

## **Find a space to write, both in your mind and physically**



### **Would this be your ideal spot to write?**

Finding the best place – Generally, I go to my writing room (my daughter's old bedroom which has a view of the town. It does not have the view above, unfortunately, but it's still nice). Sometimes I might have a change and write downstairs or outside if the weather is fine. I wish I had tried writing in different places for inspiration and I might do more of that in the future. But what's practical for you? Is it quiet, comfortable and has everything you might need? Ideally, I see myself at my desk on top of a hill in a wooden cabin overlooking a lake and mountains. Or even at the bottom of a hill next to the water, like in the view above. Maybe when I've sold a million copies...

Finding the best time – Writing is generally portable and, unless you are writing to deadlines, is not time sensitive so it can be fitted in around other activities. Having such flexibility is great but when are you at your most creative? Be disciplined. I get up early at the same time as my wife and see it as a working day. I am a morning person so that's a good time for me. You might not have the luxury of choice but, if you do, I recommend you block out time for when you want to do it.

Look after yourself – is your writing station good for your posture? You're likely to spend a long time at it so get it right. Get up and move regularly if you can. Stretch, walk, exercise if possible. Get into good habits. You

can 'lose' time when you are in the flow. Set an alarm for every hour, or more often, to remind yourself to move. Even if it breaks the flow, it's worth it to keep you healthy. Believe me; I've learnt the hard way (bad back and neck).

Other interests. It might be that you have another job or other responsibilities around the house or elsewhere and you are squeezing in time to write. However, if you have devoted most of your time to writing, you might find you need other diversions. I find that if I've started writing around 7am or 8am, by about 3pm or 4pm I'm beginning to flag, even with breaks in that time. That leaves a lot of hours left in the day to do something else. Don't get bored. You need to stay motivated and fresh for another day. I teach in primary schools an average of a day a week but I felt I still needed more to do on the other days. Voluntary work and extended family life has helped me fill that gap. Writing isn't the only thing in my life, nor should it be.

### **Be realistic**

Whatever your reasons for writing, whether just for pleasure or professionally, set yourself goals. It will help both in terms of motivating yourself and giving discipline to your writing. I enjoy writing but I would like to be published. Health warning... that's really hard to achieve, particularly if you are trying to get published through a literary agent (see publishing section). They are clear that they receive of thousands of submissions, all of them from people, like me, who would like to get published. I did my research and knew that. The chances that it will happen might be slim but don't give up! You never know...

And don't forget, if you are new to writing, it takes a lot of time and practice so be kind to yourself. Whatever your goals, they may not happen straight away – you have to stick at it. J.K. Rowling did.