

Writer's Quest

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Dear Writer,

Build your writing skills with this issue's exercise; learn all about e-book writing, and read how Peggy Somers writes her books.

Please contact us via email or check our web site if you would like to contribute to our e-zine.

Happy writing!

From the Writer's Quest team

Writers' Corner Solving Writers' Block: Building Your Storytelling Skills

by Mary Broadhurst © 2008

Another way to make stories interesting while paying particular attention to the 'show, don't tell' rule is to let your characters carry the burden. How a person reacts or conducts himself/herself will often tell how that person really feels or thinks. It doesn't have to be a quarrel or some other related conflict. In fact, this exercise has nothing to do with conflict, it's on how a person handles an every-day occurrence. This is where your expertise as a writer has to shine; you can't rely on conversation to get your point across, you can't use any other person except the one character.

Make a list of all the possible ways your character can express his/her feelings without speaking. For example: facial expressions, such as frowning; hand gestures, such as waving or pointing; and so on.

You're going to be given a particular situation and character; see how creative you can be without changing

work. [Send us](#) the release date and/or a review. It's free.

character; see how creative you can be without changing the situation or the character, at least for this exercise, we'll consider other characters at a later date. Why be so strict with the character? Because men and women behave differently, a younger person will behave differently than an older person, and a person who has had a bad day will act differently to someone who has had a great day. Attire has a lot to do with our actions: a woman wearing high-heels will have to be a little more careful of not slipping than a workman wearing boots. Take everything into consideration.

The situation: A person leaving the warmth and comfort of his/her car to pick up take-away for dinner. The pizza shop is across the street, which means your character has to run across a road. It's been raining all day, the roads are slippery and it's starting to hail just as your character locks the door of the car and is ready to dash across.

The character: A thirty-something lady who has been run ragged with a children's party. The pizza shop's only driver is sick so she had to pick it up and get back to her house before twenty hungry and excitable children destroy her home. Think how would she be dressed if she's been taking care of kids all day. Would her hair be well groomed or pulled back into a ponytail? You'll need to create your character before you place her in the situation.

Now, go to it.



Having trouble with your story or article?

Why not post the problem to our Writers' Workshop forum and gain help from other writers. It's free!

Sentence Starter ...

Many writers suffer the 'blank page' complex; therefore, each month we will supply you with a first sentence. Now your page isn't blank any more. Let your imagination take you on a journey.

This issue's sentence starter:

The lazy sun's rays crept along his body; I strained to see his chest rise and fall ...

Views on Writing

What is Freelance E-book Writing?

(Reprint article)

By Brian Konradt

Along with blogging and SEO writing, writing e-books is one of the newest forms of freelance writing. E-books involve a wide variety of subject matter and lets you stretch your writing abilities, rather than being confined to low word counts or narrow subjects. Because of this - and because of the decent pay rate and almost zero overhead - writing e-books is both creatively satisfying, and a lucrative one.

Structuring Your E-book

Writing an e-book is different in both content and structure than writing an article or a series of articles. An average magazine article of 2,000 words gives you time to introduce a topic, develop it, discuss some of its implications, and conclude neatly within the allotted word count. Shorter articles - maybe 400 words - give you a sentence or two of introduction, maybe three brisk paragraphs, and a hint of conclusion. E-books, at a bare minimum, give you eight single-spaced pages of material, or about 4,000 words. An e-book is going to reach the thirty, fifty, even hundred-plus page range and contain many more topics and subtopics.

The vast length of an e-book precludes the simple introduction-development-conclusion model that applies to article writing. Instead, you have to develop sophisticated ways to lead your reader through all topics in your e-book. This doesn't have to be a chore: in fact, it's one of the most enjoyable, creative parts of writing an e-book.

For example, if you're writing about DIY home building, you can start your first chapter with the topic 'Materials and Planning', then lead your readers to the next chapter on 'Building the Foundation', and then to chapters on wiring, walls, and roof.

If you're writing about the history of soda, you may decide a different approach, moving chronologically and focusing on a single era-defining soda brand per chapter.

The structure of your book isn't just a necessary evil: it determines the overall flow of your argument, and should be well nailed down before you start writing. Once you start writing, you'll thank yourself for setting out a structure beforehand: it's easy to lose your creative flow in a complicated topic, and developing a good structure

in a complicated topic, and developing a good structure can keep you on the right path from start to finish.

Writing Your E-book

In the actual writing, avoid the temptation to pad; your audience can tell. If a chapter seems too slight to you - or if you just want the book to be longer - add additional information from your research and write a subsection or add another chapter.

There's no topic so narrow that you can't expand it or use as a starting point for another topic altogether. As long as you're not exceeding your original chapter structure (or going off on tangents that don't relate to your topics), there's no reason not to include as much supplementary material as possible. If it's all well integrated with your topic, supplementary material makes your book more comprehensive, more interesting to a wider audience, and a better product.

If you're writing an e-book for another individual, such as a corporation, or some other entity, you won't have to deal with marketing the e-book. Just make sure the client is paying you at or above your hourly rate.

Marketing Your E-book

If you're writing an e-book for yourself, you'll need to do some work to market your product. At the very least, your e-book should have its own home page, preferably with some free content or even a sample chapter from the book.

