer's Digest* magazine and books at www.writersdigest.com
 - *The Writer Magazine* at www.writermag.com .
 - *Writer's Market* is packed with info: www.amazon.com/Writers-Market-2007/dp/1582974276
 - Sally Stuart's *Christian Writers' Market Guide* (see www.stuartmarket.com)
- **Learn about query letters.** Pay attention to articles giving tips on how to write query letters. Editors are swamped with ideas and if your query letter is not well-written (including correct spelling and grammar), your submission is likely to be ignored.
- **If you are a spiritual person, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.** This actually ought to be #1 on the list, but I usually think of it last. (I'm improving—this time I thought of it at #3!)
- **If you want to make an instant million dollars, freelancing is not the way to do it.** Most the freelancers I know actually have other means of income (especially as beginning freelancers). They teach a night class, work part time at something else, give speeches, or live off their spouse's wages.
- **Make a plan of when and where you will write.** It may not always work, you may not “feel like it” and sometimes you may even have to change the plan. However, you have to clear a space to write and really *sit down and write* or you will never do it. Don't fool yourself. Writing is hard work—but also rewarding if you enjoy the process.
- **Writers groups can be supportive.** Try to locate one in your area or start one at your church or coffee shop. Some people find that writing groups are not their style. I think a lot depends on your personality.
- **Writing classes are a plus.** In the Twin Cities area, the Loft Literary Center (see www.loft.org) has all sorts of resources, classes, and workshops on the various aspects of writing and getting published.
- **Always consider your audience.** *Who are you writing for?* What you write is a means of communicating with another mind, another soul. Certainly you must express your own creativity, but the way you express yourself will be different in a children's book, a sports fan's book, an academic work, or a humorous piece. This sounds so basic, but it is sometimes forgotten.

Best wishes and blessings in all your creative endeavors! ~ Julie McCarty