

Cristy Burne's Top Ten Tips for Writing Great Stories

1. **Have fun, make mistakes:** Don't worry about spelling or neat writing or being perfect in your first draft. Just start writing whatever comes into your head.
2. **Start with someone who wants something:** Hook us in by starting with a character who wants something *really* badly, but don't give it to them.
3. **Make us barrack for your character:** We love BIG characters. Create a character who is 1) being unfairly treated, 2) in danger, 3) funny, 4) flawed and/or 5) brave.
4. **Ask "What if?":** Great ideas come from asking "What if?" questions about ordinary life. What if you had to build a unicorn out of lollies? What if you could only eat one food? What if you could fly? What if aliens took you prisoner?
5. **Celebrate you:** You are the only person with your exact set of experiences and likes and dislikes and interests. When you write your stories, use the details of what you know. Write the things that make you laugh or cry or shiver.
6. **Show, don't tell:** Give yourself more words to describe characters and events. Instead of *telling* me "He was stinky," *show* me: "When he took off his socks, half the class fainted."
7. **Turn on your senses:** Write about what characters can see, smell, feel, hear and touch. Write the way their body reacts. Goosebumps? Butterflies? Shivers?
8. **Adventure inside:** Just like you, your characters think inside their heads: they wonder, imagine, and fear. They make guesses about other people's thoughts and judgements. They hope for the future, worry about the past, etc.
9. **Write, write, write:** Writing is just making stuff up. Have fun. Make yourself laugh. Don't worry about doing it right, just do it. Write lists, jokes, comics, songs, diaries, stories and dreams.
10. **Read, read, read:** Reading can take you across oceans, through solar systems, into danger and secrets and magic. The more you read, the easier it is to write the stories you dream of.
11. **Learn to count:** There are more than 10 tips on this list. But that doesn't matter. What matters is that these writing tips are all things that have worked for me. I hope they work for you too!

Happy writing!

