

## Irregular Writing Rules:

- 1 - Write. Put one word after another.
- 2 - Write. Every day, like you mean it.
- 3 - Write! No amount of dreaming or procrastination will help; writers write.
- 4 - Do not search amazon.com for the book you haven't written yet.
- 5 - Finish the day's writing when you want to continue.
- 6 - Read it aloud to yourself. Listen to what you've written; find the rhythm of the words.
- 7 - Always write in the third person unless a truly irresistible and distinctive first person voice offers itself.
- 8 - Always hold the reader's attention. Remember: the reader is your friend, not your adversary, nor a spectator. Involve them so they are invested in the outcome.
- 9 - If you're lost in the plot or blocked don't stop and fret. Retrace your steps to where you went wrong; then take a different route. Or change the person. Or change the tense. Or the opening page.
- 10 - Don't wait for inspiration, discipline is key.
- 11 - Own at least one large dictionary; use spell-check with caution.
- 12 - Read widely and voraciously! Especially things you would not usually read or write; the good bits will make you remember them, so you won't need to take notes.
- 13 - Be cautious about prologues, especially a prologue following an introduction following a foreword. They're okay for non-fiction but in a novel a prologue is backstory; this you can drop in anywhere you want.
- 14 - Don't write in public places. This is vulgar. Writing should be done in private, like any other lavatorial activity. And close the door.
- 15 - Don't drink or take drugs while writing. (Coffee does not count.)

16 - Find the best time of the day/night for writing and write. Don't let anything else interfere. Afterwards it won't matter to you that the kitchen is a mess.

17 - An Internet connection on the computer you're using to write will inevitably mean bad writing.

18 - Never write "suddenly" or "all Hell broke loose". 'Nuff said.

19 - To truly understand a character you must first know what he/she wants more than anything in life. If you don't understand a character, major or minor, how can you write in their voice?

20 - Avoid unnecessary adjectives. Too many adjectives equals bad writing.

21 - A problem with writing can often be solved by going for a really long walk.

22 - Try to be accurate about stuff.

23 - Don't get bogged down in research. Research is all well and good, but it is not writing.

24 - Leave out the parts that readers tend to skip. If it sounds like writing, rewrite it!

25 - The best writing will come when you have something to say. Also, when you know just how to say it.

26 - Style is the art of getting out of the way, not putting yourself in it.

27 - Increase the raw materials of your craft: words, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Respect the English language; though do not overuse complicated, fancy synonyms. The first word that comes to mind is usually the word to use.

28 - Join professional organisations that advance the collective rights of authors.

29 - Do not place a picture of your favourite author on your desk, especially if they are one of the ones that committed suicide.

30 - Once the first draft is finished put it aside and forget about it. This is best achieved by starting something else.

31 - Wait at least six weeks (ideally longer) before taking out the manuscript. Print it out in order to reread it.

32 - Show it to friends whose opinion you respect and would like the kind of thing it is.

33 - When people tell you something's wrong or doesn't work for them, they are almost always right. When they tell you what they think is wrong and how to fix it, they are almost always wrong.

34 - Cut! Only by having no inessential words can every essential word count. A second draft should be at least 10% shorter than the first.

35 - If nobody will put your play on then put it on yourself.

36 - Think of other's good luck as encouragement.

37 - Finish it. You cared enough to start, so care enough to finish.

38 - If you write with enough assurance, honesty and confidence, you're allowed to do whatever you like. (This is as true for life as it is for writing.)

39 - Interesting verbs are seldom very interesting.

40 - All description is just opinion. Find a place to stand.

41 - The best character description comes from how they speak and act.

42 - Do it every day. Make a habit of putting your observations into words and gradually this will become instinct. This is extremely important and thus extremely difficult.

43 - It helps a great deal to give the work a name as soon as possible. Own it. Dickens knew Bleak House was going to be called Bleak House before he wrote it. NB A title must reflect what the story is most about in some way. (Though Reservoir Dogs is the exception to the rule.)

44 - Never open a book with weather. If it's only to create atmosphere, and not a character's reaction to the weather, then do not go on too long.

45 - Not everything needs to be explained. If you really know something, and breathe life into it, then the reader will know it too.

46 - Write what you need to write.

47 - Nothing that ever happens to a writer, however happy or however tragic, is ever wasted.

48 - Story, story, story. Get the story, the narrative, just right.

49 - Every good story begins with a question.

50 - Have fun.