

# Creative Writing Checklist



*Try these creative techniques to make your stories fun to write — and read!*

- ❑ **Brainstorm Ideas:** All kinds of ideas are waiting in that marvelous brain of yours. If you're not brainstorming on a regular basis, you're leaving great ideas trapped in your brain. That headache you have today? Probably ideas bumping into each other. Let them out!
- ❑ **Dialog:** Including dialog in your writing keeps a reader interested and can help you capture the essence of your characters. Adding dialog allows you to give your characters depth and dimension by giving your reader a sense of who they are. Slang, half-cut-off words, interruptions and tangents are all a part of natural speech. Include these when including dialog.
- ❑ **Intense Intro:** In today's fast-moving world, the first sentence of your short story should catch your reader's attention with the unusual, the unexpected, an action, or a conflict. Begin with tension and immediacy. Remember that short stories need to start close to their end.
- ❑ **Senses:** Fiction writers draw us into their stories by awakening our senses. You can too! In order for readers to fully experience what you're writing about, they need to be able to see, hear, taste, smell and touch the world around them. Try to use language that incorporates several senses, not just sight. Are their hands shaking as they try a complicated device? Are they frowning, muttering under their breath, or scratching their heads? Is the room filled with an unmistakable sense of dread?
- ❑ **Show, Don't Tell:** Do you know what one ingredient all best-selling novels have in common? Are you thinking they are all great stories written by brilliant authors? That they all just 'happened' to sell plenty of copies at the bookstores? Nope! The authors of these books are masters in the art of showing – not telling. To make your story come to life, avoid "telling" it to your reader. Instead, give clues that show the setting, the story, and the character. Put the mental "camera" in the scene and have it run then describe what it "records." Let your reader discover the meaning and experience it firsthand.
- ❑ **Similes:** Similes help your readers quickly grasp whatever you're writing about because they compare your topic to something that's already familiar. To come up with similes, start by asking yourself what characteristic or benefit you want to convey—economical, easy to use, fast, and so on. Once you've determined that, ask yourself what everyday ideas or situations share those qualities.
- ❑ **Variety of sentence lengths:** Write sentences with a variety of lengths. Why? When people read long sentences, their minds rebel and begin to drift off. Put in some punch. Short sentences work!
- ❑ **Vivid Verbs:** Well chosen words, especially verbs, will enhance your writing. First of all, they make your writing more interesting and enjoyable for the reader. Secondly, vivid verbs have more specific meanings than the general verbs they replace. To help you transform a boring verb into a vivid verb, use a thesaurus or check out [this list](#).