

Writing for the Web: What Every Writer Needs to Know Worksheet

This is the worksheet for May's seminar, which you can find in video, audio and transcript forms at: www.writershuddle.com/seminars/may2013.

The Basics of Web Writing

All writers can benefit from learning to write for the web. This might mean:

- Writing copy for clients' websites
- Promoting your freelancing services on your own website
- Marketing your novel or non-fiction book through articles on other people's websites

... or a whole host of other possibilities!

The web is a great place to get started as a writer. You don't need an agent or editor: you can publish your writing easily and cheaply.

Try to:

- Forget about unimportant "rules" like not splitting infinitives or ending sentences with prepositions.
- Make life easy for your readers, and keep them interested and engaged.

Writing for the Web: Style

- Write short sentences and short paragraphs
- Write in an informal way (think "get" vs "obtain").
- Use "you" and "your"
- Avoid local slang – you'll have an international audience
- Use formatting to enhance your words
- Craft titles / headlines that are clear, concise and compelling

Writing for the Web: Structure

- Use hyperlinks to help readers find further information. These can help beginners as well as more advanced readers, and they'll be “crawled” by search engines.
- Create stand-alone articles / pages: a reader may only read one piece on your website. Each should be complete in itself. If your topic can't be easily split into self-contained parts, consider writing an ebook.

You don't need to dumb down when writing for the web – but remember that clear, straightforward writing can be harder to produce than flowery, ornate prose that consists of lots of complicated run-on sentences.

Exercise

Think about possible types of web writing you might want to do, either now or in the future. (Blogging about a particular topic? Writing website copy for clients? Creating advertisements / sales pages? Writing articles to help you promote your book?)

Find some examples of similar types of writing online, and see what you can learn. How are these pieces structured? How do they use language to achieve particular effects?

Have a go at writing something of your own – even if you're not ready to publish it online yet. (You might like to share it with us in [the Critiques forum](#).)