

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a white laptop keyboard on a white surface. The keyboard is angled from the bottom right towards the top left. Visible keys include 'esc', 'fn', 'F12' (light), 'F11' (light), '@ 2', '~ _', '1', 'Q', 'tab', 'caps lock', 'shift', and 'fn'. In the top right corner, the bottom edge of a white smartphone is visible. In the bottom right corner, a black pen lies on a light brown, textured object, possibly a notebook cover. In the bottom left corner, a small portion of a white spiral-bound notebook is visible.

Writing Tips for Teens

by
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Table of Contents

<i>Copyright</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Dedication.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Guidelines and Getting Started</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Your Writer's Notebook and Prewriting</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Writing the First Draft</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Responding to Drafts</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Revising Drafts.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Editing Drafts</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Publishing Drafts</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Writing the Setting</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Writing Character Arcs.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Writing Point of View.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Writing Tidbits.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Author Bio.....</i>	<i>35</i>

Copyright

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Any errors are my own. (And please send me corrections if you like!) Feel free to contact me through my author website at www.lynnlovegreen.com.

Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to all the teen writers out there. You are special, and your voice needs to be heard.

A shoutout to all the English/Language Arts teachers and youth librarians! Thanks for your service. You rock!

Introduction

This booklet started out as a series of blog posts for the 2020-1 school year. Because of COVID-19, many schools and libraries shifted to online learning. As a retired English teacher, I wanted to help teen writers. I thought about all the writing workshops and talks I've done, and started posting Writing Tips for Teens on the first week of each month. This year (2021-2), most schools have gone back to in-person learning, but some may still have a need for writing tips. I compiled and edited the posts to create this booklet. I address teens directly as if they're reading this as individuals, but this content can also be used by teachers for their writing classes or by librarians for teen library programs.

This is not a formal writing program. As you'll see, it's more of a series of short chats with teens about writing. You can read one, then play around with that concept in your own writing, or with your writing class or library writing group. Or you can read a bunch at once if that works for you. I hope this booklet will provide ideas and inspiration.

Credits: I created the booklet cover from a Stencil image. Any errors you find are my own. (And please send me corrections if you like!) Feel free to contact me through my author website at www.lynnlovegreen.com.

Guidelines and Getting Started

Welcome, teen writers! I hope you'll enjoy these writing tips. Please feel free to share with other teens, classrooms, and teen library programs. (I'd appreciate your using my name in any acknowledgements, thanks.) If you want a hashtag, I'm using #writingtipsforteens. Enough of the small talk—let's write!

Guidelines:

I'll be dispensing information *and* advice in these posts.

Information = facts, ie. What is a character?

Advice = suggestions, ie. What kind of writing schedule should I have?

Information can be right or wrong. Advice is more subjective.

Each writer is unique. Use the advice that works for you, and ignore the rest. Never believe anyone who says “Never” or “Always.” (See what I did there? 😊) Keep an open mind—what works for you right now may not be what works in a few years or with the next project.

There are only a few writing rules, but there are many guidelines. Not all will apply in every case. Rules like “You need a plot and characters for a story,” probably apply to you. Rules like “Never use adverbs,” probably don't. Take them with a grain of salt.

Getting started:

How do I work writing into my schedule?

This will vary with individual writers. Start with your daily and weekly routine and rhythm. Can you fit in writing before your school day starts, or at the end of the day? Or an hour or two on the weekend? Or a half hour while you wait for your younger sibling at soccer practice? My advice is to start small, with short periods of time, and see what works best for you.

Figure out how you'll physically write and have it ready. Pen and legal pad, laptop, phone? Tell your friends and family, and make them honor that time by taking it seriously yourself. *(Be prepared to get pushback. It may take some time before they believe you.)* Find someone who can hold you accountable. Examples: Do weekly sprints of a half hour at a time with a writing friend. Tell your best friend to ask you if you've been writing this week.

How do I organize my thoughts?

