

2011

Ten Tips for Non-Fiction Writers



Janie Sullivan
Center for Writing
Excellence
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Non-Fiction Writing Tip #1

February 25, 2011 at 10:10 am

This is the first of a series of ten tips for non-fiction writers. As we go through the next several weeks we will explore the world of non-fiction writing, which includes magazine articles, newspaper reporting, books on a variety of non-fiction topics, and any other writing that involves writing about facts, not fiction.

I started out my writing career with aspirations of becoming the next great journalist, writing engaging and exciting news stories. To that end I studied Journalism at one of the top ten rated J-schools in the country: The University of Montana School of Journalism. I received my bachelor's degree and set out to conquer the world of journalistic writing.

Although I never did become the next Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, filing my stories from exotic places around the globe, my love for writing has not wavered in the 24 years since earning that degree. In fact, I have been involved in writing in some form since the summer of my 16th year, when I took a creative writing course in summer school. So, how does this all fit into a series of writing tips for non-fiction writers? It brings us to a very important question: Why?

Why is the topic you want to write about important? Why are you the one to write about this specific topic? Why will your audience read the article? As you are starting the research on your topic, you need to keep the why in mind so your article becomes more than just a statement of fact. Non-fiction is writing about facts, but you need to insure that the writing does not become vague recitations of information gleaned from research. You need to give your reader a reason to believe what you are writing about, a reason to keep reading, and a reason to ask questions so you can write more.



importantly, *readable* format.

Creating a credible identity as a non-fiction writer will do more for your writing career than anything else. Let your audience know you are serious about your writing and that you know enough about it to present it in a professional, accurate, and, most

Next week we will look at outlines, which can be the bane of many writer's (this one included) existence. Some writers love using outlines, others shudder at the thought, but we will explore some ways to use outlines to help organize your research in a relatively painless way that will help you become a credible non-fiction writer.

Happy Writing!

Comments:

In my opinion (as a former technical writer in the high-tech industry) writing nonfiction is easier than writing fiction. If you love to do research, you'll be in hog heaven as a nonfiction writer. Also, if you put together a small proposal and send it around, you'll soon find out if anybody is interested in your topic. If not, you don't have to spend time writing the article/book. With fiction, your potential editor/agent wants finished work.

Comment by Pat— February 28, 2011

I agree, Pat. I, too, started out in the non-fiction genre. While it is easier to write non-fiction, it is definitely more fun to write fiction. Creative non-fiction can be fun as well, as long as you stick to the facts. I like the structure of non-fiction writing and the freedom of creative writing.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— March 1, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #2

March 7, 2011 at 11:31 am

Outlines. The very word makes me want to pull my hair out. I am not an outline kind of writer, but I have found outlines to be very helpful when I am putting together a non-fiction article.



Outlines are not meant to make your writing life difficult, but they are tools to use to organize your thoughts and ideas around the facts of the article. Some writers like using outlines more than others, and that brings us to the good thing about outlines: they can be as complex and formal as you want them to be. They can also be simple and casual, like a list of topic ideas.

The point to using an outline of some sort while writing a non-fiction piece is to keep your ideas and the facts organized. Creating your outline will help you define the flow of the article as well as the main topics, which will in turn help you write the query letters before spending hours writing the entire article. Send your query letters out and once an editor has indicated interest, you now have the basic information already in order so you can fill in the outline and write the article. As was mentioned by a commenter on last week's tip, non-fiction writing is a lot easier if you do this because you don't have to write the whole article to find out if someone is interested. When submitting fiction, you generally will need the whole story done for the editor to review and make a decision.

Outlines also make it much easier to change the order of topics so you can see at a glance if the information is flowing correctly. As you are creating the outline, you will also be able to determine if you have enough information or if the information you do have does not seem to go anywhere. It is much easier to abandon an outline than an entire article that took hours of work to complete.

Even if you are, like me, not a fan of outlines, try using something simple to start. As you work with outlines, you will become more proficient at them, and find them to be very useful tools to have in your writer's toolbox.

Happy Writing!

Comments

All good comments. Remember, an editor or agent will often ask for your outline, whether fiction or nonfiction. Of course, you can always wait and scramble to assemble an outline after you've finished the work (especially fiction). It's more accurate that way. 😊 Comment by Pat— March 8, 2011

I learned proper outlining many years ago, but it really isn't necessary. If you plan to write 10 chapters, for example, number up to ten and begin. Give every chapter a working title, which can be changed later. Write 2-5 sentences to remind yourself what you want that chapter to be about. When you've finished, look it over. Does the opening chapter have a good take off? Does the climax fall near the center or slightly after? Does the ending chapter tie up all the loose ends? If so, it's time to start writing.

