

# **HOLY GRAIL** **OF WRITING**



**J Jericho**



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<http://www.thefreeschool.education/grail.html>

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This instruction guides students who aim to self-publish an extended writing project.

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# PREMISE

*The first thing that I ask my understudies at our initial meeting is  
this – What exactly do you want to get from your writing?  
For most, this simple question is too difficult.*

LUKE APPLEBEE

Pseudonym

Bestselling fiction novelist

## KEY TERMS

Bestsellers, ethics, fiction, freelance, ghostwriter, inspiration, manuscript, novelists, paper  
print format, publishing, social media platforms, writing objectives.

## Premise

Every once in a blue moon, we may be lucky to engage a person who shares a simple, memorable idea that guides us positively for life. A June afternoon in Sydney, Australia 2008 is an exemplary example of such rare encounters.

"Got the day off from work today have ya?" I said to our building's newest resident with a warm smile in the underground garbage depot. It was the first time that we had crossed paths within speaking distance since he moved in a few weeks prior.

I rarely accost unknown people for casual banter nowadays. Maybe it's me, but I often receive a subtle frown, silence, a stony-faced vague reply, or a combination thereof.

"Nah, buddy" the stranger replied with a more generous grin. "I work-from-home and write best sellers" he said.

It was refreshing to receive a positive energy reply, even a showoff one like this. I could tell from his instant mega smile that this neighbor is a people lover – an extrovert.

Mister mid-40s in flannelette pajamas proudly produced a check out of his shabby once white bathrobe pocket and flashed it before my face. "I just got this \$25,000 advance today from my publisher for my next bestseller" he boasted shamelessly.

A modest man I thought. I intuitively liked him less than I did five seconds prior.

"Cool" I replied. "What sort of books do you write?" I asked as we walked in synch towards the elevator.

"Detective crime stories and that sorta stuff" he said.

"I admire fiction book writers" I replied earnestly as we entered the elevator. Must be a lot harder than just writing short academic articles like I do" I said.

"Academic hey", he said, eyebrows raised as he made intimate eye-to-eye contact for the first time. "I'm studying English Lit at Sydney and would love to pick your brains for ideas sometime soon" he said.

"Yeh, let's meet up over drinks and swap notes" I said.

"Definitely. How about the Bank Bar?" he answered.

"Great choice" I said as my neighbor fumbled his keys in Apartment 501's keyhole. "How about today after lunch at 3?" he asked.

"Sure, see you in the garden bar at three" I said as I walked towards my door, 506.

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## END OF SECTION ACTIVITIES

1. How many words do you count in this *verbatim* quotation from this chapter?

The primary thing that he wanted was -----  
-----  
----- (p. 6)

2. What objective/s, if any, do you currently aim to achieve from your writing?

Write these goals down. Date your notes and store them in a safe place such as your diary. You may record these in any format such as sentences or bullet points.

To sharpen your focus, try to limit your notes to 150 words or less.

You may review these notes as you progress through this book and thereafter.

### Further reading

Dawn, H. (2019), *Using dreams for inspiration to write*,  
[www.authormagazine.org/articles/2019-04-dawn](http://www.authormagazine.org/articles/2019-04-dawn)

Kruse, K. (2015), *365 best inspirational quotes*, California: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform,  
[www.e4thai.com/e4e/images/pdf2/365bestinspirationalquotes.pdf](http://www.e4thai.com/e4e/images/pdf2/365bestinspirationalquotes.pdf)

## Recognitions

The lives and accomplishments of individuals and entities can be acknowledged and celebrated in public domains in several ways. Pan American World Airways (Pan Am) is an example of a famed institution that no longer exists since 1991. RIP Pan Am.

Obituaries and eulogies are popular written formats that celebrate the lives of people who have passed. The 408 words article overleaf titled 'Motown Chic' is a tribute to the late Nina Simone. The word 'tribute' may convey a less morbid connotation than alternatives such as In Memoriam. Public tributes may honor the living and those who have passed.

### ACTIVITY

1. Identify someone who has been overlooked for a lifetime honor such as admission into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame or the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Write a tribute of *circa* 400 to 800 words that argues for their deserved inclusion in an honor hall of fame. Explicitly identify at least one unique achievement that distinguishes this person's contribution to their field as exemplary or original.

## Motown chic

Nina Simone's brazen biography begs a prickly question that muso critics galore ponder decades after her death. How can music historians rate the standing of top selling 'artists' who forge their name belting out covers and first edition numbers composed by others? A divisive debate indeed.

Artists who have shifted millions of units singing other's tunes are a penny a pound. Britney, Elton, and Celine are household name members of this lucrative clique.

Some of Simon's trademark tunes are from bygone eras. *I Put A Spell on You* (1965) was composed by Jay Hawkins a decade prior. Nina's immortal interpretation of *Feeling Good* released in 1965 boasts her ability to own a tune that few realize was originally sung by another artist. Cy Grant's debut version is excruciatingly cheesy.

Simone is credited as the original singer of the classic *Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood* (1965) penned by Benjamin, Caulewell & Marcus. Covers by acts such as The Animals and Elvis Costello are generally regarded as interpretations of Simone's stellar vocals.

Nina's iconic fame may stem from her image, intellect, and intimacy. Few Motown mommas' wardrobes are worthy of comparison to the trend-setting Jackson 5 posse. Simone is a lifelong member of this super-elite club. Her bouffant afros, chic head scarves, glam accessories and low-cut crocheted frocks epitomize feminine images of Motown's magnificent heyday.

Nina's candid, camera loving interviews showcase a deep-thinking, smarty arty soul. She openly criticizes social injustices such as racism, sexism and classism and fear-based self-censorship. 'Me', 'myself' and 'I' feature prominently in some rants that may relegate her high art as secondary.

Nina's ability to command the undivided attention of savvy close-up crowds in swanky piano bars may crystallize her musical legacy. Her velvety, baritone vocals are unmistakably signature-style. Simone's analog originals are worthy of Smithsonian archival.

Nina's tortured incarnation may ultimately define her narrative. Showbusiness in her prime was a treacherous cesspit for self-made wannabes from the hood. Being a single black female was a handicap that she triumphed with legendary grace.

According to folklore, Simone confronted a music executive at gunpoint and demanded payment of a stack of swindled royalties. To be a fly on the wall. What did the Queen of Gorgeous lip to this married white daddy?

Perhaps this sanguine songbird borrowed again from Bessie's depression days ditty.

"I need a little sugar in my bowl" © Williams *et al.* (1931).

Best performance: Mississippi Goddam at Carnegie Hall – composed by Simone.

*Body count: 408 words*



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