

## 8 IMPROVING YOUR STYLE



**Extract**

### OVERVIEW

In this module, we will cover the following topics:

- Finding your writing voice
- Creative writing ideas and inspirations
- Develop your creativity
- The wow! factor in writing
- Writing practice

### FINDING YOUR WRITING VOICE

Deep within each true writer is a voice that calls very loud and clear. On some days, however, this voice can be very weak, faint and even absent.

A writer's voice is a powerful writing tool, because it conveys the very spirit and soul of the creative writer, and by this voice, others will identify your work with your name.

As a crafty writer, you have a truly big job. Your job is not simply selling your prose to others – you are actually selling yourself to others!

You are selling every living aspect of your own life: a unique perspective on everything that is you! Your own compilation of personal beliefs, fears, joys hopes, loves and dreams. Everything that frames and makes your life what it is today, your childhood highs and lows, your adult accomplishments and even your utter failures. You are selling yourself and your entire world!

For many, writing comes very naturally. Anyone can sit and write pages and pages each day, until a story evolves. Not everyone, though, can write with such effect that a loyal audience of readers is formed.

Your first goal as an eager writer is to absorb as much interesting and creative material as you possibly can. Only you can write and convey stories in your own, unique way.

## DEVELOPING YOUR UNIQUE VOICE

Your first step will be to convey as much about yourself when you write as you can. This is developing your writing voice.

Voice is more than just style. Good writing style without voice is hollow.

Voice is style with:

- theme
- personal observations unique to you
- your own passion, your own belief and your own desire

## HOW TO FIND YOUR VOICE

Your writing voice will be found when you:

- read everything that you can get your hands on
- write everywhere you go, every day
- visit interesting places, such as museums and exhibits
- jot down observations as you visit parks, fairs, etc.
- watch how people interact, and make notes

Finding your writing voice involves looking for it in some of the oddest of places and then recording what you see, every minute of every day and everywhere that you go.

Doing this, you will have a very unique perspective to write with and you will find that your creative juices will flow very easily.

### **EXERCISE 8.1**

Go and visit an interesting place. Take your notepad with you and write down your observations.

## **CREATIVE WRITING IDEAS AND INSPIRATION**

As you ponder your storyline, you are hungry for new ideas. What is your story about? Who will be the main characters? If you can't quite think of these then you need some effective inspiration.

### **WHERE TO FIND IDEAS AND INSPIRATION**

Where do you get your ideas from? Reading will give you many good ideas.

Ghost stories and mysteries have a wide audience. Read from this genre and you will have plenty of interesting settings for your characters to discover and this can be an ideal starting point for your next big adventure in writing.

You will also find books about ghost stories that will provide you with a little background into how someone becomes a ghost in the first place. You will find new inspiration in this way to write about something similar if you wish to go along these lines.

You can adapt the meaning and the message behind any story for your own purposes when writing. Myths, folklore and legends can offer moral tales that can be modernized.

### **WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD?**

Keep abreast of all of the happenings in the world by reading news stories. For a good mental exercise, try and imagine that you were a witness to an event described in the news item. You could start by writing as though you were a reporter interviewing a witness.

Perhaps there's been a kidnapping or a murder. How would you have reacted to witnessing such an event? How would someone with a completely different personality and outlook on life react? Real life crime reporting will give you terrific storylines to weave a book around.

### **READ A WIDE VARIETY**

Try reading true life crime novels, too. These will give you a good background on to which you can paint all kinds of ideas from your own personality and experience. The more variety in your reading, the better! All of this adds up to great inspiration in writing.

### EXERCISE 8.2

Buy a newspaper and read a variety of news stories. See if current affairs will inspire you to write.

### DEVELOP YOUR CREATIVITY

Creativity can be very complex. It is one of life's many myths that only those born with creativity go on to lead creative lives. This is simply not true and every bit as much creativity is learned as is innate in us. Creativity can be developed and honed. In other words, creativity is as much nurture as it is nature.

If your joy in life is to write and you want to be a creative writer, develop your creative life and you will be very effective.

### TIPS FOR DEVELOPING CREATIVITY

If you're finding it difficult to get your creative juices flowing, consider these tips, and see if they help you get started.

- **Believe in your own creative uniqueness.** Everyone is creative or has the potential to be creative. To be human is to be creative.
- **Expand your creative interests.** Seek out what has so far in your life been unknown to you. Put aside what you are familiar with, go outside your comfort zone, and seek new experiences, new sources of information.
- **Have a creative store.** Record snippets of anything that inspires, challenges, tempts or impresses you. Look for new colours, textures and sounds that awaken your five senses. Use audio, video or take notes – anything that will give you a permanent record.
- **Time to make unusual connections.** You are looking to add variety and sizzle to your current interests. Seek to combine or merge two or more things that have not previously been combined. Try to make a connection between things that are not even related. This will cause you to think 'outside of the box'.

- **Out with the old.** Your stronghold habits are likely to keep you from being truly creative. Start by putting aside your daily routine or script and start to move beyond it. Break the smallest habits and you will be open to more creativity as it happens. You want to make new connections so that new points of view will take their place. This will open the door to true creativity.
- **Environment is everything.** What works best for you when you want to develop your creativity? Is it ambient mood music, or perhaps rock and roll? Some people prefer a meditative state of complete silence. It is important that you discover what you need so you can be at your best when being creative.
- **If at first you don't succeed, never give up.** Creativity doesn't come quickly for many. Accept your mistakes and learn from them. It is a part of the learning process. Keep a steady pace and keep going. Know when to say stop and then move on to something more fulfilling. First, give it everything that you have!

### **EXERCISE 8.3**

Break your daily routine and go and experience something new. Do something that you've never done before.

### **THE WOW! FACTOR IN WRITING**

The wow factor in writing is the art of grabbing attention using a good title. A writer has that one dynamic opportunity to make an impression, so it had better be good!

Many readers will select a book or piece of writing based solely on its title. That gives a writer a great deal of power. While some readers will pore over a book before deciding, reading the front and back cover, others are in a hurry and will decide after only reading one very interesting title.

The title is the first thing a reader will notice. Your choice of title is likely to be one of the most important aspects of your writing, whether it be fiction or non-fiction.

## **REMINDER**

Have you completed the following exercises? Tick each box when you have completed them.

- Exercise 8.1
- Exercise 8.2
- Exercise 8.3
- Exercise 8.4
- Exercise 8.5

When you have completed the exercises you can move on to the assignment that follows.

## **SUMMARY**

1. You know how to find your creative voice.
2. You are aware of ways to help generate ideas and find inspiration.
3. You know how to develop your creativity.
4. You are able to create the wow! factor in your writing.
5. You know of exercises that you can do to improve your writing practice.

## ASSIGNMENT 8

Write an essay answering the following questions.

- What has helped you develop creatively?
- Where do you go, or what do you do to gain ideas and inspiration?
- How is your writing voice unique to you?
- How do you think you need to improve in your writing? How will you achieve this?

When you have completed the assignment send or email it to your tutor.

If you email your assignment, make sure you include your name and assignment number at the top of your work.

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Well, that's the end of the extract. If you want to know more, you'll have to register!

We look forward to welcoming you on to the course, and helping you become a creative writer.