Are you a plotter or pantser? Or a bit of both? Plotters like to plot or plan things out in advance. Pantsers like to write from the seat of their pants, without much planning. Try different things to see what feels right for you. I recommend doing at least a little planning before you write so you waste less time writing yourself into corners. (Been there, done that!) Keep your phone or paper handy for those quick thoughts that come to you as you stand in line or wake up in the morning. Create a system for writing more detailed thoughts.

Planning and organizing can take many forms. Use your learning/thinking style.

Kinesthetic writers can make webs, collages, and boards and put sticky notes on their

walls. Verbal writers can make lists and outlines, and write character studies. Auditory writers can speak into their phones or laptops and listen to them later. There are programs like Scrivener and Aeon Timeline for people who have money to spend on planning things out on their computers. (I just use Word and Excel, and sometimes add Aeon Timeline for timelines.)

Find a way to write and save docs. For writing and organizing, I like using Word, Pages, or another writing program so I can write and revise easily. Folders are handy for different docs and revisions. For saving, save to the cloud, thumb drive, computer backups, or more than one, to avoid the “I lost my whole book!” disaster. I save on a thumb drive each day and at least once a month on another system.

Try different things and see what feels natural to you. And most important—have fun with writing!

Want a prompt to get started? Here’s a couple I created for our library’s Instagram posts:

He was the youngest warrior they’d ever had.

OR

I wouldn’t play their games anymore—I’d tear the game down instead.

Take care. See you next time.

Your Writer's Notebook and Prewriting

What is a writer's notebook?

A writer's notebook is a great place to gather and store ideas that you'll use later. It can also serve as a reference for you to look at later as you plan out your writing future. This writer's notebook can be a physical notebook, a bunch of papers in a folder, a folder on your laptop or phone—whatever works for you. Here are some ideas of what to add to it:

Descriptions: describe what is near you, or describe a person you know. Get as many details as you can, using as many senses as you can. This can be done indoors or outdoors.

Sketches: Sketch something near you, or if you're doing research or brainstorming for a writing piece, sketch about that. Add notes or labels if helpful.

Notes: Write notes about a character, plot, or other idea for your writing. For example, for a character, you might write down her name, physical description, details about her family, her personality, likes, dislikes, etc. (Or his, their, etc.—I'm using “her” in my examples today.) Or write a short scene of something important that happened to your character.

Paragraphs or poetry: If you have an idea for a short writing piece, go for it! It might be a short poem, an essay, a short story, etc.

Lists: Write lists of things you want to write about later. Some examples: important times in your life, topics for poems or stories, places you want to describe.

Research notes: If your writing involves another time in history, a special job a character has, etc., you might need to do research. Take notes and be sure to include the source (website or book, etc.) in case you need to go back and find it later.

Writing Exercises: Try doing writing exercises when you need a warm up or can't think of something to write about. Here are a couple examples:

1. Word shaking: Look at a picture or a scene. Brainstorm a list of words of what you see and include some adjectives to describe colors, shapes, etc. Then choose at least 5 words to create a poem or paragraph.
2. Take a common fairy tale or kids' story and tell the story from different points of view. For example, tell Goldilocks and the Three Bears from Goldilocks' point of view, then Baby Bear's point of view.

Journal: Keep a journal regularly or when you go on a trip or start a new school, etc.

(Note: Sometimes journals can bring out strong feelings or issues. Don't be shy about talking to a school counselor, your family doctor, etc. if you need help from an expert. Your mental health is important.)

Collect: Save pictures, library book receipts, website URLs, names of good books and authors, anything you want to save as a reader and writer.

Goals: Write down your writing goals for the week, month, year. Try breaking down big ones into little steps (ie. “I will write 500 words a day five days a week.” to help you with “I will write a novel this year.”).

Opportunities: Keep a list of writing contests, events and workshops. Many are now online. Save the URL or website so you can find it later.

What is prewriting?

