

## Rules for Getting the Story Down

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1. Write it fast, fix it later.
2. Commit to writing 16 ½ minutes per day or 3 hours per week. If it is easier for you, commit to writing 3 pages a day.
3. Quality is more important than quantity. If you only get one paragraph done but it conveys your feelings and paints a picture the reader can see, then it is good.
4. Write stand-alone anecdotes, stories or chapters. You can connect them later with a theme, but if you don't the "pearls" will still have great value.
5. Make sure each piece has a "hook" which brings the reader in, a "middle" which gives the necessary information and the "end" which teaches a moral, makes us laugh or delivers the point. The end is usually tied in with the hook.
6. Don't worry about literary style. Write your story as if you were sitting at the kitchen table swapping tales. Be yourself.
7. Include lots of details. Remember what was going on in society, the family, and the neighborhood as well as physically and emotionally with the people involved in the story.
8. Remember the five senses. Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and feel. Help the reader relive the memory with you.
9. Edit out 10%. You will be amazed at how much better it is when you take out the extra words and phrases. Now edit out another 10%.
10. Let others read it for content, grammar and flow. Listen to their suggestions. If one or two people tell you the same thing it is an opinion, however if 3 or more tell you it is an observation that you should definitely consider.
11. Don't allow others or yourself to criticize too much. You are your own worst critic. It doesn't have to be perfect or to please everyone. It just has to be done. Many generations will be grateful you took the time, energy and risk to record some small part of history.
12. Re-write or correct passages. Let it sit for a few days and then you may want to tighten it some more.
13. Include some memorabilia or photos to bring the manuscript to life. You may find copies of newspaper articles, letters, cartoons, maps etc. that will add interest and information.
14. Finish the thing! It will never be completely done but bring it to a logical conclusion and be able to let it go and start on another project.

You are a writer-never forget it- just keep writing,