

50 Inspirational ways to kick-start your writing



These 50 tips will provide inspiration and motivation to help kick-start a daily writing routine that will take you closer to your goals.

There are lots of great ideas covering the issues that many writers face - making time to write, creating the right mindset, finding inspiration, keeping motivated and developing as a writer.

Good luck with your writing.

For lots more tips and inspiration on the writing life please visit www.sandrashannon.co.uk/blog/

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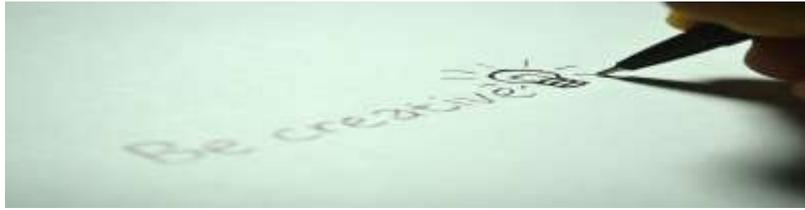
Making time to write



- 1) Cutting down on TV is probably the easiest way to claw back some precious writing time - ask yourself if you really need to watch the news every night, which is usually full of depressing stories anyway!
- 2) Order your food shopping online and get it delivered. Most big supermarkets now charge only minimal delivery fees. After the first order your shopping list is saved so it shouldn't take long to do every week. Spend that hour or so you've saved writing.
- 3) Most of the spare time we have is spread throughout the day; don't let this stop you. Even 20 minutes writing is better than nothing and it all adds up.
- 4) If you commute any distance to work take your laptop/tablet and use the time to write.
- 5) Set your alarm clock a little earlier each morning until you've got an extra hour to play with. Use the time to write.
- 6) Household chores will still be there tomorrow so follow the example of JK Rowling who openly admits she didn't do any housework for four years when writing the Harry Potter books. In reality you'll still need to do something but you can do it in half the time if you go faster - or better still get someone else to do it for you; for free of course.
- 7) Make sure family/friends know you are writing and that you are serious about it so no interruptions unless the house is on fire!
- 8) If you find you keep getting distracted book out a computer at your local library for a couple of hours each day for three or four weeks. At the end of your allotted time you should have successfully embedded a daily writing habit that you can then continue at home.
- 9) Enlist the help of a partner or writing buddy to make sure you are writing when you've said you are. Let them know they have full permission to check up on you and push you if necessary.
- 10) If you work full-time use your lunch hour to get some writing done. If you don't want to take your lap-top to work take a pad and pencil - you might find it quite inspiring to write in longhand for a change.

Creating the right mindset

- 1) Think about what you want to say to people who ask what you do. Get it straight in your own mind so that you can speak about your writing with confidence.
- 2) Affirmations are a great way to get into the right mindset to be a successful writer. Trick your subconscious into believing that you've already achieved your dream and positive things will start to happen.
- 3) If any of your friends/family question your goals or decry your dream you might have to face the fact that you'd be better off not spending too much time in their company. Negativity will have an adverse effect on your mindset.
- 4) Music can sometimes help when writing by providing a gentle relaxing background noise or a loud invasive sound that blocks out the world. Experiment to see if either work for you.
- 5) It's important to have your own space to write in, no matter how big or small. It should be a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable and everyone knows it is your writing space.
- 6) Trying to write if you've got a thousand things on your mind will be difficult. Write down a to-do list before you start writing, then clear your mind knowing you can deal with them when you've finished.
- 7) Cultivate a sense of urgency when it comes to your writing. It's important to you so put it at the top of your list instead of something that has to be fitted in and only done if you've got the time after you've completed all your other tasks.
- 8) Creating a daily writing habit will reinforce your sense of urgency. Work out how many words a day you think you can manage and then keep a daily log. It takes about three weeks to create a permanent habit.
- 9) Reading is as important as writing so make sure you always have a book on the go. There's always something to be learned even from bad writing.
- 10) Free writing is used as a way of warming up before you start your actual writing session. You should pick a one word topic and then time yourself to write for about 10 minutes, without stopping to think through the sentences. The idea is to write whatever comes into your head, even if you go off topic, without judgement or criticism. If you ever get writer's block it's a great way to get going again.



