



Want to improve your writing? Brush up on the basic skills and rules of the English language (or whatever language you are writing in). Look at other writers working in your genre. Don't compare yourself to them; instead, learn from them. Get involved in a writers' group in your community. Your local library or college will carry writing publications and journals. They'll help sharpen your skills and often list publishing opportunities.

Getting Started

You have an excellent idea, and it would make a brilliant book. Is it a poignant romance or an action-packed detective thriller? Before the words flow, consider your skill set.

Expertise: What is your knowledge level? The tools of your trade include spelling, grammar, punctuation, and the organizational elements of story creation. As a writer, you need to express yourself effectively. If your knowledge level could be higher, consider taking a course. Look at the following words.

A woman without her man is nothing. Now, punctuate this sentence.

A woman, without her man, is nothing. Meaning a woman is nothing without a man

A woman: without her, a man is nothing. Meaning without a woman, a man is nothing.

If your readers can't follow the storyline, will they buy your book?

1. Know yourself: Do you prefer to plan every detail of your story or let the story lead you? Some writers spend up to a year laying out details of the story, characters, and plot before they put pen to paper. Others allow the story to flow. I am in the middle of the road and need some planning.
2. Message: What message are you giving your readers? Love conquers all? Work hard and be honest, and you will succeed. Never give up? Be clear on your message.
3. Conflict: What is conflict? Conflict drives stories and keeps the reader interested. Without conflict, the story is boring. Your main characters and their conflicts are the heart of your book. The protagonist and the antagonist (and sometimes the orbital characters) want something. They face challenges in pursuit of their goal. Something, or someone, is preventing them from doing this. Who wins? That is what keeps your reader turning pages.
4. Characters: You have a main character (a hero or protagonist) and an opposing character (an antagonist or villain). The conflict between them is crucial. Is one good and the other evil? No. They're people like any other. Give both of them strengths and weaknesses. A one-dimensional character, even a hero, is not believable.



5. The Character Arc: The learning curve is necessary. Both characters are flawed. They have strengths and weaknesses, which keep them interesting. The protagonist appears at the beginning of the story. During the conflict, your hero engages in conflict with the antagonist (and often themselves) because of their flaws and issues. They may reach their goals or fail. The antagonist is also struggling with personal shortcomings. How do you see it ending?

6. POV: Point of View is the voice that tells your story.

First Person (I, me): used in all genre's common in detective stories like Sherlock Holmes.

Second Person (you, your): common in short stories, flash fiction, or poetry.

Third Person (he, she, it): used when the author narrates the story. It is widespread in fiction.