

Contents

Preface

1. You the Writer

One-minute summary

Taking stock of experience

Aims and aspirations

Choice of forms and genres

Reading and writing

Tutorial

2. Observation and Recording

One-minute summary

The basis of good writing

Using a notebook

The idea of a commonplace book

Keeping a personal anthology

Tutorial

3. Practice in prose

One-minute summary

Short pieces of reflection

Making the ordinary strange

The art of description

From concept to written word

Tutorial

4. Practice in Poetry

One-minute summary

Free verse

Some short forms

Tripartite structures

East and West: Having and being

Tutorial

5. Gathering the Right Resources

One-minute summary

Reference works and magazines

Critical feedback

Writing courses

Writing Circles

Tutorial

6. Ready for print?

One-minute-summary

When and how to submit work

Dealing with Editors

Specialisms and Choices

The markets: categories of markets

Tutorial

7. Re-writing and editing your work

One-minute summary

Making your own standards

Testing for quality

Accessing the genuine voice

Selection and rejection

Tutorial

8. Creative Non-Fiction

One-minute summary

Life-writing

Place and travel

Discursive prose

Mixing genres

Tutorial

9. Starting out in Fiction

One-minute summary

The nature of narrative

The short Story

Plot and character

Structure and theme

Tutorial

10. Writing for performance

One-minute summary

Patter, comedy and sketch

Radio drama or fiction

One-act plays

Poetry and Stand-Up

Tutorial

Glossary

Reference: Print

Web sites for writers

Index

Preface

There are plenty of handbooks available introducing the craft of creative writing.

What makes this one different? Mainly, I have made sure that the material here is up-dated and current. The book is meant to lead you steadily into writing as a craft as well as an art. The first short exercises and basic advice may be useful for complete beginners, or they may also help practising writers to 'take stock'.

We have taught creative writing for almost thirty years, and in that time have learned that genuine writing is honest, from some creative centre we have, with a strong aim to share, express and communicate the human situation. That will be a constant, whether you want to write freelance articles or epic novels. Everything that is going to be genuine, your true writer's voice, will germinate in that unique creative centre.

The chapters here deal with the basics of all creative writing, and also introduce some of the most popular forms and categories. It is not possible to cover all the genres here, but my second book, building on this, is *Keep on Writing Professionally*, and this focuses on the professional practice skills and issues such as contracts, copyright and editorial or publishing procedures.

But *Getting Started as a Professional Writer* takes you from short warm-up exercises to research and drafting of full-length works. We have to thank Graham Mort, Roger McGough, Suzanne Ruthven and all our former writing students for helping to bring out much of the groundwork of this book.

Stephen Wade and Kate Walker