An outline doesn't tie a writer down. It gives freedom to stray off in various directions but it provides the writer with a bird's eye view of how far they are off target. A good outline helps rein in writing that has gone too far astray.

Thanks for the article, Janie!

Comment by Deborah Owen— March 7, 2011

Love it, Deb! Your comment: "An outline doesn't tie a writer down. It gives freedom to stray off in various directions but it provides the writer with a bird's eye view of how far they are off target." is perfect! Thanks!

Comment by Janie Sullivan— March 7, 2011

Thanks for this info about outlines. I'm not a fan either but taking notes, listing keywords, and other important facts can ease the writing process. Thanks, Janie!

Comment by Peggy Hazelwood— March 7, 2011

I like your idea of listing keywords as part of the outline, Peggy. This is especially helpful if you are writing for an online venue as so many of us do these days.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— March 7, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #3

March 16, 2011 at 8:28 am

The lead paragraph in your fiction piece may be the hardest part of the article to write. This is where you want to grab your reader's attention and keep it. One way to write a dynamite introduction is to write it last. That's



right, I said write the first paragraph last. Take a look at your outline and then just dive right into the body of the article, without spending time trying to craft that all important first paragraph. You might find out that the intro will come much easier once you have written the rest of the article or essay.

If you try to write the introduction first, you may find yourself blocked simply because you are trying so hard to come up with the right wording to introduce something you have not even written yet! In journalistic writing you want to put the important points in the first paragraph, so why not write the rest of the article first? This will help you determine what points you want to emphasize in the introduction as well as give you a good idea of the direction you want to point the reader in as he starts to read.

The key here is to just start writing. Get the facts down on paper in an order that makes sense, is interesting, and answers the questions the reader is sure to have. Your introduction may write itself as you are writing the body of the article.

Happy Writing!

Comments

I use the DeBowen Writing Technique. I write the middle scene of the story first – which is the highest impact and turning point – then the end scene, and then the first scene. This works especially well for new writers.

I used to labor over that opening paragraph but no more! At one point, I wrote the introductory scene and ditched all of it except the high point. Now I've learned to open a story mid-scene. The very first line might be, "No one would ever know." That's enough to hook the reader. Or how

about “Jack stumbled through the door with a dazed look and a bloody ax”? Hmm... this would make a good contest.

Comment by Deborah Owen— March 16, 2011

This is good advice, Janie. It also works for fiction. I once knew a writer who spent years going over the first chapter, just to get it perfect before going on. I don't know if she ever finished her book. That first paragraph is also the most important to use in a query, so don't just pick the easiest thing to help you start the rest of your article/book.

Comment by Pat— March 16, 2011

I can't tell you how many hours I have wasted trying to get that first paragraph just right, only to change it after the story or article is written! Once I decided that I did not have to write the intro first, the rest came much easier.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— March 16, 2011

I totally agree with your first point. If you aren't grabbing the attention of the reader, you will lose them rapidly. Your goal should be to provide maximum value and great content in the first paragraph.

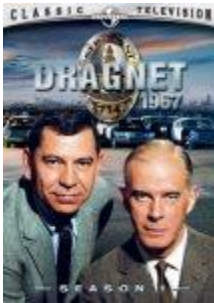
Thanks for sharing!

Comment by Article Writing Expert— March 24, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #4

March 25, 2011 at 7:31 am

“Just the facts, ma’am.” This well-known phrase was spoken by Sgt. Joe Friday on the old television series from the 60s, right? Well, not exactly. According to [Snopes](#), the phrase was actually “All we want are the facts,



ma’am.” The phrase was truncated and changed by Stan Freberg in a song where he spoofed the popular police show. The record was called *St. George and the Dragonet* and it was on the flip side of this record, in a song called *Little Blue Riding Hood*, where the phrase was changed to “All the better to get the facts. I just want to get the facts, ma’am.” From there the phrase was truncated to the oft-repeated phrase, “Just the facts, ma’am.” and attributed to Sgt. Friday.

The point here is, obviously, that as non-fiction writers, we need to check our facts carefully before we put them to paper. Facts in non-fiction are essential to establishing your credibility as a reputable writer. I’m sure you all have read about or heard about writers who ‘stretched the truth’ and were found out. When you are writing a non-fiction article, be sure to not only check your facts, but cite them properly as well. Statements, ideas, and conclusions drawn by someone else and reproduced in your article need to be attributed to the original author.

