

PRODUCTIVITY ([HTTP://WWW.LIFEHACK.ORG/PRODUCTIVITY](http://www.lifehack.org/productivity))

Published: August 10, 2017

From an Engineer to an Author, I Find These Writing Tips Really Helpful

Writing well is one of those things that's seen to be hard to do or only a skill possessed by people with a natural talent. Trying to convey stories and thoughts in a constructive and flowing manner can leave many people feeling frustration and lack of real ability.

But I'm here to tell you that, as a fan of life hacks, I believe anyone can become a great writer with the right knowledge.

Making the transition from engineer to writer over the past 10 years, I've come across many of the common issues people encounter when they write and discovered the writing tips to allow them to write 10 times better.

We Aren't Really Taught How to Write Well in School

Don't feel disheartened if writing doesn't come naturally to you. In this online age, more of us have the opportunity to put our ideas out there but struggle to know where to start when we sit down to do it.

One reason is we aren't really taught how to write well in school. Much of the emphasis is put on grammar rules and fluency instead of developing the ability to write appealing and influential work.

Writing is also the part of language skill learning that requires creativity compared to speaking, listening, and reading, making it a more challenging skill to develop. Speaking, for example, has a creative aspect but it doesn't have the same need for precision as writing where even a single connective should be considered carefully in order to create a coherent and well-written piece of work.

ADVERTISING

The Common Difficulties People Have When Writing

For anyone who's sat down to write something profound or even just to get their points across in an effective manner will have experienced those common feelings of writer's block. These usually manifest as:

- Having no ideas to write
- Not knowing where to start
- Not knowing how to organise any ideas you do have
- Not knowing how to write words in an appealing way
- Taking too long to finish a piece of writing and getting demotivated

When we experience these, our writing often suffers becoming fragmented, simple and shallow. The flow can become messy and hard to follow and in danger of even being boring and ordinary.

The Hacks You Need to Follow to Unlock Your Writing Potential

There are several things to keep in mind when you sit down to write and by following these hacks, you can steer your writing to that of flow, appeal and coherency.

Don't Google General Ideas on Your Topic

Trying to think of ideas can be the first hurdle for many people. If you have a particular topic for example "how to think positively" and you feel stuck for ideas, don't automatically search google with your general topic. Instead, try to narrow down the scope first because google will only spit out very generic and clichéd tips that people have written time and time again.

Instead, ask yourself certain questions that will elicit the answer from within.

- Why do we need to think positively?
- What happens to our brains when we think positively?

- What's the difference between people who think positively and people who think negatively?
- What are the mindsets we need to change before we can think positively?
- What are some daily habits we can build to think more positively?

ADVERTISING

Brainstorming helps narrow down your topic and create different points to elaborate in your writing. Readers of your work will then feel that you're really making good points.

Don't Dwell on the Beginning, Focus on the Body

When we read things, the headline is what gets our attention which leads us to the main body of the writing. As a writer, this is the other way around.

When writing, the key is to write the main content first and then tune the headline accordingly. But this should also be applied to the introduction – focus on the main content and points first so you know the heart of what you're writing about and then think about the beginning in relation to it.

Design the Flow Like Designing a Drama: The Model AIDA

Getting your words to flow can be one of the hardest challenges. There's a marketing and advertising model called AIDA which stands for **Attention, Interest, Desire, Action**.

This strategy can also be applied to writing to create a good sense of structure and flow in order to get readers interested instead of merely throwing information at them. So keep this in mind when creating your content.

Avoid Perfectionism

Being a perfectionist could be a massive disadvantage (<http://www.lifehack.org/621368/how-perfectionism-secretly-screws-you-up>) when it comes to your writing.

We all want our work to be perfect but this can lead to the temptation to rewrite paragraphs once you start the next one which can be detrimental to the overall piece. This creates a lack of time and while your introduction may be spot on, the rest of your writing can end up disappointing your readers.

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

How Successful Leaders Give Honest Feedback That Inspires People and Does Not Hurt Their Ego

(http://www.lifehack.org/607257/leadership-skills-how-to-give-honest-feedback-that-inspire-people?ref=in_content_related)

30+ Life Skills That Aren't Taught in School but Largely Affect Our Lives

(http://www.lifehack.org/574500/life-skills-that-arent-taught-school-but-largely-affect-our-lives?ref=in_content_related)

How Perfectionism Secretly Screws You Up

(http://www.lifehack.org/621368/how-perfectionism-secretly-screws-you-up?ref=in_content_related)

Editing is an important part of the process but leave this until the end when you can see the big picture rather than doing it as you go.

The key is getting your ideas down in an organised manner and worry about any changes once these are down. Don't get so attached to your first draft – as Hemingway famously said “*the first draft of everything is shit.*”

Replace Vague Words with Concrete Ones

Try avoiding bland and general words in your writing. Instead, think about more descriptive words that make your piece sound more attractive. If you write ‘good’ ask yourself how good? Could it be wonderful, exceptional or excellent? Could ‘bad’ be atrocious, lousy, inadequate? Or could ‘a lot’ be a massive amount, tonnes or plentiful?

Using more descriptive and imaginative words will help engage the reader and give your writing more life.

Remove Fillers and Redundant Words

When we speak, we naturally use filler words like: ‘some kind of’, ‘sort of’, ‘to start with’, ‘due to the fact that’, ‘I believe’, ‘in terms of’ and ‘in order to’.

While it's common to use these types of fillers and redundant words, they can actually decrease your credibility because they make the reader feel that you're adding no meaning to a sentence and can give the impression your logic is lacking.

For example: *All of the people rushed to get the train* can be better read as *All the people rushed to get the train.*

In the process of starting my company, I hired three new members of staff would be better written as *When I started my company, I hired three new members of staff.*

Fillers and redundant words make your writing conversational but if you're creating more informative content, avoid fillers at all costs.

Always Choose Simpler Words Over Convolved Ones

With all kinds of writing whether formal or informal, it's a good idea to avoid long and more difficult words.

You may think using simple words is a no-no especially when, at school, we're often taught to write as descriptive as possible. But while this may be good for story-telling, other forms of writing tend to have the intention of getting a message across and simple words are more effective.

For example: "use" instead "utilise", "to" instead of "in order to", "help" instead of "facilitate", "start" instead of "commence".

Remember, brilliant writing is simple writing.

Design Punchlines: One Word Sentences or One Line Paragraphs

Look.

Have I got your attention now? That's the beauty of using a single word in a paragraph. This technique is a great hook for the reader to increase their intrigue. Use this to create a sense of importance in what you're about to write next but just make sure not to overdo it – use it only once in once piece of writing.

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Sheba Leung (<http://www.lifehack.org/author/sheba-leung>) · 5 months ago

(http://www.lifehack.org/560549/asking-these-7-questions-can-help-you-get-the-most-from-book?ref=content_bottom_related)

Frank Yung (<http://www.lifehack.org/author/frank-yung>) · 5 months ago