

Title:

Top Secret! The One-Year Path To Publication

Word Count:

641

Summary:

There is a way to virtually guarantee your publication within a single year. No, it has nothing to do with self-publication. This path is not for dilettantes, and will push you to the limit, but it has worked for dozens of my students, and it will work for you.

It is based on writing principles first proposed by two giants in the publishing field, science-fiction writers Ray Bradbury, and Robert Heinlein, over thirty years ago. And no, you don't have to be a science fictio...

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writing, novel, publishing, arts, advice, fiction

Article Body:

There is a way to virtually guarantee your publication within a single year. No, it has nothing to do with self-publication. This path is not for dilettantes, and will push you to the limit, but it has worked for dozens of my students, and it will work for you.

It is based on writing principles first proposed by two giants in the publishing field, science-fiction writers Ray Bradbury, and Robert Heinlein, over thirty years ago. And no, you don't have to be a science fiction writer. No matter what your ULTIMATE goal—novel, screenplay, playwright, or poet, you can adapt this method. It is designed to address literally every major problem you have or might encounter as a writer.

- 1) Write a story a week, or a story every other week.
- 2) Read 10X as much as you write.
- 3) Put your stories in the mail. Keep them in the mail until they sell.
- 4) Never re-write except to editorial request.

And there you go. Now let's look back at the steps for a bit of further explanation.

- 1) Write a story a week, or a story every other week. These can be as short as

you wish. No, it doesn't matter if you want to write novels, or your ideas tend to emerge from your subconscious in long form. If you're a newbie runner training for a marathon, you'd start by running around the block, wouldn't you? You wouldn't start by running twenty-six miles, that's for sure! Everything you need to know to write a book is contained in a short story, and writing 100,000 words of short stories will improve your writing far more than that same 100,000 words devoted to a novel. Scriptwriting? Before you can write a script, you need to be certain you understand storytelling. I mean REALLY understand it, subconsciously. Short stories give you a chance to hone your skills. Poetry? Well, in this case, write a poem a week! Non-Fiction? Sure! Write an article a week!

2) Read 10X what you write. There is nothing sadder than a young writer who doesn't read for fear of "contaminating his style." This is complete self-delusion. A writer DESPERATELY needs to read everything she can get her hands on...and of the very best quality. Personally, I read one act of Shakespeare aloud each morning, to simultaneously improve my writing and speaking ability.

3) Put your stories in the mail. Every week, or every other week, one of your stories should be submitted to an editor who pays money for publication. Frankly, it doesn't matter how much. Money is a very cold equation, something different from pats on the back, cheers, contributors copies or even awards. When an editor cuts you a check, there is a lack of warm fuzzy feelings, and a down-to-earth "will my readers like this" that is completely different from the accolades or criticisms of your writing group or class. THIS is the feedback you need: a check that clears the bank. Get your stories out! And web publication is just fine in this regard—as long as there is money. Even a penny a word—or less! --is just fine.

4) Don't re-write except to editorial request. Once your story is finished and initially re-written, move on. Don't re-write endlessly, trying to get it "perfect." You'll learn more by writing a new story than re-writing an old one endlessly.

If you'll do this, I promise you your first sales within fifty stories. At the story a week level, that's one year! Just one year from today, you could be a paid author. And for any real writer, that should be an idea exciting enough to keep them up late, and get them up early, typing away, knowing that that first acceptance check is less than 365 days way.