

What is Writing Style and How do you Develop it?

By Craig Lock

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Creative Writing Course <http://www.nzenterprise.com/writer/creative.html>

We hope that the following article, which was extracted from a lesson on our Online Creative Writing Course may be informative and helpful to your e-zine readers, or on your web site. (There are some amendments to this previously published article, so replace, if you wish). Please feel free to publish this piece in your ezine or on your web site.

"We share what we know, so that others may grow".

WHAT IS WRITING STYLE AND HOW DO YOU DEVELOP IT?

What is style and how do you acquire it? We all have a natural style. Style is simply the way in which you put words together when you are writing. It is a reflection of your speaking and thinking habits. Clear, muddled? Some people write in short staccato sentences, sometimes even without using verbs. I believe style can reflect your personality, eg. serious, brusque, friendly, chatty, "whacky, breezy"... and so on.

In some ways, people can write differently to the way they speak.

I don't usually speak much...but I use plenty of words in my writing!

Good style is essential in any writing.

You won't get published without good style.

It means writing with clarity and precision.

Writing is a craft which needs to be learned and practised, so be self critical.

I try to write simply and with little doses of my 'weird' or '

bizarre' (not bazaar) sense of humour and have written this article in a "short and sharp, punchy" style.

I also have a serious, yet simple style for my novels on South Africa. They are written "from the heart" In a totally different style to this lesson/article's "brief, punchy and to the point" style. I wrote ANGOLAN DAWN in a different style to my other novels to portray the way an unsophisticated big word!) Angolan migrant labourer would see the world, think and speak.

In my non-fiction works, like this article and my self-help books, I try to write in a style that will best accomplish my writing aim: to "inform, entertain and hopefully even inspire people to reach out and become all they are CAPABLE of being".

HOW TO USE DIFFERENT STYLES

Your style can vary from time to time to suit the subject.

A good writer is able to vary their style to suit the subject matter and the publication concerned.

For example, use short simple sentences when writing for very young children.

When writing articles for magazines, keep them strictly factual and to the point.

No room for my flowery sort of language!

Style varies from publication to publication.

Some prefer to stick strictly to the facts of the matter, while others allow their writers to digress.

IS YOUR MEANING CLEAR?

That for me is good style.

TONE

This reveals your unique personality. It means "how are you coming across" ? #

Can I end a sentence with a "preppie"?

Is your tone angry, arrogant, breezy, sarcastic, bitter, ironic, cynical or informal? What do you think is the tone of this lesson (article)?

Tone may be used to inform or instruct.

You should use variety in your choice of rhythms.

In my non-fiction works, I try to write in a simple and unobtrusive style, with the odd "whacky" bit of humour thrown in to keep the reader entertained, as well as informed.

I believe anyone can improve their style by reading and writing more.

Look at how successful authors do it and make a mental note (I have no time for reading these days!).

Practice your own writing regularly, stand back dispassionately and look at it.

Read the words out aloud, or preferably get someone else to read your work out to you.

Ask yourself this important question:

DO THE SENTENCES FLOW NICELY?

Look at the flow: Is there variety in the length and structure of the sentences?

Correct awkward phrases or obvious repetitions.

Check is your meaning clear?

With no waffling (must heed that one!).

Then rewrite and rewrite to improve the quality of your work.

Top writers rewrite many many times over.

Be aware that style can be changed to suit circumstances.

Style is very individual - it is your own style...and is **YOURS** alone - your unique personality "shining through".

Style may be simple, formal, and even utilize slang, or be more complex with long sentences, sub-clauses and paragraphs; but it should never lose its essential clarity.

The essence of good style, I believe, is **SIMPLICITY**. In writing articles for say, newspapers, your preference will largely depend on your market.

For example in the UK, British newspapers like 'The Sun' generally have a short and sharp style - to appeal to the masses.

'The Times' usually has longer and more demanding prose to stimulate "more edu-ma-cated" readers.

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When I write articles for "the international market" of the net, I don't target particular countries and try to adapt my writing style. I've found that people around the world don't seem to mind the fact that I may use "funny" words or spelling - small details, like "s's" instead of "z's", color or colour...as long as the grammar is reasonably correct. I just try to write in my "natural style with the odd bit of whacky and zany" humour - one in which I feel comfortable (seeing I was brought up in South Africa with British English) and suggest you writers do the same.

My advice is just find your "natural style" by writing as you Speak - as practice writing in your "natural style" breeds confidence. I hope this article may be helpful to you in learning more about your own "natural style."

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About the author:

Craig Lock is an author of numerous books and the creator of the "original" online creative writing course.
<http://www.nzenterprise.com/writer/creative.html>

Craig's brand new manuscript HOW TO WRITE AND BE PUBLISHED - ALL I KNOW ABOUT WRITING is now available at
<http://www.bridgeniche.com/CLOCK/zaniestbooks.htm>
To order email clock@xtra.co.nz

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That's a metaphor, by the way!

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