101 Writing Tips

1. Every sentence should make sense in isolation. Like that one.
2. Excessive hyperbole is literally the kiss of death.
3. ASBMAETP: Acronyms Should Be Memorable And Easy To Pronounce, and SATAN: Select Acronyms That Are Non-offensive.
4. Finish your point on an up-beat note, unless you can't think of one.
5. Don't patronise the reader—he or she might well be intelligent enough to spot it.
6. A writer needs three qualities: creativity, originality, clarity and a good short term memory.
7. Choose your words carefully and incitefully.
8. Avoid unnecessary examples; e.g. this one.
9. Don't use commas, to separate text unnecessarily.
10. It can be shown that you shouldn't miss out too many details.
11. Similes are about as much use as a chocolate teapot.
12. Avoid ugly abr'v'ns.
13. Spellcheckers are not perfect; they can kiss my errs.
14. Somebody once said that all quotes should be accurately attributed.
15. Americanisms suck.
16. Capitalising for emphasis is UGLY and DISTRACTING.
17. Underlining is also a <u>big no-no</u>.
18. Mixed metaphors can kill two birds without a paddle.
19. Before using a cliché, run it up the flagpole and see if anybody salutes.
20. There is one cheap gimmick that should be avoided at all costs.............suspense.
21. State your opinions forcefully—this is perhaps the key to successful writing.
22. Never reveal your sources (Alistair Watson, 1993).
23. Pile on lots of subtlety.
24. Sure signs of lazy writing are incomplete lists, etc.
25. Introduce meaningless jargon on a strict need-to-know basis.
26. The word "gullible" possesses magic powers and hence it should be used with care.

27. The importance of comprehensive cross-referencing will be covered elsewhere.
28. Resist the temptation to roll up the trouser-legs of convention, cast off the shoes and socks of good taste, and dip your toes refreshingly into the cool, flowing waters of fanciful analogy.
29. Don't mess with Mr. Anthropomorphism.
30. Understatement is a mindblowingly effective weapon.
31. Injecting enthusiasm probably won't do any harm.
32. It is nice to be important, but it is more important to avoid using the word 'nice.'
33. Appropriate metaphors are worth their weight in gold.
34. Take care with pluri.
35. If you can't think of the exact word that you need, look it up in one of those dictionary-type things.
36. Colons: try to do without them.
37. Nouns should never be verbed.
38. Do you really think people are impressed by rhetorical questions?
39. Pick a font, **and stick with it**.
40. Sufficient clarity is necessary, but not necessarily sufficient.
41. Less is more. This means that a short, cryptic statement is often preferable to an accurate, but drawn out, explanation that lacks punch and loses the reader.
42. Sarcasm—yes, I bet that will go down really well.
43. The problem of ambiguity cannot be underestimated.
44. Never appear cynical, unless you're sure you can get away with it.
45. Many writer's punctuate incorrectly.
46. Colloquialisms are for barmpots.
47. There is a lot to be said for brevity.
48. To qualify is to weaken, in most cases.
49. Many readers assume that a word will not assume two meanings in the same sentence.
50. Be spontaneous at regular intervals.
51. The era of the euphemism is sadly no longer with us.

52. Want to be funny? Just add some exclamation marks!!!
53. Want to appear whimsical? Simply append a smiley ;-)
54. Some writers introduce a large number, N, of unnecessary symbols.
55. Restrict your hyphen-usage.
56. Choosing the correct phrase is important compared to most things.
57. Some early drafts of this document had had clumsy juxtapositions.
58. Try not to leave a word dangling on its own
line.
59. The number of arbitrary constants per page should not exceed .13.
60. Use mathematical jargon iff it is absolutely necessary.
61. And avoid math symbols unless $\exists$ a good reason.
62. Poor writing effects the impact of your work.
63. And the dictionary on your shelf was not put there just for affect.
64. If there's a word on the tip of your tongue that you can't quite pin down, use a cinnamon.
65. If somebody were to give me a pound for every irrelevant statement I've ever read, then I would be very surprised.
66. Strangely enough, it is impossible to construct a sentence that illustrates the meaning of the word 'irony.'
67. Consult a writing manual to assure that your English is correct.
68. It has been suggested that some words are absolute, not relative. This is very true.
69. Be careful when forming words into a sentence—all orderings are not correct.
70. Many words can ostensibly be deleted.
71. In your quest for clarity, stop at nothing.
72. Complete mastery of the English language comes with conscientious study, notwithstanding around in bars. Moreover the next page. Inasmuch detail as possible.
73. Sporting analogies won't even get you to first base.
74. If you must quote, quote from one of the all-time greats (Cedric.P. Snodworthy, 1964).
75. In the absence of a dictionary, stick to words of one syllabus.
76. Steer clear of word-making-up-ism.

77. Readers will not stand for any intolerance.

78. If there's one thing you must avoid it's over-simplification.

79. Double entendres will get you in the end.

80. Vagueness is the root of miscommunication, in a sense.

81. Don't bother with those "increase-your-word-power" books that cost an absorbent amount of money.

82. Self-contradiction is confusing, and yet strangely enlightening.

83. Surrealism without purpose is like fish.

84. Ignorance: good writers don't even know the meaning of the word.

85. The spoken word can look strange when written down, I'm afraid.

86. Stimpy the Squirrel says "Don't treat the reader like a little child."

87. Intimidatory writing is for wimps.

88. Learn one new maths word every day, and you'll soon find your vocabulary growing exponentially.

89. My old high school English teacher put it perfectly when she said: "Quoting is lazy. Express things in your own words."

90. She also said: "Don't use that trick of paraphrasing. . . . . . [other people's words]. . . . . . inside a quote."

91. A lack of compassion in a writer is unforgivable.

92. On a scale of 0 to 10, internal consistency is very important.

93. Thankfully, by the year 2016 rash predictions will be a thing of the past.

94. There is no place for overemphasis, whatsoever.

95. Leave out the David Hockney rhyming slang.

96. Bad writers are hopefully ashamed of themselves.

97. Eschew the highfalutin.

98. Sometimes you publish a sentence and then, on reflection, feel that you shouldn't ought to have been and gone and written it quite that way.

99. Practice humility until you feel that you're really good at it.

100. If there's a particular word that you can never spell, use a pnemonic.

101. A strong ending is the last thing you need.

102. Make sure that your title is accurate.

103. Spelling dictionaries should be made compulsary.

104. Sometimes, a foreign phrase can add a little 'je ne sais rien.'

105. In terms of writing convoluted sentences, don't.

106. Let's face it, we all hate it when a writer appeals to the lowest common denominator.

107. Learn the basic spelling rules; don't just rely on fonetix.

108. Only take writing tips from world-renounced writers.

109. Writing for the non-native English speaking market is a different kettle of fish.

110. If you can't afford a book on grammar, at least find someone to lend one off.

111. Nothing is worse than ambiguity.

112. Oh, and avoid afterthoughts.

(These are all original, but some are based on old jokes.)

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