As you may know, we often teach the writing process in steps. There are different terms for these steps depending on who you talk to, but these are the ones I’ll use: Prewrite, Write, Respond, Revise, Edit, and Publish. The Prewrite step is thinking about your topic and planning before you write your first draft. Many of the items in your writer’s notebook can be part of your prewriting. As I mentioned last time, your planning may look different than another writer’s, based on your learning or writing style. But I do recommend some kind of prewriting to help you find and flesh out your ideas.

When you have an idea or a writing prompt, give yourself a little time to think about it. Then brainstorm—write down a web or cluster, a list, a quick paragraph, whatever fits the situation. You might want to set it aside and add more details to it before you move on. When you’re ready, start planning your organization by labeling or adding to your prewrite notes. What will grab your reader at the start? What comes at the beginning,

middle, and end? For many writers, the more you do up front, the easier it will be to write the first draft.

Take care. See you next time.

Writing the First Draft

What is the write step?

Once you've done your prewriting or planning, you're ready for the first draft. Again, use whatever tools work for you. If you write on a computer or device, it's a good idea to create a file and save it right away then every so often so you don't lose it if your program crashes or another problem threatens to wipe out your work. It'll save you a lot of heartache if you develop that habit early on.

The first draft is the time to create your story (or poem or whatever you're working on). As you write, let the ideas flow onto the page. Don't worry about spelling and typos and all that. You can go back and clean it up later. This is more about having fun and getting the basic story down.

Many of us get writer's block at this stage. There are many reasons for it, but in my experience, writer's block is usually the left or critical side of our brains talking to us. Maybe we're afraid our ideas aren't any good, or others won't like what we write. Those negative thoughts can shut down the right or creative side of our brains. So don't let that critic in. Crowd it out. Tell it to go away until revision, or drown it out with happy thoughts of how much fun this story is, or immerse yourself in music—whatever works for you while you're writing. Have fun, and just write.

No matter how many brilliant writers there are in the world, there is no one just like you. Even if we all wrote the same story, each of us would bring it to life in a different way.

Whatever you are writing is good enough. You are enough. We need your words. Now go and write!

P. S. If you're interested in writing a novel, you might be interested in National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). It started as a challenge to write the first draft of a whole novel during the month of November. There are now offshoots at other times of year. There's a NaNoWriMo program just for younger writers, called the Young Writers Program (YWP). Learn more at <https://ywp.nanowrimo.org>.

Take care. See you next time.

Responding to Drafts

Why is response and feedback important?

This step is helpful for several reasons. The number one purpose is for another pair of eyes to see what you can't. As writers, we often see the idea that's in our heads, not what's actually written down. Plus, others can more easily find repeats, awkward explanations, and that kind of stuff. The number two purpose is to see how others respond to your writing. Maybe that description isn't as clear as you hoped, or that character isn't as likeable as you thought, or the word choice isn't a good fit for your intended audience. Critique partners and beta readers can pick up on that kind of stuff and let you know. The third purpose for response is that you also grow as a writer when you give feedback to other writers. It helps to develop a keen eye that will allow you to notice more things in your own writing and add to your own toolbox of writing styles. And joining a writing community means giving as well as taking. Helping fellow writers with critiques is a great way to do that.

When do you ask for responses?

We usually think doing of this step after the first draft. But it's also a good step to repeat. I often get feedback from people after each major draft. On my last book project, I got critique partners and beta readers to respond to my writing in five rounds. (Not the same people each time—I don't want to wear out my welcome! But I stopped to get feedback that many times.) Your number of drafts and responses may vary.

Who do you find to respond to your writing?

First, find someone you're comfortable with who won't tear your writing apart without mercy. That's not constructive criticism. Outside of that, there are several ways to approach this. Many people look for writers who are at or near the same stage of their writing journey. It's also helpful to have at least one person a little ahead of you to help you grow. You can look for people who write or read the same kinds of things as you do. It's also helpful to have people who read other kinds of things, to get a new perspective. Above all, find people you're comfortable with.

