

# The **7** Habits of a Good Writer

## 1. A good writer **reads**.

The better writing you put in, the better you'll put out. Consume the best writing you can find—fiction, nonfiction, newsprint, speeches, poetry—and learn what entertains, informs, and inspires people.

## 2. A good writer **writes**.

Devote a regular time and place to writing. Write anything, so long as you write often. Train your brain to write on command, and learn to finish your projects.

## 3. A good writer **prepares**.

Good writing features detail, texture, and depth. These qualities will not simply appear in your writing—you must constantly look at the world around you for useful images and concepts. Take a notebook with you wherever you go, and write down your thoughts as they come to you. Think, research, and outline before you ever begin a first draft.

## 4. A good writer **studies the reader**.

Write with your audience in mind. Learn as much as you can about them, and shape your writing to reflect their knowledge, needs, and sensibilities. Don't talk down to them, but don't talk over their heads.

## 5. A good writer **says something**.

Write because you want to communicate a message to your readers. You may be required to write because of school or church or work, but do not write just because you have to. Find something you want to say, and say it. Without a central message, your writing will lack direction, organization, and clarity.

## 6. A good writer **edits**.

Be merciless with your writing. Never accept your first draft as complete. Find ways to be clearer and more concise, surprising the reader with variety and new insight. And as hard as it may be, remove anything from your writing that does not in some way support your purpose.

## 7. A good writer **stretches**.

To be a writer is to be vulnerable. Whenever you put pen to paper, you give others a window into your thoughts, your values, your weaknesses—and that can be scary. But the good writer presses on, sharing truth and love in spite of the discomfort or reprisal that might bring. So stretch yourself. Find new ways and new opportunities to write. Discover what makes you uncomfortable, and hone your craft regardless.