

9 Powerful Writing Tips From Famous Authors

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
[9 Books to Immediately Improve Your Writing: Tools for Writers Series](#)

“Kill your darlings, kill your darlings, even when it breaks your egocentric little scribbler’s heart, kill your darlings.”

— [Stephen King, On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft](#)

“Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor, the enemy of the people. It will keep you cramped and insane your whole life, and it is the main obstacle between you and a shitty first draft. I think perfectionism is based on the obsessive belief that if you run carefully enough, hitting each stepping-stone just right, you won’t have to die. The truth is that you will die anyway and that a lot of people who aren’t even looking at their feet are going to do a whole lot better than you, and have a lot more fun while they’re doing it.”

— [Anne Lamott, Bird by Bird](#)

“The mind travels faster than the pen; consequently, writing becomes a question of learning to make occasional wing shots, bringing down the bird of thought as it flashes by. A writer is a gunner, sometimes waiting in the blind for something to come in, sometimes roaming the countryside hoping to scare something up.”

— [E.B. White, The Elements of Style](#)

“Many experiments have shown that readers understand and remember material far better when it is expressed in concrete language that allows them to form visual images...”

— [Steven Pinker, The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century](#)

“The world doesn’t fully make sense until the writer has secured his version of it on the page. And the act of writing is strangely more lifelike than life.”

— [Betsy Lerner, The Forest for the Trees](#)

“Agency in fiction has to exist in the context of the worldview. Otherwise agency is not just meaningless or unconvincing, it is often laughable. Unfortunately, agency is often thoughtlessly given to characters who would not have it in reality. p.189”

— [Jeff VanderMeer, Wonderbook: The Illustrated Guide to Creating Imaginative Fiction](#)

“I have a distaste for the term “supporting characters.” It’s not that it’s a bad term, exactly, but it does call to mind a jockstrap or a bra—something created only to lift and support something else, that’s purely architectural and not alive with that precious spark of life we assume characters should have.”

— [Chuck Wendig, *Damn Fine Story: Mastering the Tools of a Powerful Narrative*](#)

“Stories are about people who are uncomfortable.”

— [Lisa Cron, *Wired for Story*](#)

“Examine every word you put on paper. You’ll find a surprising number that don’t serve any purpose.”

— [William Zinsser, *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*](#)