How do you structure the critique process?

I use critique partners or groups to read chapter by chapter or small chunks at a time. Each critique group or pair of partners can come up with their own process. In person and on paper works for some writers. I like to share the chapter or selection online, make written comments, then meet online or in person to discuss. Sometimes the discussions help us bounce ideas off each other and find great solutions to writing problems.

What are beta readers?

I have beta readers read the whole book at once. I look for writers who are good at seeing the whole picture and finding plot holes and inconsistencies, in addition to "expert readers" (Linda Sue Park's term) who can give feedback on how I am describing characters from experiences different from my own. I want my writing to be fair and respectful to people of marginalized communities.

What do you ask them to respond to/how do you ask for feedback?

It's important to give both positive and negative feedback. Writers need to know what works as much as what needs to be revised. Plus, positive feedback makes it easier to swallow the hard critiques. Outside of that, you might ask for a few general topics, like, "Is it clear?" or "Is it engaging?" Then you might ask something specific to fit your writing process like "Any places I need to add more?" or "What descriptions need to be cut or pared down?"

Now go out and write! And when you're ready, share responses with fellow writers!

Take care. See you next time.

Revising Drafts

What is the revise step?

Revision literally means “re-seeing.” When you revise, you look at your work and make it better.

Depending on the draft, you might revise for several different elements, like plot, character, and so on. If you’re a poet, you might revise for flow, structure, etc.

Sometimes I can do two things at once, if I can keep them in my mind, but it’s often just one at a time. I know I write short drafts and need to add more to flesh things out more. I usually start with adding descriptions of people, places, etc. Then I add character parts like Deep Point of View (thoughts and feelings from the character’s point of view) and backstory. And as a historical novelist, I stop and do more research as needed to add those kinds of details (setting, clothing, events, etc.) as well.

I often do a round or two of revision on my own, then revise more after I get feedback from critique partners. (See the response section for more about cycling between response and revision.) For instance, I may spend one round adding to a main character’s thoughts and feelings within her narrative. I may spend the next one adding to the other main character(s). The next round may be adding more to the subplot or theme. Near the end, I look at smaller issues like word choice, dialogue tags, etc. It can take me ten rounds to get the draft in decent shape, with a few breaks to see things more clearly. Some writers can write fewer drafts. You’ll want to play with it and see what works for you.

Don't get discouraged with the time it takes to get things just right. Revision is your chance to make your words shine. Have patience that it will all work out. You can do this!

Take care. See you next time.

Editing Drafts

What is the edit step?

After you've got your draft in the right shape, you need to make it easy to read. Editing is fixing what I call the "picky little English teacher stuff." This is when you correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and such. Some of us don't automatically use the proper forms and need to fix things later. And we all make typos or miss little things now and then. The goal is to give a smooth reading experience to your audience so they can focus on the story or poem, not the mistakes.

While you may have fixed some things in the response and revise steps, now is the time to make sure the whole draft is neat and tidy and ready for publication. As in many of the other steps, it's good to have a fresh set of eyes, so take a break before you look for these things. It's also a nice time to use critique partners or beta readers to catch the things you might miss. Got that friend who is great with spelling or grammar? See if you can swap her services for fresh baked cookies or whatever treat she might enjoy!

As in many of the other steps, it might take more than one round to catch every typo or mistake. Take your time and do it right so you won't pick up the book later and be mortified at all the problems you see. (For the Type-A writers, remember you don't have to work too hard, either. One typo is not going to make a reader throw the book across the room.)

Here are a few common mistakes to look for:

Paragraphs:

We start a new paragraph every time a new person is speaking or there's a change in topic. For example:

Dorothy fidgeted with her flute case. Could be she was a bit nervous at meeting a new boy. "Hi."

"Glad to meet you," Chip replied, a slight twinkle in his eye. Surely, he got attention from girls all the time.

