

What Does It Take

To **Write, Publish and Sell** a Novel?

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My Writing experience

- Creating
- Researching
- Editing
- Submitting
- Dealing with rejection



Writing

How I Start—From where I left the day before

Daily goal: 500 words, 2 double-spaced pages

2-3 hours of uninterrupted time (*Turn off internet!*)

Allow the characters to take over

“Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can see only as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.” EL Doctorow, author.

The Creating Process

- Place or setting
- People
- Industry—type of work your characters do
- Time period (historical novels)
- Weather
- Events
- Speech patterns
- Character differences

What do fiction writers research?

- Google
- Interviews—Talk to professionals
- Reading (other sources)
- Life experiences
- Travel
- Dialogue—Eavesdrop on conversations to pick up patterns of speech

Where do you find your information?

✓ Take out everything that doesn't move the story forward or add something to the character.

✓ Edit your tags (he said, she said). Remove all those that are not necessary to clarify the action.

✓ Watch your “show” vs. “tell.” Each time you use the words, *heard*, *knew*, *felt*, you are telling. Do a search. Can you show instead?

✓ Be merciless. Don't get too attached to your scenes or your writing.

✓ Pay attention to what your readers suggest.

✓ Re-write and re-write.



Editing

- Research what the agent or editor wants. Study the submission guidelines on their websites.
- In your query letter make sure you say your manuscript is *completed* and has so many words. Do not send the completed manuscript unless it's asked for.
- Do not sit back and wait for a response. Keep writing!

What to submit?

- No thanks. This is an auto-responder. They probably did not read your material.
- Not for us. This may mean you sent something that they do not publish—the wrong genre or content they avoid.
- Could work if. This is an invitation to re-write it and re-submit it. Not a real rejection.

Handling Rejection

My Publishing Experience

- Preparation
- Conferences
- Contests
- Agents
- Small Press



The Art of Publishing

- Check out the site to see what they publish (editors) or whom they represent (agents)
- Send only what they ask for (synopsis OR first 50 pages OR query only). They are all different.
- In your query tell them why you are sending to them. What makes them attractive to you.
- Do not try to be cute to capture their attention.

Prepare how?

- Meet and network with other writers
- One-on-ones with agents and editors
- Learn what is new in the publishing industry in your genre
- Learn the craft of writing
- Meet and interact with readers

Conferences

- Don't enter to win. Just enter! The contest will give you a deadline and a chance to tweak your work.
- With some contests you get a critique.
- Don't pay too much money for the contest (no more than \$80). Most contests cost \$10-20.
- Don't be too shy to enter. Just enter!

Contests



- The role of the agent is diminishing. Why? More information online.
- They pave the way for you and represent you to the publishers.
- They negotiate your contract.
- They do not sell your books once published.
- They earn their money on a percentage of your royalties, no up front fees!

Agent?

- Agents and large presses want experienced writers.
- Small presses will take a chance on a new writer.
- Do not send simultaneous submissions. Send to just one.
- Wait 3 months. If you've heard nothing, withdraw your submission and submit to someone else.
- Use searches like www.duotrope.com to locate small presses interested in your genre.

The role of the small press

Your Agent?
Your Publisher?
Your Publicist?

***YOU are
responsible!!!***



Who is Responsible for selling your novel?



Twitter, Facebook, Goodreads, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Wattpad.
Constantly changing. Stay up-to-date and blog at least 2 times a week.
Check out Joan's blog at <http://www.joancurtis.com/blog>

Outlets

www.joancurtis.com

- Go to conferences
- Enter contests
- Meet other writers
- Keep writing
- Learn the industry
- Look for small presses
- Don't expect to make a fortune
- Accept rejection



I would advise anyone who aspires to a writing career that before developing his talent he would be wise to develop a thick hide. — *Harper Lee*

Strategies to Break In

Dr. Curtis is an award winning writer who has published 5 books, including:
The Clock Strikes Midnight, MuseItUp Publishing
Hire Smart and Keep 'Em, Praeger Press
The New Handshake, Praeger Press
Managing Sticky Situations at Work, Praeger Press
Strategic Interviewing, Greenwood Publishing



About the Author

www.joancurtis.com

Join Joan on her blog
where she shares many
more tips for writers,
reviews of books and
much more!

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