

## At last, friendly, respectful help is at hand for budding writers

So you think you'd like to write. You might keep this intention very close to your chest. It's private—right? Perhaps even a little embarrassing because you haven't fully thought it through. You *suspect* you need some guidance, but you just don't know what you don't know, and therefore what questions to ask.

Have a peep inside this booklet for some ideas.

Written by experienced writer/editor Beverley Streater—a person who reads voraciously, writes for the joy of it, and assists others to express themselves to their best potential—this booklet gives you some hints, some starting pointers.

Your writing is your baby ... right? With her gentle and respectful approach, Beverley can share with you some tips and tricks to engage your readers; pitfalls you should avoid; and encouragement to keep at it when you're feeling thwarted.

Her ideas are built on years of reading about writing, listening to advice from published authors and networking with other emerging writers.

## To have a chat about how she can help, contact Beverley at Classic Women

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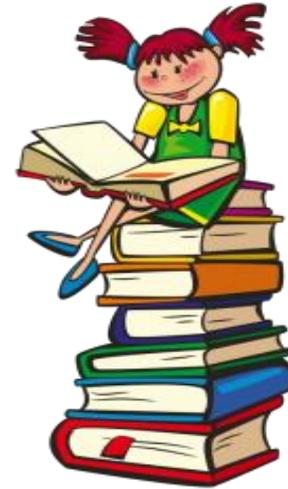
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(The *Classic Women* blog was launched when Beverley left full-time paid employment—a life transition that can leave many people floundering for a new identity and life-purpose.)

# Let's get



# writing!

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## A final word about technicalities

You will find helpful advice in the publications I have listed and also from your local and state writing centres. For legal advice, engage a lawyer.

### How your book will look

*Book cover:* yes, readers do make judgements at this point! Get some ideas by looking at the covers of other books in your genre. Be sure to make best use of the back of the book as well as the spine.

*Illustrations:* again, look around to see what others are doing. Ask your writer-friends for advice.

*Layout:* font size, paragraph spacing, text colour are all important. Do your own research and ask for formatting help from others.



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### Things to watch for

Protect your rights, include a *copyright* statement, and don't infringe the copyrights of others. Respect the privacy of others; don't cast aspersions—this is 'libel' in the written sense.

Buy a unique book number (*ISBN*) for each version of your work (paper, ebook, audio).

*CiP* (Cataloguing in Publication)/ *legal deposit*—a version of your book will be stored in the national library of a country.



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# Getting published

## Print? eBook? Audiobook?

Pundits used to say that eBooks would replace paper books. However, it seems that many readers still love the experience of reading a hard copy publication; while some readers love the convenience of travelling with a virtual library on their device; and there is a growing love for audiobooks and podcasts.

## Self- vs assisted- vs traditional-publishing

There are passionate advocates for each style of publishing. I recommend you join a local writers' group to hear, first-hand, the experiences of your peers. Your choice will be affected by your expertise, your network, your budget and competing demands on your time.

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*Content is King. Promotion is Queen—Bob Mayer*

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# Marketing your book

There is little point to publishing a brilliant book that sits on a shelf, waiting to be discovered. You **have** to get out there and tell people about your book. This can be frightening for those of us who recoil from public speaking and 'networking'. Here are some helpful resources.

*Inspire Your Fire* (2018) by Ocean Reeve, [www.oceanreeve.com](http://www.oceanreeve.com)

*Streampunks—how YouTube and the new creators are transforming our lives* (2018) by Robert Kyncl

*Yes You Can Publish Your Book!* (2018) by Andrew McDermott, [www.publicious.com.au](http://www.publicious.com.au)

*Wannabe a Writer We've Heard of?* (2010) by Jane Wenham-Jones

# Where to start

The urge to write can be both powerful and exciting, the experience daunting and lonely. You want to share a fabulous story; you want to get it right. Here is a simple guide to things you need to consider along with some potential resources for you.

## I shall cover:

- Writing tips and hints
- Resources for authors
- Editing tips
- Publishing
- Getting readers (aka marketing)
- Basic legal information

Information offered in this booklet is derived from years of reading about writing, listening to advice from published authors and networking with emerging writers. My intention is to spark your thinking and motivate you to look around you at the smorgasbord of helpful information.

# Getting started



## Writing tips and hints

Advice from some successful authors and publishers:

- Write every day; make it a habit.
- Know yourself—decide if you are a ‘pantser’ (fly by the Seat of ...) or a planner—and then work with it.
- Organise and honour your workspace.
- Just START writing!

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*The first draft is just you telling yourself  
the story—Terry Pratchett*

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### Fiction

- A story needs a person, a problem, a place (characters, plot, setting).
- It needs obstacles that get in the way of the characters.
- Good guys MUST change—keep the hero chasing his goal.
- Let your characters show themselves through what they do (show, don’t tell).
- Let them your characters be funny.

### Non-fiction

- If you plan to research and collate information, be sure to acknowledge your source material.
- Keep it interesting, focused and logical.

### All writing

- Always keep your target audience front of mind.
- Draft something, then put it away for a while—don’t persevere; don’t fiddle with it—you don’t need perfection up front. When you come back to it, refreshed, you’ll either wonder how you were so awesome, or wonder what you were thinking!

## Resources for authors

Your creative writing efforts will eventually culminate in something resembling a manuscript. As you put out feelers for guidance on ‘what’s next?’ you will be astounded by the vastness of resources—books, online guides, writing groups, Facebook pages, library events for writers. Your personality will probably influence your preferred medium for acquiring information. Here are some of my favourite publications and online resources that deal with writing, editing, publishing, and marketing.

*Save the Cat* by Blake Snyder (2005) (screenwriting)

*Self-editing Your Novel* by Kathy Stewart (2014)

*The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White, 4<sup>th</sup> ed (2000)

*On Writing: a memoir of the craft* by Stephen King (2012)

*How to Write Your Blockbuster* by Fiona McIntosh (2015)

*Bird by bird: some instructions on writing and life*, by Anne Lamott (1994)

Facebook—search for ‘writing’ and FB will throw up some interesting options.

[Belinda Pollard's website](#) offers practical ideas.

## Editing hints from me

Indulge me a minute! I have spent years of my life suggesting ways that writers could make their message more powerful, logical, emotive, read-worthy! While 21<sup>st</sup> century English is fluid, there are some basic rules to stick with. So here are some very basic hints and tips:

- Tell your software program what spelling you’d like (US, English, Aus English) and respect its suggestions. You can overlay a program such as Grammarly if you need more help.
- There are no *absolutes* in language, and you are likely to receive conflicting spelling and grammar advice from your editor, beta-reader, best friend, picky relative. Be sure you pick a style and keep it consistent throughout your manuscript. The readers won’t mind if you write Mr., Mister or Mr, but they will be frustrated if you keep changing it!
- Engage an experienced editor and trust them. They are on your side.