There is more to checking facts than just finding the author. When you find something you want to use in the article, look up the author. Once you find the author, you need to verify that this is really the original writer and not someone who ‘borrowed’ the information from someone else. This can be done by searching for information on the author and reading other things written by him or her. If the writer turns out to be a motorcycle mechanic who is publishing articles on brain surgery, you might want to check further to find out where the information REALLY came from.

Have someone else check the facts for you as well. If you are writing a piece on the natural habitat of the mongoose for a nature magazine, talk to someone who is an expert in the area of mongoose habitats. Sloppy fact-checking habits will do nothing but get you in trouble. Look at the

[case of James Frey](#) and his book “A Million Little Pieces.” He caused a lot of trouble for himself by not having someone check his facts in that book.

The bottom line here is, when in doubt, check it out!

Happy Writing

Comments

Too many things are sad about publishing these days. Book stores like Borders knocked out most of the indie book stores, now they're on the ropes. e-books are selling better than “real” books. Well, that might be OK if one could get one's books published at all. But the small publishers have been gobbled up by the big guys until there are few left who will even look at a MS. The first readers have been let go so now we have to have an agent to do the first read, and those only want to deal with best seller-type writers. It's a wonder that any of us persevere!

Comment by Pat— March 25, 2011

James Frey was a fraud, all right, but it was partly his editor—and maybe his agent—who encouraged him to label his book as fact, not fiction, which is how he wrote it originally. So all the blame doesn't go to him. Still, as you said, it's better to be factual all the way 'round. By the way, James's mess didn't do him any harm, apparently, as he's still writing and selling successfully. There are at least 8 books attributed to him on Amazon.com, including the one that was pulled from the shelves, “A Million Little Pieces.”

Comment by Pat— March 25, 2011

That is true, Pat. He got a lot of publicity through his appearance on Oprah. I guess any publicity is good publicity. However, I don't think I would like to be remembered as the writer who called fiction fact (even at the encouragement of my editor). He should have stood up to his editor in my way of thinking. Unfortunately, the underbelly of our profession is titillating enough to the public that writers like Frey (and their editors) are considered marketable. Sad, isn't it?

Comment by Janie Sullivan— March 25, 2011

I can see how it would be easy to use the editor's way of thinking. Nice excuse. But can you imagine getting on Oprah????? Wazoo. I'm wondering what kind of clout can pull that little trick off. Good article, Janie. Fact checking is an absolute must.

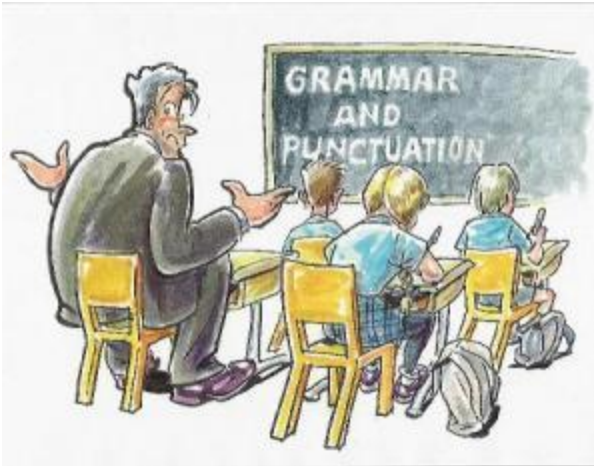
Comment by lettuce make you laugh— March 26, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #5

April 5, 2011 at 9:05 am |

Grammar, Grammar, Grammar. I cannot stress this one too much. Any kind of professional writing, whether fiction or non-fiction should be free of grammatical errors. Many writers struggle with basic grammar, submitting work that is an automatic turn-off to editors, writing contest judges, and readers. Something as simple as a miss-placed or missing comma can dramatically change the meaning of the sentence. Here is an example: “Let’s eat, Grandma.” Now, think about that sentence without the comma. Here is another one: ***A woman without her man is nothing.*** There are two ways to punctuate this sentence, both are correct. The meaning is entirely different depending on the placement of the commas:

- A woman, without her man, is nothing.
- A woman: without her, man is nothing.



Sentence fragments, run-on sentences, misspelled words, other grammatical mistakes will send your manuscript straight into the circular file. Take the time to proof-read your work before you send it in or publish it on your blog. If you are unsure about

grammatical structure, have someone else look at it or go online to sites like [Grammar Girl](#), or [The Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) at Purdue University. You can also take a course in basic grammar through the local community college. It is that important, so don’t overlook this step in your writing process.

