

# The Smart Path to Growing As a Writer!

For Both the Experienced and the Aspiring



## 1. Be smart: Study good books on the craft of writing

*On Writing Well* by William Zinsser.

Studying this classic can help writers develop their overall writing skills. Even some well-published writers make it a point to read through this book once a year.

*The Magazine Article: How to Think It, Plan It, Write It* by Peter P. Jacobi.

This is a great foundational handbook no matter what kind of writing you may do. You can often reach more people through magazine articles than through books, and articles combined around a central theme may be strong enough to grow into a book.

*The Writer's Journey: Mythic structure for storytellers and screenwriters*, by Christopher Vogler. This book is a must-read for all fiction writers, re: characterization, plot development, and more.

*Write with Excellence 201: A lighthearted guide to the serious matter of writing well—for Christian authors, editors, and students*, by Joyce K. Ellis. Joyce set out to write a grammar book that reads like a novel, infusing her practical grammar instruction with generous doses of humor. One reviewer, who has attended Joyce's writing workshops, said, "Only Joyce Ellis could write a grammar book that's a great beach read." Check out this link for more detailed information here: *Write with Excellence* on Joyce's Books Nook page.

## 2. Be smart: Study any magazines you would like to write for

Carefully study several issues, paying attention to the types and lengths of articles they use. Never submit anything to them that they never use. For example, don't say in your accompanying email, "I noticed you don't use any poetry, so I thought some of your readers would appreciate this poem." That's an easy rejection for the editor. Likewise, studying each book publisher's website can increase the likelihood of your finding the right fit for your work.

## 3. Be smart: Learn the business of writing

You *must* buy and study the essential reference work, *The Christian Writers Market Guide* by Steve Laube, updated every year. This comprehensive volume provides listings of—and contact information for—book & periodical publishers, writers groups & conferences, agents, and more.

## 4. Be smart: Develop relationships with other writers

**Join local writers' groups & attend conferences**, especially those where editors offer appointments to discuss a specific project you're working on. You can learn more in a few days at a conference than in years of studying alone. And the friendships you make are invaluable.

**Join or start a writers' critique group.** Because, as the saying goes, writing is the loneliest profession in the world, meeting regularly with a small group of other writers for positive and negative feedback on your writing can provide the support you need and help you grow quickly. "For me," Joyce says, "my critique group is probably the most important factor in my growth as a writer, and it has provided some of my most cherished friendships."