



How to Be a Writer: Building Your Creative Skills Through Practice and Play

Barbara Baig

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Athletes practice. Musicians practice. As a writer you need to do the same. Whether you have dreams of writing a novel or a memoir or a collection of poems, or you simply want to improve your everyday writing, this innovative book will show you how to build your skills by way of practice.

Through playful and purposeful exercises, you'll develop your natural aptitude for communication, strengthening your ability to come up with things to say, and your ability to get those things into the minds (and the hearts) of readers. You'll learn to:

Train and develop your writer's powers--creativity, memory, observation, imagination, curiosity, and the subconscious

Understand the true nature of the relationship between you and your readers

Find your writer's voice

Get required writing projects done so you have more time for the writing you *want* to do

And much more

Empowering and down-to-earth, *How to Be a Writer* gives you the tools you need, and tells you what (and how) to practice so that you can become the writer you want to be.

How to Be a Writer: Building Your Creative Skills Through Practice and Play Details

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Lynda says

If you want to learn how to write well, then read this book. Even for those of us who already think we write well, we could still benefit from this book. It does not matter if you are writing in a business setting or just day dreaming of becoming a successful fiction writer, this book, although written a few years ago, should become a classic on how to write well. It is written in a manner of a workshop so as you go along you need to take the time to do the exercises, which I found very effective and useful. I am still going through the book and have purchased a used new book from Amazon (after reading the library copy) simply because it is an invaluable reference for me. The author who has been teaching writing for several decades is for sure up-to-date and describes how today's connected world with us surrounded by the media and entertainment while being tethered to our devices is robbing us of our ability to imagine, be creative, and go deep in our minds and hearts to write well. I would be thrilled to sit in on one of Barbara Baig's writing classes rather than attend your typical writing-critique course where your writing is judged and critiqued by fellow classmates; talk about a surefire way to sap your enthusiasm and confidence about your own writing. Baig describes her methodology well and obviously has a passion not only for writing itself, but for enabling others to reach their full writing potential.

Kate says

Useful for beginners, though the information is repeated almost every chapter. Advice pretty much amounts to free-writing, list making, and more free-writing.

A. Neilly says

This book focuses on creating content for writing. And that is the great value it has, because by creating content in the slow, nice way the book suggest, we are starting to create a source for all our writing. It is suitable for beginners, because it will take away the fear of writing, and for professionals, because of all the exercises that will help to improve your writing. I found it reassuring because it creates a healthy approach to writing that is all about giving yourself permission to learn instead of trying to do everything well from the first time. Also it considers why is there so much pressure for writers to become professionals and make money when so many people enjoy being amateurs in other areas. I love it!

Scott says

I've read a LOT of books on the craft of writing and over time I've found less and less I like about them. This one had a "go at your own pace and don't worry about it" tone that I found refreshing, relaxing and encouraging. The whole philosophy about PRACTICING, just like a piano player, golfer, or basketball player, is something a lot of uptight writers should embrace. Have fun with it. This book will show you how.

Easily one of the top 5 books on writing that I would recommend.

Wiktoria says

This book gave me the courage to start writing again after a long break, and I am very grateful for that. However, it seems to me that it is boring at times, as it focuses mostly on variants of the ten-minute freewriting exercise (which I do every day, by the way), and also on giving beginner writers confidence. In this matter, the book is indispensable. But there is not much advice about fiction writing; you can find more content on writing stories on the author's website than in this book. I have not tried the method described in the chapter about obligatory writing (for school, university and work), but it seems really effective.

In a nutshell, read this book if you are insecure about your writing and want to feel more confident about it, but if you are looking for specific fiction writing advice, like that about plot, characters, setting etc. try something else, for instance the short e-books by K. M. Weiland.

Lashawn says

I found the author's remarks about the education system in the states really began to annoy me. Being a product of said system, I get that the education system sucks. But seeing that I had no other alternative like say, private school, I learned to go outside the education system to learn how to write. She also makes a lot of assumptions that turned me off as I read it. She approaches imagination as something to be studied and critiqued rather than something involving fun and play. Started reading this in 2013, and my last note was three months afterwards. Now that I have Jeff VanderMeer's *Wonderbook*, which does a much better job in engaging imagination and creativity, it's time to call it quits with this one.

Chris Chaves says

Absolutely loved this book. Barbara's voice is simple-easy to follow- and well thought out. it is clear that she knows what she is talking about. As a beginning writer I find the exercises throughout this book extremely beneficial.