Dialogue:

We use quote marks before and after direct speech, and separate dialogue tags (who is speaking) with commas if they are part of the sentence. For example:

"Good morning," the dragon said.

Pet Peeves:

Many readers have pet peeves, like common words that are mistaken for others that may not be caught with autocorrect (there/they're/their, your/you're, its/it's). The last one is one of my pet peeves. We use "its" for the possessive form of it, and "it's" for the contraction of it and is. For example:

A pot of marigolds lay on its side on the sidewalk.

It's nighttime in the city.

If you'd like more help with editing, you can find blogs like Grammar Girl or services like Grammarly. (I don't know enough to give advice about these but there are several

out there.) And, of course, your local librarian or English teacher will have resources to recommend as well. Use what you have around you, and you'll polish your draft into a perfect shine.

Take care. See you next time.

Publishing Drafts

How can I publish my work?

So, let's say you have taken a writing project through the writing process and gotten it just the way you want it. Before you do anything else:

Kudos! Pat yourself on the back! Celebrate! That's a great achievement!

Now, you're ready for the last step in the writing process: publishing. This will vary based on the project and your goals for it.

Depending on what your writing project is, you might turn it in to a teacher as an assignment. Or maybe it's a letter or email to send off to someone. Of course, the most personal way to publish your writing is to show it to your family and friends. You may know someone who would love to read your work. That's a perfect form of writing publication.

You may be looking for a wider audience, so I have listed some online resources below.

Asking a teacher or librarian for publication ideas is also a great idea.

Warning: Please, always research any websites, and be careful when creating accounts or submitting information. Any time you're online, you need to practice safe internet skills.

You've probably heard about them in school by now, but here's a great list of tips from the NYPL for a little reminder:

<https://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/legal-notices/internet-safety-tips>.

Note: These links were active and accurate at the time of publication for this booklet, but may not be when you read this. Please, use your judgment and check them out before you send anything.

Perhaps you'd like to enter your writing in a contest? NYPL has a great list of contests at <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2020/10/26/writing-competitions-young-adults>.

There are online journals where teen writers can be published. Check out the website to learn more about the age range, kinds of writing they're looking for, etc. for each site, and make sure it's a good fit for your work and your writing goals. A few examples:

Ember Journal <https://emberjournal.org>

One Teen Story <https://www.one-story.com/index.php?page=ots>

Parallax Online <http://parallax-online.com>

Teen Ink <https://www.teenink.com>

Do you have a whole book to publish? Wow, congrats! Book publication is a huge undertaking. You have two basic options, traditional publishing through a mainstream publisher, which usually involves getting a literary agent; or indie or self-publishing which involves hiring professionals or doing your own editing, layout, and cover. I don't have space to go into details here, but I will say that it is possible for teens to become

book authors. One of the most famous examples is Christopher Paolini, who published *Eragon* at age 17. (Read more about him at his website bio:

<https://www.paolini.net/biographies/christopher-paolini-full/>.)

YA author Ally Carter has gathered more advice on this topic in her book *Dear Ally, How Do You Write a Book?* <https://allycarter.com/books/dear-ally-how-do-you-write-a-book/synopsis/>.

Publishing can take many forms. Whichever you choose, share your writing and feel the satisfaction of a job well done. Then start your next writing project. There's always a new idea you can have fun with!

Take care. See you next time.

Writing the Setting

What is setting?

Setting is the time and place of your story. To give a few examples: *Star Wars* takes place long, long ago in a galaxy far away. *Dumplin'* by Julie Murphy is set in Clover City, Texas in modern times. The sky's the limit--anything is possible in fiction! But you as the author will need to choose a specific setting for your poem or story.

I usually choose my setting first, because I write historical fiction. But even if you write in another genre, I recommend spending some time thinking about setting to give your book or story a dramatic boost and ground your story and characters.

How do I choose a setting?

