

SO YOU WANT TO BE A WRITER, EH?

by Lee Netzler

Having been a writer for many years, I decided to acquaint my family, friends, and acquaintances with my unnoticed success by producing this guide to the craft of writing. The purpose is to connect with those of you who also aspire to become a successful writer like me, and who would like some blunt answers about making a similar run at it.

Over the course of time, I have had many conversations with other aspiring writers. I have tried to capture their feelings, desires, inclinations, attitudes, druthers, etc. and believe that I have been able to do that, and have also been able to condense that important information in the survey below. You are invited to participate in this survey, and to have your potential as a writer assessed later through the survey scoring process.

For each of the following ten questions, please select one answer.

1. Why do you write?
 - a. To become very very rich and very very famous.
 - b. To become rich and famous.
 - c. To become rich.
 - d. To become famous.
 - e. Because it's there.

2. What writing experience do you have?
 - a. Italian operas.
 - b. Broadway stage plays.
 - c. Pulitzer prize-winning books.
 - d. Daily editorials for the New York Times.
 - e. Grocery lists.

3. How do you select subjects to write about?
 - a. From topics of international interest.
 - b. From topics of national interest.
 - c. From topics of regional interest.
 - d. From topics of local interest.
 - e. From a Ouija Board.

4. In what language(s) do you write?
 - a. English.
 - b. French or German or Italian or Spanish
 - c. Other foreign language.
 - d. Southern drawl.
 - e. igpay atinlay.

5. When do you write?
 - a. All day.

- b. All night, Mary Anne.
 - c. In the morning.
 - d. In the afternoon.
 - e. In the Twilight Zone.
6. What type of writing do you prefer to do?
- a. Encyclopedias.
 - b. Books.
 - c. Magazines.
 - d. Newspapers.
 - e. Graffiti.
7. Who is your target audience?
- a. Doctors of Philosophy, Science, Medicine and Religion.
 - b. Career professionals.
 - c. The Common Folk.
 - d. Bart Simpson fans.
 - e. Mom.
8. What do you consider a measure of success?
- a. A Pulitzer Prize.
 - b. A Nobel Prize.
 - c. An Award from the National Academy of Arts and Sciences.
 - d. Selection as a finalist in the Dog Writers Association of America's national writing competition.
 - e. To write something without plagiarizing.
9. What writing medium do you prefer?
- a. Voice synthesizer with automated transcription.
 - b. Word processor.
 - c. Electric/Manual typewriter.
 - d. Pencil and Paper.
 - e. Magic Marker on T.P.
10. What is your ultimate goal?
- a. To write a book that outsells the Bible.
 - b. To become very very rich and very very famous.
 - c. To have my work nationally syndicated.
 - d. To have a #1 book on the best seller list.
 - e. To break even financially.

To interpret your survey results, score 5 points for each "a" answer, 4 points for each "b" answer, 3 points for each "c" answer, 2 points for each "d" answer, and 1 point for each "e" answer. Total the points for all ten questions, and compare the total to the following results key:

50 to 45 points = Zounds! You are probably too highly energized to take on the mundane task of writing. You may want to contact your physician to see if Prozac or Ritalin is right for you.

44 to 6 points = Congratulations! Your score is consistent with the majority of well-adjusted and maladjusted writers. Based on a bell curve, your score is in the middle.

5 points or less = Alas! Your lack of interest has probably prevented you from reading this far down the page. The odds against your becoming a successful writer are higher than the likelihood of the Pope getting married in June.

Thank you for participating in the survey. If you have questions or need clarification, feel free to contact me for further information. In concluding, we hope that you will enjoy a life full of complete sentences and without a single dangling participle.