

Tips for a New Writer

- Begin writing. Don't worry about how it sounds the first time through... just write.
- When possible, develop a rudimentary 'goal' (a potential ending); a theme (or themes); a rudimentary setting (temporal [time] as well as geographic); a rudimentary set of characters - including the protagonist (sometimes a 'hero' - i.e. the main character); one or more antagonists (those who hinder, or attempt to hinder the protagonist from achieving his/her goal); and the supporting characters (family, friends, co-workers, etc.)
- You can use tools such as Topical (or other types of) Outlining to help you develop the story line; and logically keep track of your continuity along the way. Maintaining logical continuity in your story is highly desirable; as it is a hallmark of professional writing; and nobody wants to read a story that has no logical progression; with unexplained holes and gaps along the way.
- Consider using authoring software, if you do not have a good feel for going it on your own. This can be expensive, but can help the novice and professional alike in developing solid stories using some of the tried and true formulas that have been analyzed in creating such software.
- It's not always the best idea to send your manuscript in for publishing the second you finish it. Give yourself awhile to consider revising and rewriting. This may be a few days to a few weeks. Step away for a bit, and then come back. There always will be things in your novel that you may wish that you had done differently. Don't linger too long - revise it; spell-check it; grammar-check it; pick a time when you feel the manuscript is ready; let friends, colleagues and select others review it; get feedback; apply or don't apply that feedback. Get an agent - have the agent submit it; **OR** go the small independent press route.
- It's really up to you, the writer, regarding how long you should take to revise/rewrite.
- Consider joining an online writing community. This can provide support and feedback/peer reviews. Or, even better yet, join a critique group locally to get their personal feedback on a personal basis and it also allows you to be inspired and around other writers for the often overlooked support from people with the same goals and problems.
- Consider an agent and hope for a large publisher or small press before a vanity press. NOTE: Many e-publishers really are just another form of "vanity publishing" -

they claim "no costs," but you end up paying fees for various add-ons, premium 'this' and premium 'that'. REAL Publishers pay you.

- Many e-pubs and small presses are offering print versions of their books through the benefits of Print on Demand services like Lulu. Also, with MOST NON-TRADITIONAL (small presses) PUBLISHERS, be prepared to help promote your own work by setting up a blog and attending online chats, as well as other promotions AND other leg-work on YOUR part!
- Write your story the way *you* want. There are markets for all genres. You can search for publishers based on the keywords that you think describe your story best. Many publishers cater to a broad variety of tastes in readers and writers.
- Make your idea as original as possible; or make it a truly unique twist on an already-existing idea. Without realizing it, you could be taking storylines from books you've read or movies you've seen. Conversely, using other works as inspiration is a useful writing method - just be sure to avoid plagiarism and clichés as much as possible.
- Use writing advice that works best for you - different writers write differently. Regarding writing advice: "One size" does NOT fit all.
- You do not have to write about something you already know: you always can research and learn about things you wish to incorporate into your plot. Use the Internet, libraries, interviews, etc. as tools to assist in research.
- One method of developing a novel is to begin with the ending in mind: If you know the ending of the story, it can help you form the theme, the plot, the settings, and the characters; and it can help you more easily progress toward that ending.
- Develop your characters to be as multi-dimensional as possible - flat, boring, uninteresting characters can kill even the best story before it gets off the ground. Sometimes your characters will begin to develop in ways you hadn't expected. Don't panic! This can be a good thing, and it can add new and refreshing directions for you in your plot. Try to base your characters on real-life experiences and on what motivations and traits that you believe your characters would have in an equivalent real-life setting. Use your imagination fully; use your interactions with others as an initial basis. Also, don't be afraid to research various personality types for character material.
- Another tip that might prove useful is a "big picture" approach: Try to create the world (the overall setting and environment), and then build on it to create your novel. Base your characters around the world that you have created (geography, races, towns, cities, capitals, cults, factions, governments, etc.)

- Try to avoid throwing away ANY ideas! In writing, it's often a good practice to have MORE material than you actually need, so please try to retain ALL of your ideas (even those you may have considered tossing out earlier). At times, you may need "filler ideas" to finish out a sub-plot and move to the main plot along. Set up a computer or hard copy file for all "discards" and other ideas for future reference. This also helps when you have to cut the great idea that didn't really fit and you don't want to lose it. Put it in the file for future reference.

Things you will need

- A clear mind. You can't do anything without clearing your mind.
- A quiet place to sit and work.
- Loads of stamina, perseverance, and the willpower to plough on and finish what you start, running with your idea to its conclusion rather than abandoning it midway through.
- A dictionary and thesaurus. You might need to look up words or you might need a different word to use. This will help!
- A computer or typewriter.