QUEENSLAND WRITERS CENTRE

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QWC RESOURCE SHEET # 7
I've Just Started Writing

You have a story to tell and you want to start writing. Where do you begin?

Published authors tend to agree that in order to be a good writer you need to do two things: read a lot and write a lot. Read everything you can in the genre you'd like to write in (genre is style of writing – i.e. thrillers, historical, biography, romance, children's, etc.) so that you can see what other authors have done and learn from their successes (and failures). Keep a notebook on you to jot down ideas. And write whenever you have a chance.

Writing is a craft and the more you work at it, the better your writing will be. Writing workshops and courses can be a good way to learn basic skills.

Writing courses: which ones are good?

As everyone's needs and expectations are different, QWC does not recommend any one institution offering writing courses or workshops.

QWC has a calendar of workshops, seminars and masterclasses that cover a wide range of genres and employ high profile authors as tutors. Please see our website for upcoming workshops – go to www.qwc.asn.au/. Not every QWC course is suitable for every writer: seminars are generally suitable for writers at all levels of experience; workshops are suitable for participants of all standards and experience, and cover general writing techniques and creative writing exercises; masterclasses are for writers who are writing regularly, have some publishing experience or who have a manuscript in progress.

The Australian Writer's Marketplace lists courses available throughout Australia. QWC suggests when making inquiries you should:

- Ask who the tutor will be and then do some research on that person.
- Ask to be referred to someone who has completed the course.
- Ask for details about any participants who have been successful as a result of doing the course.

How do I get in touch with other writers?

Attending writers' festivals, book launches and other writing events is an excellent way to immerse yourself in 'the writing life'. Joining a writers' group should give you access to peer support and peer critiquing of your work – this kind of networking is a way to learn and grow as a writer.

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QWC's magazine, *Writing Queensland,* keeps members well informed of upcoming literary events. QWC can also supply its members with a list of writing groups in Queensland or you can refer to *The Australian Writer's Marketplace*. Your local library may also have information about local writers' groups.

How can I tell if my writing is any good?

If you are in the early days of your writing pursuits, you should consider either joining a writers' group where you can get feedback (free) from peers or attend a writing workshop or course.

Another means of establishing yourself as a writer is entering (and winning) competitions. QWC's magazine, *Writing Queensland*, has Competition and Opportunities sections in every edition. Submitting stories to magazines is also a way of getting your work in front of magazine and journal editors.

There are services available at QWC and within the writing industry that can offer you an appraisal of your work. (See QWC's website for details of the members' only Editorial Consultancy Service.)

People write for different reasons. Some write because they want to get rich quickly and think that a bestseller will make their fortune. The odds of that happening are infinitesimal. It does sometimes happen but it's terribly rare, and writing for publication is a long and arduous journey with no guarantee of success. Some people write because they love writing and some because they have a story they'd like to share.

If you're on a writing journey, whether you're taking the first steps or are already published, Queensland Writers Centre is here to help.

Happy writing.