

3 Tips to Improve Your Writing

I meet people every day who tell me they want to improve their writing and maybe one day, write a book. Most already have a book title but have little confidence to even write a chapter outline.

I encourage would-be-writers to write every day. Start with 100 words a day and then progress in small steps to a goal of 1,000 words daily. It may take a full year to progress from 100 to 1,000 words of daily writing. There's no need rush the quantity of output. But there is GREAT need to improve writing skills.

I've worked with several thousand college students and tried to help them improve their writing. My all-time favorite writing improvement training is from David Ogilvy. He's in the copywriting hall of fame and was a successful advertising agency owner for most of his career.

He wrote a memo to his staff on Sept. 7, 1982, titled "How to Write."

I'll share of three of the 10 tips here:

1. Write the way you talk. Naturally.
2. Use short words, short sentences and short paragraphs.
(This tip alone will help you dramatically improve your writing.)
3. Never send a letter or a memo on the day you write it.
Read it aloud the next morning—and then edit it. (This is the most ignored tip of all!)

My most important writing goal is to hear someone tell me, "It sounded like you were writing to me."