

How to conquer fear of writing

Fear of writing gets planted in schoolchildren at an early age. We're led to believe that writing is a special language owned by the English teacher, available only to the few who have 'a gift for words'. But writing isn't a skill that some are born with and others aren't.



By [James Hurford](#) 25 Nov 2012

Writing is simply talking to someone else on paper. Anybody who can think clearly, can write clearly - about any subject at all.

10 writing myths

There're lots of ways to overcome your fear of business writing. But a good place to start is to recognise false ideas that hold you back:

1. Good writers are fast writers - the best writers in the world will tell you that this just isn't true. Slow down, take your time to make it matter.
2. Good writers get it right on first draft - nothing could be further from the truth. They draft, rewrite, revise, edit and sweat over their writing.
3. Good writers don't need to edit - just the opposite. Good editing improves the clarity and forcefulness of your writing. It's where the real work of writing happens.
4. Good writers know what they want to say, word for word - they don't. They develop their ideas as they write, and are open to changing their minds.
5. Good writers use long words - big words muddy your argument. Don't hide behind fancy words. Use plain, simple English.
6. Good writers write long emails, documents and papers - the shorter it is the better chance it has of being read. Readers appreciate not having their time wasted.
7. Good writing is built one sentence at a time - it's not. It's written first as chunks of ideas and revised later.
8. Good writers work alone - most business writers work in busy offices with frequent input from their coworkers and peers. Sharing ideas, asking questions, and revising their writing.
9. Good writing means grammar, spelling and punctuation - that's the shine on the text. Polishing should be done on your final draft.
10. Good writers are born that way - stop telling yourself you're not good enough or that you don't have what it takes. Everyone can be a good writer with a little practice.

If you still have lingering fears of writing, just remember - there's no such thing as good writing, there's only good editing.

Just get it down - you can always make it better later.

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