

## **I Want to Write: where to start**

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/i-want-to-write-where-to-start/>

This entry is part 3 of 6 in the series [How to Start](#)

[How to Start](#)

- [1, 2, 3... KICK! Getting Started on Your First Illustrated Storybook](#)
- [10 Must-Haves for a Solid Illustrated Storybook](#)
- I Want to Write: where to start
- [To Storybook Mock-up or Not to Mock-up?](#)
- [How I Make Time for Writing](#)
- [5 Essential Writing Elements plus 3 levers](#)

**One of the questions I get asked a lot from new writers goes something like this: “I’ve always wanted to write and I have so many ideas, but I don’t know where to start.” Notice: not an actual question. But it *is* a question, really. The question is hidden inside the statement.**

**The question that eventually comes out as I talk or write with someone at more length is really more like this: “Should I even try being a writer? Do I have what it takes to be a successful writer?” The short answer is yes. Always.**

It bothers me how often I find successful writers and even writing teachers do their best to dissuade people from even trying to write. Writing isn’t something that can be handed down to you but the ability to be successful at it isn’t something anyone else can prevent you from pursuing. No one.

Success in writing (or anything else, for that matter) has nothing to do with ability or talent. It has to do with tenacity. Not giving up. If you want to be a writer, then be that. It’s easier to say than to do, but that doesn’t make it any less true.

Being a weak writer will not help your success. No question. Being a great writer is what anyone should strive to be. But you’ll never get that far if you don’t even try to be – well, *any kind of writer* at all.

**If being a writer is something you want to do, there are certain things you must do to make that happen.**

## **Where should I start?**

### **1. Do what the professionals keep telling us.**

They all say these things because it's true.

- You've got to read, and
- you've got to write, and
- you've got to re-write and edit and polish.
- Rinse and repeat.

That will never change. But there's more.

### **2. Meet people. Get involved.**

You need to get to know other people who read and other people (not necessarily the same people) who write. [And edit](#). And who are [book distributors](#). And [librarians](#). Oh yeah, and maybe [some agents](#).

In short, you've got to get to know people who are involved (in any way whatsoever) in the world you want to enter: The World of *Words*.

But what if you plan to self-publish anyway? DOES NOT MATTER. You must acquaint yourself with other writing professionals. But what if you're shy? Does Not Matter.

How? There are lots of ways. Here are a few:

- Take writing classes.
- Attend a writing convention.
- Join or create a [writing group](#).
- Join or create a reading group.
- Get to know your librarians.
- Hang out at book shops.
- Go to book events.
- Go to book events.
- REALLY – go to book events. ([Here's the biggest](#), worldwide.)

### **3. Start small, think big (a.k.a. learn from my mistakes).**

Another thing you absolutely need to do is – and I hate to admit it – start smaller. Don't jump right away into the epic saga that will require 1,000 pages of back-story. The reason I say this is that – well, it's what I did.

Years (and years, and years) later, I still have not been able to organize all the materials from the epic saga that I as a first-time-budding-fiction-writer attempted to write. It is (or would be, if I could write it all down) an amazing story.

Starting fresh on a completely new book or screenplay is much easier than digging through the volumes of notes and chapters that I've written for that old epic that I worked so hard on for so many years.

I bit off more than I could correlate... as a writer at that time. I went from writing technical manuals for a Port of Entry (think: big trucks with heavy stuff needing to cross a border and be processed for certification) to trying to write an eight-book series of novels. Tomes, really.

Over the years, I've come to find that most people who want to write a book or book series have never written more than five pages of text for any purpose – not for a story or a diary entry or a long letter. So going from the more average length of writing (which is rapidly shrinking, thanks to text messaging and Twitter), how does one go from nearly-no-pages of words strung together to a 300-page first novel in a series?

Well, you don't. At least, not on the first attempt.

If you want to write but you have no experience in writing fiction, my best advice is to start with something shorter than a full-length novel. Now, if you're anything like me at all, you will *hate this answer!*

I am absolutely not the type of person to start small and work my gradual way up to something bigger. No. I like big. I think big; I want to make big things. That's my way.

Don't jump right away into the epic saga. It's an exercise in frustration and unless you have a love of writing lengthy chapter outlines, you will most likely slam into a wall right around Chapter Four.

So what should you do if you've never written a story before?

My best advice is to write something short or even super short, where the word count and word choice is tightly limited and your readers are very demanding.

## **4. Get feedback, get rejected.**

There are many venues where writers can find a home for their writing. The booming option these days is to self-publish, but I highly recommend submitting your work to others.

[This can absolutely be disheartening](#), I know. But if you're lucky, you'll get some solid feedback on what you've submitted. This will only help your writing abilities if you take that feedback and do something with it.

You'll know you're ready to take your writing seriously when you can accept critical feedback without wanting to pull out all your hair and crawl under a rock. This is an important step. It isn't about

developing a thicker skin. You don't need thicker skin, and you don't need a smaller ego either.

You just need to listen and observe. Really listen. And really observe.

**Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to submit your finished manuscript to as many publishers as possible with the intention to NOT get published, but to get feedback.**

**Your first manuscript probably will not get published. It doesn't matter.**

**You wrote it. Now go and get it rejected.**

**Where to get rejected? Here are some great options.**

You could write poetry for a poetry slam event. That's a pretty tough crowd and writing poetry is fun. The only problem with writing poetry is that it doesn't require structure and there's oftentimes no story. A poem usually depicts a moment, not a story. The character is your own – actually, you.

That said, there are a lot of literary magazines looking for poetry. If you've never heard of [32 Poems](#), check it out. Pretty cool stuff there.

If you want to write compelling characters and a rich story with rising and falling action, then I would recommend short fiction.

For short fiction drama, I recommend getting rejected by [Glimmer Train](#). Very respected.

Write short scripts for the stage. Here's a short script outlet, [Lazy Bee Scripts](#).

Write short scripts for the screen (or computer screen). Here's a list of contests from the [International Screenwriter's Association \(ISA\)](#), a great resource for anything screenwriting-related.

You can write [Flash Fiction](#) or Drabbles. These require extreme word economy. My only nit is that you can't really develop characters that feel real. If you want to take a stab at writing that kind of fiction, you can submit to [100 Word Story](#). Highly respected flash fiction publisher.

The most rewarding type of story writing and the toughest demographic? Writing for kids. Whether an illustrated storybook or a [chapter book](#), this kind of writing is surprisingly challenging because of [language restrictions](#) and limited word count.

If a child doesn't like the story you're reading to them, they just get up and leave the group. They start playing, or just start doing - anything else. You know immediately if your story is captivating or not, because kids aren't compelled to silently suffer for you.

If you can write a series of stories that kids love and that adults appreciate too, it will enhance your life and it will enhance your writing abilities. For a list of [agents interested in fiction for kids](#), [Go Here](#).

## **5. Don't stop.**

Whatever you decide to write, there is one thing you should keep in mind. Don't stop after one story. Writing isn't a destination, and I think a lot of people have the idea that becoming a writer is something you can get hold of - and then it's over. You stop.

Becoming a writer starts whenever you start writing. But being a writer is something that never comes to an end – not until they carry you out the door, feet first.

There is no ending really. You'll always be writing and re-writing and learning and improving your craft. Book after book after book. Through every story, you learn.

I doubt I'll be able to write all the stories I want to write in my lifetime. (And yes, I *will* finish that epic saga!) The task is to at least try.

Keep creating, no matter what.

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