You may want to choose a time and place that has drama already built into it—that's why I chose the Alaska Gold Rush for my first novel. For romance (or other character-driven genres), it is also handy if you can build in some character conflict with love interests, enemies, or friends from different groups in your setting. They might clash and/or learn from each other. What do I mean by groups? For example, you might have main characters from different worlds, like rich and poor, or city and country, or from different backgrounds. That can be a great opportunity to add diversity to your story.

Above all, find a setting that speaks to you. You'll spend a lot of time there while writing your book.

How can I use setting to ground my characters?

Once you have a setting, you can use it to do some world building. You can ask yourself questions like: What kind of geography or ecology do you have—are you in the mountains, desert, forest, on a beach, in farmland? Are you in the country, or a city, a small town or suburb? If you're in a place with a group of people (or animals or aliens or whatever), is it a structured community? Are there different classes or groups within the larger group? Is the time period today or in current times, in the past, or in the future? If it's in Earth time, give yourself a specific time period, like a particular year or decade, for example near the end of World War II in 1945, or in this decade, or one hundred years in the future in the 2120s.

Once you know your setting better, it's easier to create a main character. You might ask yourself questions like: Is your character a leader or a follower? Or maybe she (or he, they, etc.—I'm using “she” in my examples today) is a loner, an independent who does her own thing? If your setting has characters from different groups, what group does she belong to? Does she try to fit in or stand out? These things will help ground your character in her setting.

What else can I do with setting?

Another fun thing you can do is have your character reveal herself by the way she describes the setting. Moods or attitudes can show a lot about the character or what they're going through. For example, there's a big difference between:

“Taylor couldn’t stand the beach. The hot sand burned her bare feet and got all over her car’s interior no matter how often she vacuumed.”

And:

“Terry loved the beach. The warm sun on her skin and the sound of the waves made every bad thing in her life fade away.”

Now, go play with your setting, and see how it can add life to your writing!

Take care. See you next time.

Writing Character Arcs

What is a character arc?

In a long story or poem, things happen. Those events are called the plot. In great stories, the events that happen to the main character or protagonist lead to character growth.

Sometimes the person—or elf or whatever—will learn something important; other times she will change a personality trait or flaw that is holding her back. (I usually use “she/her” pronouns for this booklet but please substitute “he” or “they” or whatever makes sense for your character.) The character arc is the change or growth she experiences.

There are some literary patterns or traditions that are so common that they have tons of books and articles written about them. You can use these if they fit your purpose. Here are three examples:

The Hero’s Journey: A hero (or heroine) takes on a quest and masters it in the end. (The traditional pattern has 12 to 17 steps, depending on whose version you use.)

The Heroine’s Journey: Maureen Murdock developed a character arc where a heroine (or hero) discovers herself and integrates her masculine and feminine traits in the end.

The Virgin’s Promise: Kim Hudson’s take involves an emotional journey with a community and unconditional love at the end.

Many books and movies use these, or variations of these, in their stories. It's okay to borrow these, or elements from them. Or you can borrow from other traditions, or come up with your own plot and character arc. There are no wrong answers in writing a book—just make sure it fits what you're trying to do and creates a story that will engage your reader.

Here are a couple character arc tips:

Tie your main character's conflicts to her character arc. If her biggest flaw is that she is too selfish, put her in a situation where she has to think of other people. Or if she always has to have things organized or planned out, make her fall in love with a spontaneous person who wants her to relax and let go.

Plan your plot so that growth happens in stages. Maybe your main character realizes she needs to change, and makes some progress? Then give her a new challenge, or something that causes her to slide into her old habits, before she really learns her lesson. Don't let her make the full change or growth until the end (or near the end), so you keep the tension going.

Take care. See you next time.

Writing Point of View

What is point of view?

