

CRISTY BURNE

TOP TEN TIPS FOR WRITING GREAT STORIES

1. **Have fun, make mistakes:** Don't worry about spelling or neat writing or being perfect in your first draft. You can fix your mistakes and make the story sing in your second draft.
2. **Ask "What if?":** Great ideas come from asking "What if?" questions about ordinary life. What if you had to build a unicorn out of lollies? What if you could only eat one food? What if you could fly? What if aliens took you prisoner?
3. **Start with a character who wants something:** Hook us in by starting with a character who wants something *really* badly, but don't give them what they want.
4. **Make us barrack for your character:** We love BIG characters. Create a character who is 1) being unfairly treated, 2) in danger, 3) funny, 4) flawed and/or 5) brave.
5. **Celebrate you:** You are the only person with your set of experience and interests. So celebrate you. When you write your stories, use details of what *you* know.
6. **Show, don't tell:** Spend more time describing characters and events. Instead of *telling* me "He was stinky," *show* me: "When he took off his socks, half the class fainted."
7. **Turn on your senses:** Write about what your characters can see, smell, feel, hear and touch. Write the way their body reacts. Goosebumps? Butterflies? Shivers down their spine?
8. **Adventure *inside*:** Just like you, your characters think inside their heads: they wonder, imagine and fear. They make guesses about other people's thoughts and judgements. They hope for the future, worry about the past, etc. Make sure you write about what your character is thinking.
9. **Write, write, write:** Have fun. Make yourself laugh. Don't worry about doing it right, just do it. Write lists, jokes, comics, songs, diaries, stories and dreams.
10. **Read, read, read:** Reading can take you across oceans, through solar systems, into danger and secrets and magic. The more you read, the easier it is to write, spell, research, learn and create the things you dream of.

These writing tips are all things that have worked for me.
I hope they work for you too! Happy writing!



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