

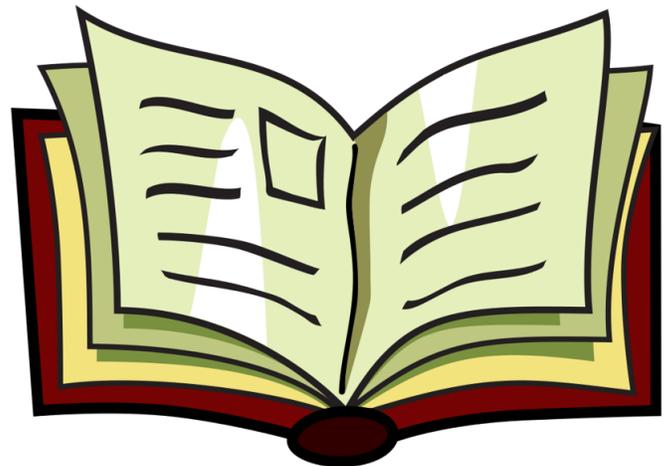


Fiction Writing Tips

Writing is a process, no matter the genre. Fiction writing can be especially challenging because it contains many different writing elements. Even the best writers look for ways to improve. 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.

Our Top 15 Tips

- 1. Read.** Read anything and everything you can find. Reading helps expand your vocabulary and general knowledge and can 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.
- 2. Find your voice.** Voice is how you write your works and 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. 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.
- 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.
- 4. Establish a routine.** Find a time to work on writing every day. Ideally, this time would be when you are most creative. Using a writing routine helps establish consistency which will lead to enhanced writing. The routine should consist of a time, place, and topic. Maybe it changes every day of the week; maybe it's only every other day. Make a routine that works for you and stick to it!
- 5. Don't limit yourself to one genre.** 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. Once you feel like you have mastered your favorites, try genres your friends prefer and move out of your comfort zone.
- 6. Write what you know.** 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.
- 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 in it or use it for practice or as part of your routine.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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





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 are repetitive and may cause the reader to become bored.

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 before moving on to the next. Will the readers be able to immerse themselves into your story? Or will they feel like they are missing important pieces?

13. **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. Straying from your target audience's beliefs can cause a loss of readers.

14. **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. Remember, revising is not just proofreading; revising is improving. Our resources for [revising](#) and [editing](#) can prove very useful!

15. **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.

Online Resources

- [Peep](#)– Peep is a website where you can make social media for your characters. It allows you to make blog-style posts in a chronological order, which can help with character development.
- [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.
- [Better Novel Project](#)– This website helps deconstruct popular novels to help writers and readers understand the elements of the story and learn how to use these elements within their own writing.



Book 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. If you have a question about writing, you will

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