Finding Inspiration

- 1) Visit somewhere new in your home town then write about it; either fiction or non-fiction or even both.
- 2) Most of us have pictures hanging on our walls - pick out a favourite and write a story around it.
- 3) Choose a genre that you wouldn't normally go for and give it a go; you might surprise yourself.
- 4) Write a dialogue piece between two characters from opposite ends of the scale, for instance, young/old, healthy/ill, rich/poor, nasty/nice, introvert/extrovert, etc. Put them in whatever situation you want and see what develops.
- 5) Think of all the senses - sight, sound, taste, touch and smell - and write a short piece (fiction or non-fiction) incorporating them all.
- 6) Imagine a house your character is visiting for the first time and bring it to life in around 300 words or less.
- 7) Find a friend or colleague who is willing to be interviewed and then write it up with an introduction and a suitable ending.
- 8) Write a fictional story or a non-fiction article about a natural disaster, ie storm, floods, earthquake, etc.
- 9) Search through some of your earlier writing, even childhood attempts, find a suitable piece and rewrite it.
- 10) Visit your local museum with notebook and pen - jot down ideas as you walk around and then go home and write up a fiction/non-fiction piece taking inspiration from your outing.

Keeping Motivated

- 1) Set yourself challenging but realistic goals for both short-term and long-term. Write them down and refer to them often.
- 2) Do something every day to move closer to your goals and keep momentum going.
- 3) Reward yourself when you hit a goal. The reward doesn't have to be lavish but it should be something that you appreciate.
- 4) The writing world is full of deadlines so set your own and try to stick to them as it will help to keep you moving forward in your writing journey. If you don't make the deadline, obviously it's not the end of the world, just re-set the date and push on.
- 5) Look after yourself by taking a break every so often. Writing, either on a laptop or by hand is tiring and repetitive and mammoth sessions without breaks will burn you out quickly. Office workers are recommended to take a break from their screens every hour and this can be just five or ten minutes away from the desk. Walk around, get a coffee, gaze out of the window for five minutes and then back to work.
- 7) Find someone who is where you want to be and ask them how they got there. A mentor who is willing to give you some of their time on a regular basis can be invaluable when you first start writing.
- 8) Make sure your writing space is clutter free. Rooms crammed with junk can drain your creativity.
- 9) Let your friends and family know your aims so that you become accountable to them. Obviously they should support your ambitions.
- 10) Writing is hard work and there will be times when you just don't feel like it or the words won't come. Pushing forward on days like that is what will make you into a successful writer. Have a few projects on the go so if you get stuck with one move onto a different one.





Developing as a Writer

- 1) Throughout your life as a writer you will be constantly learning and developing your craft. Buy into this concept at the outset and always be open to training and opportunities to learn something new.
- 2) Cultivate professionalism if you want to make a living from your writing. If you see it as a serious business others will see it that way too.
- 3) A good writing group can provide constructive criticism and suggestions as to where to send work, if that's your aim. The best ones also run workshops and have speakers to help and inspire their members.
- 4) Trying out different types of writing in both fiction and non-fiction will stretch you as a writer and help you to find which direction you want to go in.
- 5) If you think your grammar may need dusting off and polishing up a bit, get yourself a copy of *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. This little pocket book is used and recommended by many writers including Stephen King.
- 6) Writing can be a lonely existence so attending writing conferences or festivals is good way to meet like-minded people and make some good contacts.
- 7) Read through your early work from time to time to see how far you've come as a writer.
- 8) If you've got a vague notion that you want to write a book get started on it right away. No writing is ever wasted and the quicker you start the quicker you'll finish. Some people spend their whole life thinking about writing a book - don't be one of them.
- 9) Nothing worth doing is ever easy so be prepared to put in some serious hard work on your book and enjoy the feeling of achievement as you clock up each chunk of a thousand words.
- 10) If you have a really bad dry spell, and it does happen occasionally, try not to panic (unless of course you have a looming deadline that can't be moved and then... panic!) Instead, relax and have a day away from your writing to clear your head. If that doesn't work phone your writer friends that you met at the conference and ask for help and inspiration.

I hope you have found these tips useful - if so please tell your writer friends.

If you would like more help and inspiration please subscribe to my mailing list to get my latest posts straight to your inbox by visiting www.sandrashannon.co.uk

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