Happy Writing!

Comments

One of the saddest things I've ever seen is someone who has real writing talent but doesn't have a clue about grammar. They are at such a disadvantage. Their only alternative is to study very hard and learn it (which is hard to do after one hits middle age) or have someone else edit it. In my opinion, poor grammar and punctuation are the two most likely reasons for a writer not making it to publication. Good post, Janie.

Comment by Deborah Owen— April 5, 2011

Yes, it is hard to read something that is obviously good content, but the grammatical errors detract from it so much that something gets lost. Even a small error throws me off when I am reading something. If the writer does not have the grammatical skills, then it behooves him or her to get a good editor!

Comment by Janie Sullivan— April 5, 2011

Great article, Janie. I used to write a small grammar column for a local writing newsletter called Nipper's Nits. It died for lack of interest, though I did meet somebody recently who asked where that column is. For anybody who's interested, I moved it to my web site.

Comment by [Pat](#)— April 5, 2011

Just click on Pat's name above and you will go to her website.

Thanks for the link, Pat. I know grammar is not everyone's favorite topic, but it is very important. When I was in college, I had a prof who started every Monday morning off with what he called "The Great Comma Caper." We had to take that day's newspaper and find as many grammatical errors as we could on the front page in 15 minutes. We ALWAYS found them!

Comment by Janie Sullivan— April 5, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #6

April 20, 2011 at 8:41 am

Proofread and Edit

This step is probably the most important step in the writing process – no matter what the genre. Proofread. Edit. Then do it again. The difference between proofreading and editing is this: when you proofread, you are looking for grammatical errors, spelling errors, and punctuation errors. Proofreading will fix the mechanical errors in your manuscript. Editing, on the other hand, is the process of reading what you have written and changing it by rearranging sentences and paragraphs, lopping off parts that don't fit or belong in the article or story, and generally cleaning up the wording. Both steps are critical and both steps should not be done lightly.

In fact, it is a good idea to find someone else, someone with a good, critical eye, to read your manuscript and give you some suggestions. Fresh eyes will see the little things you miss. As you are writing, your brain knows what it thinks your hands are writing, but sometimes your hands don't always do what your brain thinks they are doing. Words get left out or misspelled, punctuation is missing and sometimes words get repeated. If you try to proofread your own work, your brain will tell your eyes what it thought it told your hands earlier – and you will miss those errors made by your hands. If you don't have someone else to look over your work, then let it sit for a day or so, and go back and proofread it. Your brain will have forgotten the details by then and your own eyes will be 'fresher.'



The proofreading and editing steps should be repeated at least once, and not right after each other, if possible. If you have the time, try writing, wait a day, then proof and edit, then wait another day and proof and edit again. The final manuscript should be in pretty good shape after that and ready to submit to an editor.

Happy Writing!

Comments

Thanks for pointing out the difference between proofreading and editing. Valuable tips for the freelance writer.

Comment by Barry— April 30, 2011

Wow. You edit a lot quicker than I do. I edited one story 53 times. (blushes) Now I think I could do it in 52. lol I'm just not a fast writer and the more I think about how much time it takes the more frustrated I get so I cool it, whirr it down in the ole Granny gear and mope ahead. Great article, Janie. Allow me to share some of what I wrote in an article, as it applies well here.

1. Don't use more than three prepositional phrases in a sentence, and only two in consecutive order. It weakens the structure.
2. Delete every word that doesn't have to be there (verbiage).
3. Delete semi-colons and use only one exclamation mark per 2,000 words.
4. Check for linear flow (order of events).
5. Watch for tense changes. Also, don't use words ending in "ing" when writing in past tense.
6. Delete as many forms of the verb "is" as possible, including am, are, was, were, be, being, been.
7. Don't over use (or under use) the comma. Follow the rules.
8. On the last edit, "jazz" the verbs. For example: (1) She walked down the sidewalk [change to] She strolled down the sidewalk and skipped over the cracks. (2) The kid hit the ball out of the park [change to] The kid whanged the ball out of the park.
9. On the very last edit, run the spellchecker.

Deb: <http://www.creativewritinginstitute.com>

Comment by [Deborah Owen](#)— April 20, 2011

Another good thing to do in the process of perfecting a piece is to use the spell checker that comes with your word processor. This is not foolproof, of course, but it helps. Even if you've done a spell check, then added some additional material, do another spell check.