I would certainly recommend this to anyone who is an aspiring writer along with anyone who simply wants to clear their minds and find their inner voice.

I have introduced freewriting into my journaling and have found the benefits grow exponentially. I look forward to the journey of being a practicing writer and reading Barbara's further works.

Yaasir says

wonder full book .. this book may help Lot of people How to Be a Writer and also Building Your Creative Skills.this book has good meaning that also needs to use it actually this book help's me lot of things also was my needs... 4 now you better get use to it if really wanna feel better and i hope you may found out your

needs to appreciate you will be great with and hopeful this book for me my finger is thumps up with this book better look it down body ... am off

try this book insha Allah If you do more practice it will make you more understanding..... which is my finger is thumps up body for only this book

Emma Sea says

there's a lot here to take in. I had to read in small sips, and this is a book I suspect I'll return to again. I'm not sure I'd unequivocally recommend it, however I did order her other book, Spellbinding Sentences: A Writer's Guide to Achieving Excellence and Captivating Readers, before I had finished this one, so there must be something about it that intrigued me.

I got a lot more from the section on bringing your imagination to required writing that I thought I would. I particularly appreciated Baig's advice that "functional writing doesn't have to be perfect. It doesn't even have to be great. It just has to be good enough . . .[it's] simply not worth agonizing over. It's a task: it has to get done. That's all." (p. 237) I'm going to hold that in my mind this year.

Alex Linschoten says

An excellent starter guide for those who perhaps have been writing for research, business etc but who want to be more creative with what they write. Barbara Baig is also a believer in Ericsson's principle of "deliberate practice" which makes me trust her just that little bit more. She stresses the idea of practice for writing as something that is important and that can be disassociated from writing for specific publication or results.

M0rningstar says

A primary focus on content generation, a topic not so frequently tackled, makes this a potentially interesting read. There are some nice freewriting prompts and practical advice, particularly on helpful attitudes to hold. Author is insightful when speaking of writing. Would have given this 3 stars if an editor had trimmed the sanctimonious and narrow-minded commentary on "academics", "Western education" (read "American"), and mass media, not to mention the endless references to baseball.

Cindy says

There's two aspects to becoming a better writer: content creation and craft. This book deals with content creation (her other book, Spellbinding Sentences, deals with craft). She gives you the tools to create the content you desire. A basic exercise the book will come back to again and again is free writing, but she shows you new ways to use this technique in pursuit of well-informed and creative content.

Andrew Hildreth says

Although this took me almost a year to finish—very rare and sporadic reading here and there—it was well worth it and a great book on writing. It contains a lot of good information and practicing techniques that is very helpful. Plus, the fact that this was a free ebook on my Nook was an extra bonus.

If you are at all interested in writing and/or becoming a writer, I recommend this book. Even if you don't feel fully inclined to dive into this book, I do highly recommend at least reading the last chapter on "Walking the Writer's Way." It covers a nice amount of reaffirming issues that deal with the non-technical side of writing.

Al Sevcik says

The book is directed at people who would be like to be writers but aren't sure how to start. For these readers it's an excellent book. For people who are moderately experienced writers but struggle with plot and story ideas this is also an excellent book. Especially the first two-thirds. The author introduces "freestyle writing", and offers exercises to awaken one's subconscious (one's muse), and to mine all sorts of stuff that is filed away in one's mind. The result is enhanced creativity. In my opinion, one of the most helpful books on writing.
Note: Look to other books for guidance on grammar, sentence construction, etc. 5 stars.

Neal Dench says

If you went to a music concert, you'd be shocked if you heard that the musician hadn't practised prior to the concert. Similarly, if you went to a sports event, you expect the competitors to have trained. Writing is no different, this book argues, and it provides a helpful guide on how a writer can practice their art most effectively. The book also makes the distinction between writing that is meant to be seen by a wider audience, and writing that is just for yourself, and again helps you prepare a piece of writing for wider distribution appropriately. While the book did drag at points, for the most part it was an enjoyable and sometimes quite inspiring read. Aimed not just at professional writers, but at people who may need to produce writing during the course of their own professions, or just at people who enjoy writing, even if only in a diary, this book has a broad appeal. I picked it up some time ago on the Kindle store for free (it's actually pretty expensive now and I freely admit I wouldn't pay full price for it), and it was definitely worth the read.
