



January 2013

Write first, revise later: How to avoid sabotaging your creativity

Do you sit down to write only to find yourself, one hour later, agonizing over the first sentence? Do you stress over details until you are waist-deep in Internet forums and style guides, yet have nothing to show for it? If this describes you, you might be falling victim to too much revision. One of the most common pieces of advice that come out of writing courses and seminars is: Just write! Easier said than done, right? Sometimes it is best to get something down on paper (or computer screen) and evaluate its merit later. Try some of these tricks:



- Open up a new Word document and turn off your screen. Start typing anything that comes into your head. Don't worry about correcting any typos. Just keep going!
- Take a blank piece of paper and a pen and start jotting down words. You can draw arrows and make webs to connect words and ideas. You may not follow up on every idea, but you'll at least have a lot to work with.
- Check out NaNoWriMo.org. National Novel Writing Month challenges writers to write a novel of 50,000 words in a month. It's all about the word count, as there is little time to revise if you are going to meet that goal. The event takes place every November; however, the website contains tips and tricks that can help you all year.

The importance of reading as a writer

Of all the advice that professional writers give, there are two recommendations that tend to come up repeatedly: Write a lot and read a lot.

The advice to simply write is obvious, but certainly many of us underestimate the hours of practice it takes to get good at a craft. If you don't write and write some more, you won't get better at it—simple.

Many aspiring writers will struggle with their early works. Some will attempt a novel or two and get frustrated as to why things just don't seem to fit together. Or maybe they find that their novel works but isn't quite as good as they had hoped it would be. What can such a writer do?

It's especially important for budding writers to ensure they are reading widely and often. Works of literature don't spring from nothing; they have a foundation in inspiration and influence. This, of course, comes from other books, and not simply books similar to the work in question.

If, for example, you are attempting to write mysteries, limiting your reading to the genre will limit your imagination. Mystery stories aren't influenced merely by other mystery stories. They are also influenced by the classics, mainstream fiction, and even speculative fiction to some extent. This applies to virtually any storytelling. Writers also find ideas in books on history, politics, philosophy, and more. Ideas are also found in the visual arts, film and television, music, and the news.

Reading widely will introduce you to ideas that you may not have ever come across otherwise. The key is to challenge yourself to expand your horizons. Read books that you wouldn't otherwise be interested in, and you just might find that you were mistaken. Read the good and the bad. One is a perfect example of what to do, while the other is a perfect example of what to avoid doing. Every book will be a learning experience.

Be sure to spend your time as a writer reading the works of others. It will pay off more than you can imagine.



Ardith's Notebook is a monthly newsletter for writers and self publishers.

To unsubscribe to Ardith's Notebook email us and ask us to take you off our subscription list at info@ardith.ca

Our mailing address is:
520 Princess Avenue. London, Ontario, N6B 2B8

Our telephone:
1-877-288-0114

Copyright (C) 2013 | Ardith Publishing | All rights reserved.

[Forward](#) this email to a friend