Comment by [Pat](#)— April 20, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #7

May 1, 2011 at 9:53 am |

Organization



Does your office look like this?

There are lots of ways to organize your notes, drafts, and clips for each of your writing gigs. I am not much of a paper-file person, so I keep things in folders on my computer, but if you prefer paper files, get yourself a file cabinet and set up folders for each of your stories and articles. Start by creating a ‘tickler file’ with lists of ideas for future articles, story ideas, etc. as soon as you think of them. Sometimes ideas will come to you as you are working on a current project and you don’t have time to pursue the idea, so file them away in your tickler file.

When you are between assignments or projects, open up your tickler file and sift through it for inspiration, ideas and new projects to start. As you pull different items from the tickler file, create individual folders specific to each article with research notes, editor’s names, magazines to query, etc. in them. As you write the article, keep copies of any contact with the editor, or query letters to magazines, etc. in the file for reference later.



Make your office look like this.

Setting up some sort of folder organization, whether electronic or paper, will prevent frantic rummaging through your desk looking for that one bit of information you need to finish the article or project. You will find yourself spending more time writing, which is what you want, right?

Happy Writing!

Comments

It's against the law to stand at my window and take pictures of my office.



Comment by Deborah Owen— May 1, 2011

hmmm – was yours the first one, or the second one? Mine is somewhere in between. 😊

Comment by Janie Sullivan— May 1, 2011

My office is somewhere in between, too. I worked with a woman whose office looked like example number 1. When I visited her apartment, it was similar. She had made a kind of path to the couch, through piles and piles of papers. “Excuse the mess,” she said, clearing off the couch so I could sit down. Guess she might be called a hoarder.

Comment by Pat— May 2, 2011

WOW, yes, I have seen places like that. I can't imagine living that way, but I guess some do. I find that organization makes a big difference in how productive I am. If my office is a mess, I don't get nearly as much done.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— May 2, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #8

May 16, 2011 at 7:50 am

Language



Just because the piece is non-fiction, that does not mean the language needs to be boring. You can spice up your non-fiction needs with strong verbs and interesting word choices, as long as they fit the style of the article, add meaning to it, and keep the reader interested. Some methods you can incorporate into your non-fiction to make it interesting for the reader include:

- Use exclusive pronouns. When you include the reader in the article, he or she will feel attached to it and want to become involved, even if that involvement is simply reading the entire article. Use words like “we,” “our,” etc. to keep your reader involved.
- You can use descriptive imagery, metaphors, similes, and emotive language to persuade your audience to the point of view of the article.
- Rhetorical questions that imply their own answer will also serve to engage the reader and help sway him or her.
- Use a tone that will invite your reader to stay involved with the reading. Sometimes an overly formal tone will put your reader off, but a certain amount of formality in the tone will imply authenticity and sincerity.

The bottom line is, you want to keep the reader engaged and continually involved in the article and your use of language will go a long way in doing that.

Happy Writing!

Comments

More colorful language is what agents and publishers want these days in their articles and books. They’re always requesting “creative nonfiction.” In other words, add some fiction now and then, if it won’t contradict or interfere with the facts. For example, if people you’re writing about said

something, but you don't remember the exact words, make up the quotes. If you aren't sure about this, check with the people you are supposedly quoting. Chances are, they won't remember, either.

Comment by Pat— May 16, 2011

For the longest time, I couldn't decide between using "we" and "our" or "you". After a great deal of experimenting and studying, I've decided that writing directly to the reader is best in most cases. I use "we" and "our" when I'm talking about something distasteful, such as laziness or bad habits. Good post, Janie! Happy day.

Comment by Deborah Owen— May 17, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #9

June 1, 2011 at 12:40 pm

The Inverted Pyramid.

Although widely taught in Journalism school, the inverted pyramid style of writing can be adapted to fit almost any kind of writing. If you want to get your point across quickly, succinctly, and grab your reader's attention, this format is quite handy. The basic premise of the inverted

pyramid is to get the important information out there first. If your reader only reads the first paragraph of your message, whether it is an e-mail, letter, memo, or article, he or she will get the point of the message right away. Follow up with additional information, details that add to the main point that is important, but not crucial to the reader. Finally, end the message with even more detail that is nice to have, but not essential to get the point across.

The reason this format is used by journalists is because editors are more concerned with space in the paper than what the writer has to say. It is not unusual for an editor to lop off the last three inches of an article in order to fit it into the allotted space. But, knowing the true nature of most readers, which is to read a bit and then decide on whether or not to continue based on interest, time, and habit, you want to hook them right away and keep them around for the detail. If they do stray after the first paragraph or two, they still have all the main information they need.

