

The Accidental Wizard Writing Pack

Top Tips from Kimberly Pauley

TIP ONE: THE MORE YOU READ, THE MORE YOU KNOW

One of the most basic things that we can do to make ourselves better writers is to read.

1. Read a lot. I mean it. Read as much as you can. You can tell your parents I said so.
 2. Read widely. Do you usually read fantasy? Try some non-fiction or a murder mystery!
Always read serious stuff? Try something funny!
 3. Read things that challenge you. Comfort reading is wonderful, but books that aren't in your comfort zone make your brain grow.
 4. Read books about ALL kinds of people and places.
It's the easiest way to travel the world (and expand your mind at the same time)!
 5. Read for enjoyment...but read critically too.
- As you're reading, think about the bits that really worked for you and what didn't too.

TIP TWO: BE FUNNY!

There's no one key to successful humorous writing. But, there are some things that work for me!

1. Be specific. Writing about an "ugly chicken" is one thing, but writing about "an unreasonably angry, cursed, boil-covered, featherless chicken" is another thing entirely.
2. Be surprising! Many jokes are about leading people to a different place than they thought they were going.
3. Be aware of who you're writing for. Trust me when I tell you that kids and parents often don't find the same things to be funny. We're talking fart jokes vs. dad jokes.
4. Be silly. Seriously. Don't be afraid to be really, really, really silly.
Sometimes I'll be writing something and think, hey, this is SO ridiculous!
And then I remember who I am and make it even MORE ridiculous.
5. Be mean to your characters. I mean this in the nicest way.
Making them uncomfortable often leads to really funny situations.



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TIP THREE: USE ALL YOUR SENSES

For many people, writing is a very visual thing. By using all five senses when writing, we can create much richer stories.

1. Smell...what do your characters smell like?

How about their room or their school or the car they are riding in?

What's in the air as they walk around town?

2. Sound...what do they hear as they lie in bed at night?

What does their best friend's voice sound like? Did that door creeeeaaaaak as it opened?

3. Touch...what does it feel like when someone bumps into your hero?

Is the ground hard or soft?

Are they wearing a fine silk shirt that feels cool like running water or rough polyester that itches?

4. Taste...what does their favourite food taste like?

They've picked an apple from a tree—is it tart or sweet?

5. Sight...what are the little details they see in their world?

What are the things that only they would notice?

TIP FOUR: LISTEN TO LEARN

Writing isn't actually a solitary thing. As people read it – friends, family, teachers, mentors and, when you're writing for a living: agents and editors – they all have a hand in a story.

1. When someone gives you feedback (good or bad), think about it for a while before making any decisions.

Our first response is often to deny that our work is anything, but perfect but there's no such thing as a perfect book.

Okay, except maybe for *Coraline*. I do love that book.

2. Be open to suggestions but also don't be afraid to say "No!" because it is your story.

3. Don't get angry if someone doesn't like your story.

Not every story is for every person. If they give you advice and it's well meant, that's great.

If it is mean spirited, ignore it.

4. You can pick and choose what works for you from critiques.

You don't have to take all of that advice. Take what works for you.

5. When you're critiquing other people's writing, you should also listen to them.

It's another great way to learn!



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Create a character!

Name: _____

Age: _____ Height: _____

Physical description:

What am I? (wizard, witch, royalty, peasant, pirate, shopkeeper, student, etc)

Where am I from?

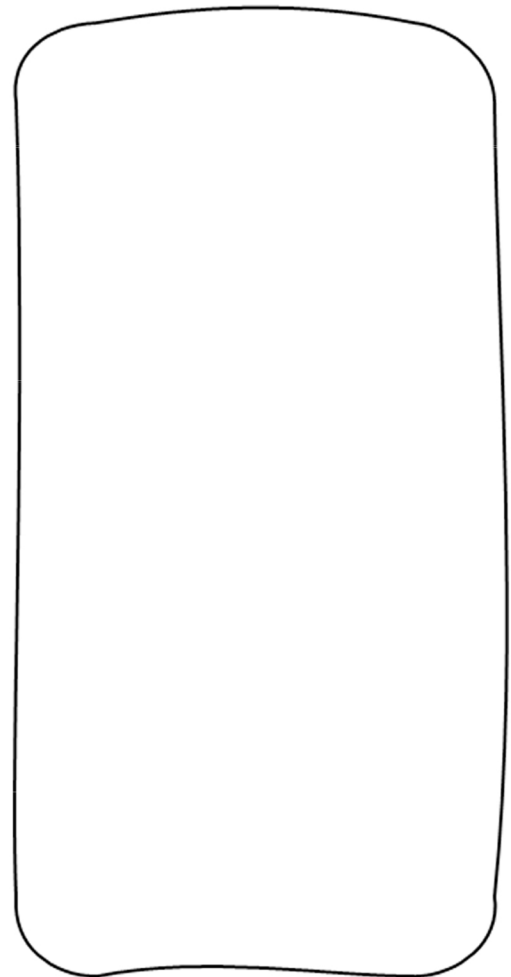
Who are my family & friends?

Am I magical? What are my powers?

What are my habits and skills (the stranger the better)?

Favourite foods / objects / hobbies / things:

Draw your character here:



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Build a magical town or city!

Name of town or city: _____

Describe your town /city (is it next to a forest, or in the desert? Is it a large city or a small town? Are there two suns or moons? Are there any rivers or is it by the sea?):

What is the weather like?

What do residents do (what are their jobs, their hobbies)?

What do residents eat and wear?

Draw a map here:

