

Writing and Self-Publishing Fiction Worksheet

This is the worksheet for May's seminar, which you can find in audio and transcript forms at: www.writershuddle.com/seminars/may2014.

“Guest posting” means writing content (a “post”) for someone else’s blog or website. You might be called a “guest author” or “contributor”. Use it to:

- Build up writing credits early in your career
- Bring more readers to your blog (if you have one)
- Establish a relationship with influential bloggers / writers

It doesn’t normally pay, though it may well lead to paying work.

Guest posting **doesn’t** work well for fiction writers, and you shouldn’t do it just for SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) reasons, to get a link back to your site.

Getting Started with Guest Posting

The best place to begin is with blogs you already read, on topics you’d like to write about. The bigger the blogs, the more beneficial your guest post will be to you ... but big blogs are also harder to get a slot on.

Before guest posting, make sure you know all the basics of writing for the web, covered in the May 2013 seminar (writershuddle.com/seminars/may2013).

Read the guest post guidelines: these will usually be linked to from the Contact page (possibly the menu or sidebar). It’s important to follow them carefully, though if it’s a choice between deviating from the guidelines or not submitting at all, deviate!

Seven Tips for Guest Posting Success

Tip #1: If they want you to pitch ideas, suggest at least three (not more than five). Outline your top idea, and just give titles for the others.

Tip #2: Tackle something that's on topic but hasn't been covered on the blog in a little while.

Tip #3: Over-deliver: long, in-depth posts often go down well (assuming the blog's open to them!) and can get a lot of attention.

Tip #4: Think about more unusual structures to use -- a list post or how to is fine, especially if this is your first guest post, but you can get more creative too. See zenoptimise.com/8-blog-post-structures for ideas.

Tip #5: If you can, help out a fellow writer with a link to one of *their* blog posts within your post. Only do this if it's 100% relevant, of course.

Tip #6: Use your bio effectively: link to something specific (blog post, newsletter sign up, your book on Amazon) rather than your homepage.

Tip #7: Follow up afterwards – answer comments, thank the host blogger, and (if all went well!) pitch another post a couple of months later.

Pitching Your Guest Post

Basic Template

Here's a simple outline you can use to structure almost any guest post pitch:

Dear [name], (*It's fine to use "Hi" or "Hey" if you prefer.*)

A sentence or two about their blog – e.g. saying that you enjoyed a recent post.

Explain that you want to guest post and suggest a title or at least a clear topic. You may want to suggest several possible posts. Say (briefly) who you are and mention any relevant qualifications / experience.

Link to examples of your writing.

Close the email politely (e.g. "Thanks for your time" or "Best wishes" or, if you know they're fairly informal, "Cheers".)

Worked Example

Here's a fictitious worked example:

Dear Ali,

I've been reading Aliventures for a couple of months now, and I love your practical, encouraging advice. (1) Thanks so much! (2)

I launched my own blog a month ago (www.tomswritingjourney.com) and I wondered if you'd be interested in a guest post from me? (3) I'd love to share some tips on knowing how much to plan ahead and how much to "wing it". (4) If that doesn't sound like a good fit, though, I'm very happy to write on a different topic.

If you'd like to see some examples of my writing, please take a look at any post on my blog. These two posts would be particularly relevant: (5)

How to Outline Your Novel on Twelve Index Cards

Plotters vs Pantsers: How Eight Top Novelists Write

Thanks for your time, and all best wishes, (6)

Tom

Tom does a great job here:

1. He lets me know he reads Aliventures, which is always flattering! If you don't normally read someone's blog, don't lie about it – instead, say "I really enjoyed your recent post on ..." (You should read at least a few posts to get a feel for their style and content.)
2. He manages a great blend of polite and friendly. You don't need to be formal and stuffy when writing to bloggers – but you also don't want to dash off a purely functional email without so much as a word of greeting.
3. He makes it clear why he's emailing: he's offering me a guest post.
4. He suggests a topic that's relevant to Aliventures.

5. He provides me with examples to look at. Tom doesn't have any guest posting experience, so he links to two posts on his own blog. It's fine to give bloggers a link and tell them they're welcome to read any of your posts, but it's also a good idea to highlight ones that show you at your best.
6. He ends politely, and without sounding presumptuous.

Useful Links:

[**The Ultimate List of Blogs that Accept Guest Posts**](#) (wide range of topics)

[**200 Plus Blogs That Accept Guest Posts**](#) (wide range of topics, links to guidelines)

[**45+ Websites That Pay You to Contribute an Article, Instantly**](#)

[**Over 30 Reliable Blogs That Pay \\$50+ For Your Guest Posts**](#)

Writing-related sites:

[**Write to Done**](#) (guest post guidelines here)

[**Men with Pens**](#) (guest post guidelines here)

[**The Write Life**](#) (guest post guidelines here)

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[**www.writershuddle.com/forums/seminars/may-2014-guest-posting**](http://www.writershuddle.com/forums/seminars/may-2014-guest-posting)