

Top Writing Tips

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First of all don't think 'I'll write this novel/story/poem' in such and such a time, just give yourself so many hours a day and write. The number of words you have are number of words you have. And that is it.

Think of a first draft as just that – a DRAFT. For most of us we don't really fully realise what something is until we're drafting it for a 2nd, 3rd or even 4th or 5th or 6th time! So don't feel you have to know all the answers of why/what/who in your story until you're on the very last draft. If even then. Leave that up to the reader. They are very good at joining the dots you make.

There are rules that are cliches that come with 'How to Write' – they are

- 1) Avoid cliché. And by that I mean cliché of expression, plot and character.
- 2) Less is more
- 3) and...Show don't tell.

But of course like any rules that are cliches you can do whatever you want, if you're fully in control.

And I like to add: think of your fictional world as a sensual one, you have to communicate via your senses. How does your character/characters interpret their world sensually? What do they hear, taste, smell, touch?

So to carry on with the Writing Tips -

Drink a lot of tea.

Take many of breaks to drink said tea.

READ.

Carry a notebooks.

Don't get lazy and think, 'I'll write that down when I get home,' because the older you get the more holes there will be in your memory so get in down as soon as you see/hear/think about 'it'.

If you're stuck – and the blank page can be a scary thing- take a first line from any book on your shelves and simply carry on from that line. Write feverishly for 4 minutes.

If you're stuck, have your character/s say something. Dialogue equals action and something will happen.

Don't worry too much about how other writers 'do it' – you'll have your own way.

If you're stuck go for a walk/play the cello/paint a picture/do whatever activity takes your mind off writing and puts it onto juggling a story in your head.

Finally, if you want to write a story you will write a story but don't worry about the label' being a writer' – it's nothing magical, it's a job, a creative one but as Richard Ford recently said 'it's an amateur's art.'

Try and enjoy it. Don't forget to live.