Writing this way is logical as well. It just makes sense, in non-fiction writing, to get all the good stuff out first so the reader has enough information to make a decision about whether or not to keep reading. Of course, this technique will not work very well in fiction writing where you want to keep the reader involved using tension, etc. The inverted pyramid gives you the chance to present the 'lead' of your story and follow up with the details.

Happy Writing!



Comments

This is great! I really enjoy these writing tips and find myself using them all the time. Thanks for sharing. Comment by Marie— June 1, 2011

Hey Janie – I use this form all the time. I get so sick of sorting through ebooks to locate pertinent information that I make it a point to respect my reader’s time. Good post. Thanks!

Comment by Deborah Owen— June 1, 2011

This was drummed into me in J-school, but I, too find it very helpful when writing articles, etc.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— June 1, 2011

I’d forgotten about the inverted pyramid. It’s a good idea for each paragraph, actually—in nonfiction writing especially. Then if you need to create an index, you can use the first sentence in most of the paragraphs to grab a word that is the essence of the paragraph and use it in the index.

Comment by Pat— June 1, 2011

That is a great idea, Pat., and using Word to create the index will automate that process for you.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— June 1, 2011

Non-Fiction Writing Tip #10

June 16, 2011 at 9:35 am

I am going to finish this list of “Ten Writing Tips for Non-Fiction Writers” with a list of terms and definitions that you should find useful as



you continue with your non-fiction writing projects. I have run across these terms in various places and sometimes wondered what they meant or how they applied to my writing. If you have some terms you would like to add to this list, please feel free:

- **Anecdote:** a story that illustrates a concept and engages the reader.
- **Autobiography:** a form of non-fiction in which the writer tells his or her own story.
- **Biography:** a form of non-fiction where the writer tells someone else’s story.
- **Connotation:** the set of ideas associated with a word’s explicit meaning.
- **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning of the word independent of any connotations.
- **Description:** the “picture,” if you will, in words of a person, place, or thing.
- **Emotive Language:** language that affects emotions
- **Essay:** a short work in non-fiction of a particular subject.
 - **Descriptive Essay:** conveys an impression about a person, place, or thing.
 - **Narrative Essay:** a true story
 - **Persuasive Essay:** tries to convince the reader to accept the writer’s point of view

- **Visual Essay:** conveys ideas through visual elements and language
- **Hyperbole:** extravagant exaggeration that can create a persuasive impact
- **Non-fiction:** writing about real people, places, events, ideas, etc.
- **Objective Writing:** based on facts only
- **Paradox:** a true statement that seems contradictory
- **Rhetorical Language:** language that sounds convincing
- **Subjective Writing:** based on the author’s own opinion

What are some terms you have come across that help define this occupation called writing?

Happy Writing!

Comments

Hey Janie – That was so good that I started a file with writing definitions. Thank you. Comment by Deborah Owen— June 16, 2011

Good – then when you get a nice long list you can post it in your blog! 😊 Comment by Janie Sullivan— June 16, 2011

Way ahead of you girl. lol Already planning for that – with your permission, of course. Comment by Deborah Owen— June 16, 2011

How about “narrative nonfiction”? This was a term new to me about five years ago, but now a lot of agents/publishers are asking for it. It means that you write your nonfiction the way journalists do—with quotes (real or manufactured), dialog (again, real or close to the way you remember it), etc. In other words, whatever makes the nonfiction less dry and more interesting. I once read a book that was supposed to be based on a grandfather’s story. When the grandson said, “what did you say then?” the grandfather said, “who can remember that far back? You’re a writer: make it up.” This is narrative nonfiction. Comment by Pat— June 17, 2011

I like that. I just finished a non-fiction book that used narrative nonfiction, but I did not think of it as a specific technique. It was the memoir of a woman written when she was old about things that happened when she was much younger. The dialogue was certainly not word for word from 40 years ago, but there were

quote marks so it appeared to be directly quoted. Interesting.

Comment by Janie Sullivan— June 17, 2011

I'm coaching one of my students on how to write narrative non-fiction right now. It's a very interesting style and he has an excellent story to tell.

Comment by Deborah Owen— June 17, 2011

Keep in Touch

Contact information

Janie Sullivan: janie@instructionalexcellence.net

Twitter: @janiewrites

Facebook: Janie Sullivan

SKYPE: janie.sullivan1 or 928-458-5861



Center for Writing Excellence: www.janiewrites.com