

Mindful Content: Writing Resources 102

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By Marcus Coates, @homeinriyadh, 2nd April 2021

“If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There’s no way around these two things that I’m aware of, no shortcut.”

(Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, 2000)

Audible Content

With a long commute back and forth to work every day, I’ve become a big fan of audible books. Here is a selection of the ones related to writing that I have been inspired by on my daily journeys.

Stein on Writing

By Sol Stein (read by the author)

Sol Stein states in his introduction: “This is not a book of theory, it is a book of solutions on how to fix writing that is flawed, improve writing that is good, and how to create interesting writing in the first place.”

On Writing

By Stephen King (read by the author)

Stephen King shares his writing process and tips on writing. Just like his novels, the narrative style he uses is unique and engaging throughout, interweaving the story of his writing career with observations. The outcome is a book unlike any other one on the writing process that I have come across. Spoiler alert: Stephen King hates adverbs!

Save the Cat! Writes a Novel

By Jessica Brody (read by the author)

Jessica outlines 15 essential plot points (or beats) that she believes are needed to make any novel a success. She critiques ten genres and analyses an array of bestselling books and acclaimed films to show where the plot points are used and at what point in the story arcs of each.

Writing Tools

By Roy Peter Clark (read by the author)

“Writing is a craft you can learn,” says Roy Peter Clark, “You need tools, not rules.” He then analyses writing samples taken from short stories, novels, and print journalism and applies 51 rules that energize writing and turn the mundane into the extraordinary.

First You Write a Sentence

By Joe Moran

This book is probably the best and most engaging audiobook I've come across on the topic of English grammar. I've listened to and read dozens of grammar books on my never-ending quest to improve my knowledge of this tricky topic; what I usually find is that they all start sounding very similar very quickly. This one doesn't: Joe Moran takes you from words to phrases to sentences to paragraphs as the essential building blocks of good syntax. And written and presented engagingly!

English Grammar Boot Camp

By Anne Curzan (read by the author)

This audio presentation is a thorough immersion in all things English grammar by someone who loves grammar. Professor Anne Curzan navigates through all the tricky grammar rules and the exceptions that seem to come with every rule! She traces words back to their etymological roots and shows how grammar is a living and changing beast that refuses to be caged. If you've ever felt intimidated by English grammar and its idiosyncrasies, then Anne Curzan will make you less afraid.

Screenwriting 101: Mastering the Art of Story

By Angus Fletcher

As part of the great courses series on audible, Angus Fletcher, a screenwriter and professor of English at Ohio State University, takes a personal and professional look at screenwriting craft. He analyses plays and film scripts throughout history, looking beyond formulas and three-act structures to the emotional and psychological impact that great stories have on audiences. In doing so, he analyses dozens of TV series and film scripts in an array of genres to show that no cookie-cutter approach can create great viewing experiences: instead, you have to write for your audience.

Podcast Shows

In a previous blog (blog 11), I listed some inspirational podcasts I have come across over 2020. In case you missed them, below are listed podcast shows that I heartily recommend to fellow scribes. I hope there are a few gems here that you haven't come across yet.

The Deliberate Freelancer, by Melanie Padgett Powers.

This North American-based podcast is about making a living by doing freelancing work, such as copy editing, writing, and B2B gigs. Melanie's approach shows that a steady income is achievable as a freelancer with proper planning rather than suffering through boom and bust cycles.

The Writing Life, by the National Centre for Writing.

Based in Norwich, England, this podcast is about interviewing writers, agents, and publishers and giving tips on submitting work for traditional publishing routes.

Self Publishing School, by Chandler Bolt.

Chandler Bolt hosts an upbeat USA-based podcast show that interviews authors who have successfully self-published and students who have passed through his self-publishing school. He gets granular with the detail on how they wrote, marketed and distributed their work. There are plenty of charismatic guests on the show and many inspiring tips to be gleaned on topics such as creating a marketing funnel or building and raising your personal brand.

High Income Business Writing, by Ed Gandia.

Ed looks at how writers can make a six-figure salary or the part-time equivalent in the world of B2B writing. In his USA-based podcast, he interviews a wide range of freelancers who write case studies, white papers, ad copy, etc., and goes through their story from quitting employed work to becoming their boss.

The Editing Podcast, by Louise Harnby & Denise Cowle.

This UK-based podcast focuses on all things related to proofreading and copywriting from a fiction and non-fiction point of view. This podcast is a great listen, not only for people interested in learning how to become freelance editors but also for writers who want to understand how best to decide what kind of editing their work requires.

Marketing in Minutes, by Jonathan Gebauer.

Unlike the other podcasts, which tend to be around the forty-five minutes to an hour mark, Jonathan's podcasts are a snappy ten minutes per episode. Each podcast provides a tip on how to best market your product or brand via social media.

What Editors Want, by Philip Conner Finn.

This is another UK-based podcast, where the host of the show, Philip, interviews editors, agents and key personnel from publishing houses that range from start-ups to the biggest in the business. The interviews give a great insight into the world of publishing. Importantly for aspiring writers, the show holds a candle up to reveal what publishing houses are looking for from new writers.

I know there's a ton of content out there, but for me, these podcasts have been great to listen to on commutes to work, walks around the block, gym sessions, and when preparing meals. Happy scribing!