

Foster Care to Academic Success

Basic Tips for Writing Well

Good writing is basically a matter of expressing your ideas in a clear and graceful way, using **good grammar**, **proper structure**, and **appropriate vocabulary**.

We've got some resources for you.

Help with Grammar

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/>

http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/alle_grammar.htm - this one's pretty cool; it's a German website to teach English as a foreign language. It's got plenty of exercises similar to those you do if you're learning, say, Spanish.

<http://www.better-english.com/grammar.htm> - this one's specifically for business use.

Help with Structure

<http://www.tustin.k12.ca.us/cyberseminar/paragraph.htm> - this is as BASIC as it gets but it's kind of cute and if you're really stuck you might find it helpful.

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/index.htm> - there's some good stuff on sentence structure here.

<http://www.whitesmoke.com/grammar-rules-sentence-structure-basic-clauses.html> - this site has a lot of glitzy pop-ups but if you avoid them, the content is good.

Help with vocabulary

You know who the people are with the best vocabularies? The ones who READ. Yes. In order to be a good writer, you need to be a reader. Read – read the classics (Steinbeck, Twain, Dickens ... oh there are hundreds!). Read Harry Potter or Twilight or the latest Dan Brown. Read the newspaper, read stories to your children, read the back of the cereal box.

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If you don't know the meaning of a word, look it up – and then use it if you can. 😊

<http://www.freerice.com/index.php> - this is a very cool site with a purpose – for every meaning you know, they donate 10 grains of rice through the United Nations Program to End Hunger.

<http://wordsmith.org/awad/subscribe.html> - this site will send you word by email every day. Be SURE to subscribe to the FREE edition, because the premium edition costs \$45 a year. Today's word? "Grangerize" – look it up!

<http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday/> - dictionary.com offers a word a day but you have to click on the site to get it. Today's word is "cavort."

Each of the resources listed above will help you become a better writer, but not without ... you guessed it – PRACTICE. The more you write, and the more you read, the better a writer you will become. PRACTICE – look over what you write and edit it. Think about it and change words. Show it to people whose opinion you respect and ask them to help you edit it.

Here are a few final words of wisdom.

- SHORT is usually better than long.
- SIMPLE is usually better than complicated.
- ACTIVE is usually better than passive.
- USE your school's tutoring center or writing lab.
- ENJOY writing. Once you know what you want to say, figuring out how to say it best should be FUN. Words are a wonderful thing; learn to love them. Poetry, rap music, jokes, scientific research papers – they're all just WORDS trying to get across MEANING and FEELING. Don't be afraid; write, read, rewrite, and ask for help from people you respect.

