



## Play the Writing Game!

By Carlynn McCormick

I know quite a number of budding authors who sweep me away with their creative ideas and imaginings — individuals filled with passion about the books they are writing. I am often surprised, however, to learn nothing or very little is actually put down on paper. Years pass, stories dim and manuscripts never materialize.

These individuals taught me the most important rule of the writing game: to be a writer, you must write. Of course one may dream or ponder, but such actions are *preparation*. Dreaming is *not* writing. Pondering is *not* writing. Putting thoughts down on paper is writing. The only way to be a writer is to write. There is no other way.

### Rules of the Game

Why write? A foremost reason is that putting your ideas on paper makes them more concrete and keeps them from fading. Why do I write? It is a way to express things that are important to me and it is a

way of forcing me to observe something closely so I can write about it. But my favorite reason: I find writing fun. It's the best way I know to propel the innermost thoughts out of my mind and onto the playing field of life.

If you don't write much, I invite you to write more. If you are new to the adventure, you might naturally ask, *"What should I write about?"* That is easy to answer. Everybody has loves or hates — things they feel deeply about — write about the things *you* know or feel. You are, after all, unique unto yourself: only *you* can write precisely the way *you* see things.

Another rule of the game is to read a lot. One is usually "in love" with reading before he is bitten by the "writing bug." Stephen King, author of such best sellers as ***Fire Starter*** and ***The Green Mile***, says: *"If you don't have the time to read, you don't have the time or the tools to write."*

Being an avid reader usually makes it easier to be a prolific writer. Try it. Read a good book. Get inspired. Grab pen and paper or keyboard and let your own story rip!

## **Most Important Rule**

The next writing rule is so noteworthy it should be embossed on every author's forehead: **never, NEVER stomp on your own creativity.** Statements such as *"I'm not a good writer"* or *"my writing stinks"* are poison. So for goodness sake, don't poison yourself! And don't let someone else poison you. If you ask for another's opinion and you don't like what he says, ignore it. And don't take advice you don't agree with (not mine or anyone's). Above all, ignore critics. It's not a

perfect world. Someone, somewhere, at sometime is going to be critical of you. Utterly and completely ignore his snarl.

One last rule: know the difference between writing and editing. *To edit is to prepare for publication or presentation by correcting, revising, or adapting.* Editing is *not* writing. When you write, you are letting creative juices flow. Don't let your attention get stuck on grammar, punctuation, spelling or re-reading to see if it makes sense. It doesn't matter. It is about writing creatively. It is about having fun. Later, if your work is for an audience, you must edit, but remember you are editing. It is a separate skill.

With the rules of the writing game delineated, *anyone* can play!

***"Play the Writing Game!"*** article courtesy of Carlynn McCormick, Copyright 2010 All Rights Reserved



©2010 Applied Scholastics Online Academy. All Rights Reserved. Applied Scholastics Online Academy admits students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin. Applied Scholastics Online Academy is licensed to use Applied Scholastics™ educational services. Applied Scholastics and the Applied Scholastics open book design are trademarks and service marks owned by Association for Better Living and Education International and are used with its permission.

AppliedScholasticsOnline.com