

Creative Writing at Work Checklist

Try these creative techniques to make your blogs and articles, reports and proposals fun to write—and read!

- ❑ **Genius Generator or any brainstorming technique:** 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!
- ❑ **Dashes:** Use dashes to say, "Pay attention to this!" Dashes are different from parentheses. Parentheses add a quieter comment, something that's nice to know but not essential. Dashes add something meatier.
- ❑ **Dialogue:** Break up your content with other voices. Also adds white space and makes the page "breathe."
- ❑ **Foreshadowing:** Set the stage for something that will happen later in the chapter or an upcoming chapter. You can also hint at conclusions—but make the reader keep reading to discover the answer.
- ❑ **Rhythm with rhyming.** When we read, we hear the words, so rhythm is important. Rhyming adds to that flow. Brain scientists have also discovered that rhymes are easier to remember. (No wonder those commercial jingles stick in our heads.) Stuck for a rhyme? Go to www.rhymezone.com.
- ❑ **Senses.** Fiction writers draw us into their stories by awakening our senses. You can too. If you're writing a report about a problem, for example, grab your readers' attention by showing how people typically react to the situation. 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?
- ❑ **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.
- ❑ **Stories:** Stories set you apart. Stories allow readers to step into the picture. And stories trigger emotions, which is where we buy and buy in from.
- ❑ **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:** Sometimes the most elegant construction uses "to-be" verbs, e.g., *is*, *are*, *were*. But whenever you can, try to replace "There are" or "It is," for example, with constructions using vivid verbs such as *inveigle*, *foster*, *recall*, *delineated*, *exercise*, *specify*...

For more great tips, tools, and tricks of the trade, check out the Association for Creative Business Writing at www.afcbw.com.