Link exchanges are another good promotional tool. Find someone with a web page that deals with the same topic, email the site's admin, and ask whether they'd be willing to participate in a link exchange. A link exchange means your e-book's home site puts up a link to the related site's content and vice versa. Many people will say yes to a link exchange, and it's a good way to connect with a wider pool of online traffic (some of whom will hopefully buy the book).

If you have a number of different e-books, you can cross-promote them in one another. If you have a blog, you have a ready-made audience of people interested in your writing who might buy the book.

Finally, portal sites full of e-books (similar to Amazon.com for traditional books) are the closest approximation e-books have to a traditional bookstore, and a good way to make your book known to the e-book audience.

The Glory of E-book Writing

E-book writing is a much larger undertaking than other freelance writing projects. It involves the ability to develop a good chapter structure, to stick to it, and to keep the quality of writing consistent (i.e. never padded) throughout the entire length of the e-book.

Once you're finished, you have a substantial piece of work behind you, and one that can earn you profits almost immediately and continuously through the e-book's lifespan. If you can write clearly and effectively on a broad and interesting topic, and if you can promote your work vigorously, e-book writing is one of the best ways to launch a career in writing.

About the Author:

Brian Konradt is the author of the book, *Freelance Poker Writing: How to Make Money Writing for the Gaming Industry*, available at www.FreelancePokerWriting.com.

Learn more about different writing careers at <http://www.WritingCareer.com>.

Article Source: <http://www.reprint-content.com>

Résumé Builder:

Write That Book!

(Rewrite article)
by Peggy Somers

You're inspired by an idea for a book and decide to sit down and start writing. You take your laptop to a quiet comfortable spot in your home and open up your document. Then, you stare at the screen. Ideas race through your head, but where do you start? What do you call it? Panic grips you as you think about all of the details you're missing. Relax. Been there, done that. Only now I've written five books with a sixth in the works.

First, focus on your content and plot. What is it you want to get across to your readers? What is the basic theme of your inspiration? Make a list if you have more than one then prioritise them. You may find you have one overlaying theme and the rest are subsets of that.

Now that you've started a list, let's talk about characters. Who are they and how do they relate to one another? Each character needs a mini-bio to give him/her depth, but don't get bogged down in the details. As you write your story your characters should develop, bringing out the important details of their past at key moments in your book.

Where is your story located? Are you familiar with the area or is it somewhere you've never visited but seen on a travel show on TV? If it's somewhere you spent a lot of

a travel show on TV? If it's somewhere you spent a lot of time, how long ago was it? Places can change quickly so make sure your information is up to date. Use the internet to research the locations in your book, even the ones you are familiar with. You may find something new and interesting about places you thought you knew well. Books that take place in the future must also have some basis for their setting and plot.

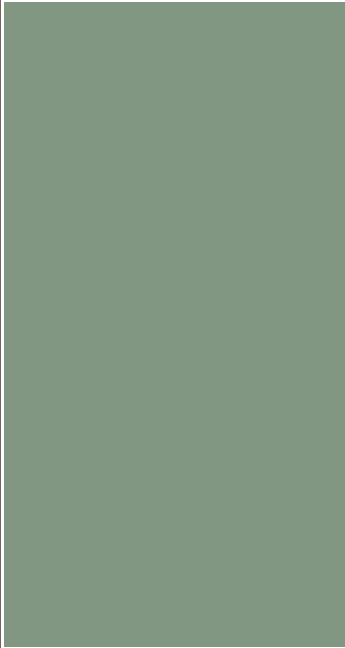
Another technique is to visualise what it is you're going to write about. Sometimes you have to develop a picture in your mind, filling in details little by little. Write it all down, everything you see. Describe the setting. Is it indoors, outdoors, who is present? Write down anything that is relevant and contributes to the mood of your story.

Start writing. Make sure you use your grammar and spelling checker. When you come to a point where you feel like stopping, read over what you have written. Read it as if you were reading it for the first time. Expand the descriptions where you feel necessary or edit out unnecessary information. Maybe you've included things that you want to bring into the story later. Put them on your list.

For every book I have written I have at least one list. Most of the time I have more than one supporting document: a list of the plot, subplots, events, etc.; a list of characters with short bios; a list of places with descriptions. I also use maps on the internet and other applicable web sites. Finally, I make a timeline. Telling you about timelines is another whole subject. Please watch for my article about storytelling timelines.

For those who are inspired to write, the bottom line is to be organised and try to be as factual as you can even if you are writing fiction. Sometimes it helps to read your story out loud so you can audibly hear it instead of in your head, the way you think you wrote it. So, now just sit down and write that book!

About the Author: Peggy Somers is a passionate romantic who lives in a lovely coastal community north of San Diego. She always dreamed of writing books and took several writing courses in college. Her years at two prominent San Francisco Bay Area universities included studying drama, dance, music, economics and math. And her travel adventures to China, Hong Kong, Europe, Australia and New Zealand provided inspiration for her writing. Visit <http://www.PeggysRomanceNovels.com>
Source: <http://www.isnare.com>



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