
13 Expert Writing Tips for New Book Authors

1. **Routine** - Establish a set writing routine (where, when, how long for). Have a goal of e.g. a minimum of 1,000 words or 3 hours per day. Don't stop either until your word count is done or your set time is up. Allow no phone, no notifications, no email, no other distractions. Sit down to write at a set time each chosen day, no matter what. It'll avoid running the risk of never finishing your manuscript. Even if you end up just staring at your screen for half the time – you'll be engaged in the process of thinking about your book. Avoid going back over a lot of content from the last session (other than to find your train of thought) – or you'll end up in perpetual-editing loops.
2. **Write First, Polish Later** - Your editor will help you polish your manuscript later. Your job as the author is to share the knowledge others don't have. You can, of course, read the previous chapter to get you back into the flow and the same tone – just don't be overly critical of yourself. This is a *draft* you're creating, not the final piece. So "brain dump" your insights into your draft manuscript, and resist self-editing your book draft to death. Do an edit of your work at the end – once you have a solid first draft completed and before you hand over your work to your editor for polishing.
3. **Elements** - Think about whether to include these and how: case studies, illustrations, pull-out boxes for tips or quotes, chapter summaries, and maybe quotes at your chapter beginnings. Will you need disclaimers? Keep a jargon list as you write and research – and create a glossary, if your topic requires a lot of expert terms.
4. **Consistency** - Chapters should have a similar structure, more or less. Your tone will vary throughout, depending on the mood and form you were in on a given day. Don't let that worry you too much; it'll get evened out in the editing stage.
5. **Introduction** - This is where you convince your reader that this book is for them. The main book premise is explained, and why you / this author is the best person to talk about this topic and issue. You'll explain what to expect, how to use this book. This is a crucial part of your book and its success. Too many authors do not make good use of it. Ensure you do.
6. **Give Credit** - Keep a list of books and other sources you refer to in your writing, and quote the author when you refer to someone else's work or idea. Listing your sources will enhance your credibility and protect others' copyright.
7. **Front Matter** - Think about whether you need (and who you should mention in) a dedication, acknowledgments and thank-yous. Try to get a foreword or review testimonial by a respected leader in your field. Don't know them personally? Don't worry. Few people will have the gumption to ask this favour, so your request will likely be noted and acted upon. You can start collating these endorsements early, based on your book draft; no need to wait till the manuscript is finalised.
8. **Research** - Read competitors' books (skim previews in Amazon) to position yours and to differentiate yourself from other authors. What's your unique insight or idea?
9. **Evolving Text** – Titles, ideas, structures and themes of your book will evolve and may change during the writing process. In moderation that's ok, so be ok with it.
10. **Authenticity** - Be true to your voice; write as you speak. Don't try to be someone you're not – it'll be keenly obvious and erode the trust you're trying to build with your book.
11. **Who are you writing for?** - Write the book for your aspirational best client – who are they? What are their pain points? What questions do they keep asking? Create an avatar – a representation – of your target client(s) "Sue" or "Bob" and imagine you are talking to them when you write.
12. **Take Notes** - Keep an ideas list. Get them out of your head so they won't distract you. Write them down for later, so you can keep the writing flow and not get side-tracked. It's likely that not all ideas will make it into your book, but you'll have great material for blog posts, newsletters, speeches, presentations, etc.
13. **Accountability + Support** - No author goes it alone; writing a book is not a sprint but a satisfying marathon for which you need a support crew. Get a writing buddy, author coach or mentor to keep you going and sticking to deadlines. Assemble your editorial, production and distribution team early. And for the launch: who will do your marketing? Who will create your book's website and its content for you? Who will organise the launch party and handle PR? If you're proactive in choosing your support team, writing your book will become a joint effort that will bring you joy and success.