

## How to Become a Better Writer

August 2011 Newsletter

This month we're going to reveal a widely-kept secret about how to become a better writer. Ready? Two things. Two simple things: read and write. That's it. We could easily end the newsletter here because we've revealed the great secret, but let's unpack these ideas a bit.

**Read.** We've heard it since we were kids: reading is fundamental. And it is. But what happens to most of us is that we tend to read the same types of documents to the point that we lose all objectivity about the writing. We read work-related writing and articles related to our work. Oh sure, we read the daily newspaper and perhaps a magazine article or two, but we typically read the same documents or documents about the same kinds of stuff. Reading other types of documents, like novels, short stories, or magazine articles, benefits our writing by broadening our vocabulary; enhancing our familiarity with language; introducing us to different ways of expressing ideas; and, believe it or not, improving our knowledge of grammar! Experts suggest reading 15 minutes a day, every day.

**Write.** Writing in a journal, keeping a diary, blogging, or doing any writing outside the confines of the workplace is beneficial in that it helps writers clarify thoughts, hone critical thinking skills, and reflect on what they know; it also provides opportunities for writers to test various writing strategies. Perhaps the most important of these is the enhancement of critical thinking skills, which are directly related to reasoning and logic. Logic and reasoning, we all know, are essential when writing the document and, of course, within the document itself. After all, if the document isn't logical and well-reasoned, persuading the reader to agree with its premise is almost impossible. In fact, [many professionals](#) are keeping journals as a means of professional development, and recent [research](#) supports the notion that writing enhances critical thinking skills.

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**Prices Slashed!** We've reduced the prices of our [online classes](#) (without feedback) 25 percent!

**Congrats to the winner of the Online Technical Writing Course!** Janet Schafer of Conrad had the winning entry. Thanks to all entrants! [Read](#) her entry.

**Public class in Annapolis, MD!** Sept. 15-16 we'll be teaching a 1.5 day technical writing class. [Contact us](#) for more information.

**Stand-alone modules!** Very soon we'll be offering stand-alone modules that you can download to your computer. Visit [our site](#) often or [contact us](#) for more information!

**Follow us** [@hurleywrite.com](#) for weekly writing tips and the "word of the day."

**Just for Fun!** Entries from the annual [Bulwer-Lytton](#) contest for bad opening sentences to imaginary novels!

So, the next time you have an extra 15 or 30 minutes, spend it reading or writing--it will be time well-spent!

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