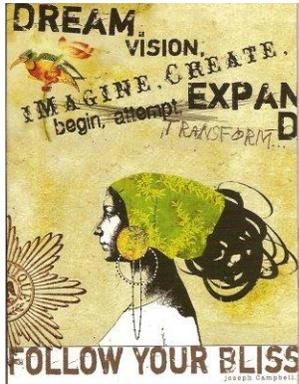


Write It Your Way: Find Your Voice, and Use It

by Laura Orsini



Just like each of us has a unique voice we use to speak our words to the world, each writer has a unique voice; however, their delivery method is the written or printed word. The writer's voice is comprised of the unique blend of description, character, and style that allows him or her to speak directly to the reader through printed words. Without an interesting or distinctive voice, even the most grammatically correct copy will lie dead on the page. The voice is what brings the words to life.

A writer's voice cannot be taught; rather, it is something every writer acquires only with practice. Regardless of what you are writing, your voice already exists, inside your writing, but it may be hidden or disguised by the ideas of what you think your writing should be or should sound like. Many a beginner works very hard at trying to sound like a writer. They pore through the thesaurus looking for fancy substitutions for ordinary words; they create unnecessarily long, indecipherable phrases or sentences bursting with flowery descriptions, incorrectly assuming that more is always better. The crazy part is that this effort is often wasted as they misuse words or phrases they *think* they know. In this effort to sound professional, they forget that the goal of their writing is to communicate a message so that their reader will identify with it, understand it, and respond to it.

Included in the voice is a writer's tone. The tone you use depends on how you want to come across. Possible tones include:

- ♦ Serious
- ♦ Knowledgeable
- ♦ Formal
- ♦ Dutiful
- ♦ Informal
- ♦ Apologetic
- ♦ Familiar
- ♦ Questioning
- ♦ Genuine
- ♦ Creative

Again, this will depend a lot on what you are writing and who your audience is . . . but whichever tone you opt for, make sure to carry it consistently through the document. The **ONLY** exception would be if there is a point where the tone changes **for an obvious reason**.

Generally, a fairly **conversational** tone works well in almost any writing. However, the better you know your audience, the better you can tailor your language to meet their specific needs.

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