



# Fiction Writing Tips

Writing is a process, no matter the genre. Fiction writing can be especially challenging because it contains many different writing elements. Fiction writing can be especially challenging because it contains many different writing elements, but there are ways to overcome these challenges. Improving can become complicated if one does not know how to start. The following 15 tips and outside resources can guide you through your revision journey.

## Tip #1 Read

Read anything and everything you can find. Reading helps expand your vocabulary and general knowledge. It can also assist in improving the fluidity within your writing. It will also give you an understanding of what audiences look for as well as insight of what is currently available to them. You will also begin to recognize common story beats and can incorporate these into your own writing.

## Tip #2 Find your voice

Voice is how you express personal attitude and character. Don't feel like you have to sound like Shakespeare or Jane Austen. Every writer has a unique style based on their values and ideas. Determine yours and convey them through your writing. Voice also varies between characters. Each character has a voice that distinguishes them from another character. It will take time establishing what is important to you and learning how to implement it in your writing, but it will help you connect to your readers.

## Tip #3 Practice writing

Practicing helps you improve your work. Decide what to focus on during practice, such as character development or describing the scene. Journaling every day is an easy way to practice because it promotes a flow of ideas. [Think Written](#) is a great website for finding prompts to guide you if you struggle to find your own ideas.

## Tip #4 Establish a routine

Schedule a time to work on writing a few times a week. Using a writing routine helps establish consistency which will lead to enhanced writing. The routine should consist of a time and place. Make a routine that works for you and stick to it!

## Tip #5 Finding a Genre That Works for You

Finding your favorite genre to write is a process where you will test many out. You may choose one that is your favorite, or you may like writing in multiple genres. Start by writing in the genres you most often read, such as science fiction, romance, or horror. Don't feel the need to perfectly align your genre with the typical tropes. You can merge genres together or even branch out and invent something entirely new within your favorite genre.



## Tip #6 Write what you know

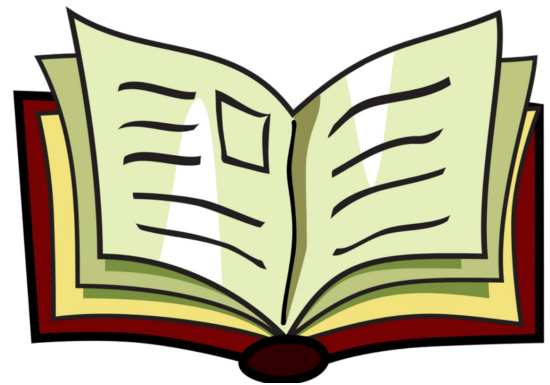
Try to use your experiences and knowledge when determining your topic. You will better connect with your readers because you will feel more confident with your writing. Your experiences and knowledge are the best place to draw inspiration because you are more comfortable with the topic about which you are writing when it is something you know. This is especially helpful when starting to write fiction. However, you also have the creative freedom to explore other topics in your writing.

## Tip #7 Carry a notebook with you

You never know when inspiration may strike. Also, you do not want to ruin the moment by forgetting your idea, so carry a notebook. You can write down observations that may provide inspiration for future work, use it for practice or as part of your routine.

## Tip #8 Stick to the main plot

While subplots can add depth to the story, focusing on them too much pulls the readers' attention from your main idea. Staying on track with the main plot also helps to avoid discontinuities and plot holes. Decide what you want the reader to be most focused on and add detail accordingly.



## Tip #9 Hook your readers

Make sure to open the story in a way that will encourage the readers to continue and finish the story. Peak their curiosity so they crave to know what happens next. If you don't hook your readers, they will lose focus and not finish your piece of writing. If you don't know the perfect way to start your story just yet, you can skip it and return to it at the end. Knowing how your story ends might help you create a stronger introduction.

## Tip #10 Show, don't tell

Use detail to describe the story to the readers rather than explaining what is occurring. Using detail will allow the readers to create the scene in their head and is much more impactful. Explaining emotions and events can disengage the reader and keeps the story flat. Instead, make use of literary devices like setting, imagery, indirect characterization, dialogue, and symbolism to show your reader what's happening. For example, instead of saying, 'He was so tired,' you can say, 'He could barely keep his eyes open.'

## Tip #11 Avoid generalizations and clichés

Generalizations don't add specific information to the writing and can be applied to many situations. Instead, use specific details related to the story that help the reader stay connected. Clichés, which is an overused and ineffective trope or use of language, are repetitive and may cause the reader to become bored.



## Tip #12 Allow your story to play out

Writers often have the habit of rushing through the story to arrive at the next big event. One way to avoid this issue is writing only one chunk of the story at a time. Make sure each part is written in detail and sufficiently developed. Will the readers be able to immerse themselves into your story? Or will they feel like they are missing important pieces?

## Tip #13 Jump Around in Your Story if Needed

If you lose inspiration while writing your current scene, don't be afraid to jump to the next one. Writing doesn't have to be (and often isn't) linear. If you know how the story ends, write the ending first. If you have random, unconnected scenes, you can write those ones out and connect them later. Don't force yourself to start from the beginning!

## Tip #14 Know your audience

Who you are writing for will determine the path your story takes. Are you writing for adults? Teenagers? Children? Each age group has a specific set of ideals and values. For example, young adults may believe truly good people deserve a happy ending. Your audience also determines what style of language you should use. Will your audience be familiar with slang? What about technical terminology?



## Tip #15 Revise

Don't agonize over getting it right the first time. Try to write the complete draft before going back and changing it. Also, check for inconsistencies or awkward parts within each draft. If you constantly feel the need to go back and revise what you have currently written, it helps to remember that you will be a stronger writer many weeks or months in the future when you have finished the first draft. Remember, revising is not just proofreading; revising is improving. Our resources for [revising](#) and [editing](#) can prove very useful!

## Tip #16 Have fun

The most important part of writing is to make sure you are enjoying it. You are never forced to continue a story you lose interest in. Write for your pleasure as much as the audience's. If writing stops being fun, look for a way to find the joy in it again.



## Resources

- [NaNoWriMo](#): With this website, you can receive daily tasks to help you write a novel in thirty days. It can help you develop a routine for writing everyday.
- [The Art of Narrative](#): A website that lists a multitude of writing resources.
- *On Writing* by Stephen King: King provides a series of snapshots from his life that formed him into the writer he is today. The snapshots range from his time as a child to his adult adventures.
- *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White: This short book covers topics from grammar and language to composition and personal style.

**Further Assistance:** For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.

**Sources Consulted:** The Quad, English Oxford Living Dictionaries, Daily Writing Tips, HuffPost, iUniverse, Writer's Digest