

TIPS FOR BEGINNING WRITERS

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1. Attend a writers' conference such as the Tennessee Mountain Writers' Conference (<http://www.tmwi.org/>) in Oak Ridge or Mountain Heritage Literary Festival (<http://www.lmunet.edu/MHLF/>) in Harrogate that feature workshops for all levels of writers. Workshop leaders often provide handouts with examples of query letters and a list of recommended writing magazines and books. Like a racehorse at the Kentucky Derby, you can canter off to pursue publication opportunities.
2. Purchase a hard copy (or Kindle version) of Writer's Market, and subscribe to writing magazines such as Poets & Writers or Writer's Digest. These publications provide both markets and advice for writers.
3. Join the Knoxville Writers' Guild (KWG) and/or other local writing groups and seek critiques of your work. Take writing courses to polish your prose. Volunteer to help at KWG or serve on its Board of Directors. This experience will provide you with opportunities to meet a variety of writers and editors and to build a network of contacts.
5. Get clips by submitting work to church newsletters, organizational newsletters, and online magazines such as Long Story Short (<http://www.alongstoryshort.net/>), Absolute Write, (<http://absolutewrite.com/>), and Writing-World.com (<http://www.writing-world.com/>). Some will publish you, and some may even pay you!
6. Use writing contests such as those sponsored by TMW, KWG and New Millennium Writings (<http://newmillenniumwritings.com/>) to motivate yourself to write.
7. Volunteer to teach a writing course or workshop for an elementary school, a church, or a community college to give yourself positive visibility and exposure.
8. Develop the hide of a rhino and embrace rejection. Rejection hurts, but like a penicillin shot, it only stings for a little while. Rejection letters are proof that you are working at your craft.
9. Don't submit work to national publications such as *Readers' Digest*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Salon* if you're a beginning writer. Generally, these publications are not interested in unknown writers. Build up your writing credits by aiming at local and regional markets first.
10. Don't let anyone discourage you from writing. Everyone has a story to tell. When you have polished and perfected your writing, find the right market for you.