Point of view shows who is telling the story. You can think of it like watching a video or movie—are we seeing it from a character’s point of view? Are we close to them, like seeing it through their eyes or looking over their shoulder? Where is the movie camera, is it like in a close up shot, or is there more distance, like a long or wide shot? All these things can enhance your story or poem.

First person point of view uses “I” or “me.” The narrator is in the story. For example, “I tiptoed down the dark hallway, my heartbeat thudding in my chest.”

Third person point of view uses “she,” “he,” or the singular “they.” The narrator is outside the story, looking on. For example, “She tiptoed down the dark hallway, her heartbeat thudding in her chest.”

Second point of view uses “you.” It’s not common in novels, but it’s sometimes used in shorter pieces. For example, “You tiptoed down the dark hallway, your heartbeat thudding in your chest.”

Point of view can be limited, showing only what the main character can see or observe. For example, “Luis grinned.”

Or point of view can be unlimited or omniscient, showing what many characters can see or observe. For example,

Luis grinned, thinking about his date for the prom.

Shonda wondered why he was so happy.

If you're going for a closer or more immediate point of view, you might have a limited point of view that we call Deep Point of View. That's when we get deep into what the narrator is thinking and feeling. For example, "My breath hitched as my stomach clenched. No hope of Luis asking me to the prom, now that Lin said yes."

Choose whichever point of view will tell your story the best. Play around with it and try a few drafts to help you decide, if you're not sure which works.

You can even use more than one point of view, for example alternating between two lovers in a romance, or between the protagonist and villain in a thriller.

Pro tip: Be clear and consistent throughout the book or story. Once you establish a point of view (or a couple points of view in the last example), don't change it halfway through. Use breaks or other clues when you switch. Make it obvious who is speaking. You don't want your reader to be like, "Hey, I'm lost. Who's telling the story?"

Take care. See you next time.

Writing Tidbits

For our last time together, here are some tidbits to consider as you continue your writing journey, and a bonus writing prompt in case you'd like one to play with!

1. A gentle reminder: There are no rules, just guidelines. Never believe anyone who says “always” or “never.” (See what I did there?! 😊) Sometimes guidelines are important; you probably need a plot and characters to write a book. But sometimes they sound like the law when they aren't; you have my permission to try using adverbs or whatever other “never” you've been told to avoid.
2. Write often! Some writers write every day, and some make time in their weekly or monthly schedule. But writing is a practice, and the best way to get better at it is to practice as much as you can. Once you find a schedule that works for you, incorporate it into your regular routine and stick to it.
3. Read often! Reading is fun for many of us, but it also lets you see great examples of writing and notice what works in structure, character, and so on. Read widely and make it part of your writing life.
4. Discover your own writing style. This kind of goes with #1 above, but there's more than one right answer to the question of how to write. Your writing voice is

unique, and your style may be different from your favorite author's. Don't feel like you have to copy them to be a good writer.

5. Another reminder: Back up your electronic writing. You don't want to lose weeks or months of work when your computer dies, so save and back up your writing on a USB drive, on the cloud, or whatever system is easy for you to use.

BONUS PROMPT:

Take three things that you see around you, or that you recently saw in three different movies or video games. For example, pencil, window, sink; or dragon, ice cream, witch. Now, write a story or poem that contains all three things.

Take care. I'm thinking of you—you are not alone.

Want to stay in touch? Check out my website at www.lynnlovegreen.com. It's a good place to contact me, to see what I've been up to, or to sign up for my newsletter.

Teachers and librarians, feel free to contact me about presentations.

Thanks for reading this. Happy writing!

Author Bio

Lynn Lovegreen has lived in Alaska for most of her life. After twenty years in the classroom, she retired to make more time for writing. Her young adult historical fiction is set in Alaska, a great place for drama, romance, and independent characters.

When not reading or writing, Lynn enjoys volunteering at her local library, spends way too much time watching PBS, and would gladly run off to Cornwall with the Poldarks. Her favorite food and drink are chocolate and tea.

See more at her website at www.lynnlovegreen.com.