

Questions and Answers on How to Become a Successful Writer

Why does Mr. Sommer say it's important for everyone to become a good writer?

Mr. Sommer says it's important for everyone to become a good writer because today we live in the age of information so we need to learn to communicate with each other.

What is one of the popular ways of communicating with a computer?

One of the ways we communicate with one another is by email. If we cannot write properly, we'll appear ignorant and the high-paying jobs that require communication won't be available. So learning how to write is extremely important.

What did Mr. Sommer decide to do when he became a New York City high school teacher and saw that many of his students lacked basic education?

Mr. Sommer decided to investigate and write a book on the reasons for the educational failure and to offer solutions for educational success.

What major problem did Mr. Sommer say he faced about writing?

Mr. Sommer said, "I could write, but I was far from being a polished writer."

Since Mr. Sommer was not initially a polished writer, what did he do when he decided to write a book?

Mr. Sommer began to do extensive research regarding how to write.

How important does Mr. Sommer say the dictionary is in becoming a successful writer?

Mr. Sommer said the dictionary is very important for successful writing.

How many loose leaf binders and file drawers does Mr. Sommer have?

Mr. Sommer has 145 3-inch binders and 4 filing cabinets with 4 files each.

Why does Mr. Sommer have such a large filing system?

He stores up knowledge for the time he may want to use it for the books he will be writing.

What did King Solomon say about storing up knowledge?

King Solomon said, "Wise men lay up knowledge" (Proverbs 10:14).

Mr. Sommer says, "To become a successful writer, one is always looking for ideas." Where are some places to get good ideas?

Filing system

Literature—magazines and books

Internet

Teachers

What does Mr. Sommer mean when he says, "One of the important ways to become a successful writer is to imitate success"?

To become a successful writer one should imitate success by looking and examining what makes other writers successful.

What was one of the lessons Mr. Sommer learned about successful writers?

Successful writers often tell many stories.

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The key to successful writing is to use descriptive and exciting language. What was the illustration Mr. Sommer gave for: Show—Don't Tell?

Telling: Proud Rooster walked to the tree and told them to watch him as he began to climb the tree.

Showing (Using descriptive language): Proud Rooster stuck out his chest and walked up to the tree. "Just watch me!" he crowed as he began to climb.

Teachers: Go to www.AdvancePublishing.com. Under "free resources," there are worksheets for students to use to help them write properly.

What does Mr. Sommer say about using proper grammar to become a successful writer?

If you use improper grammar, people will assume you are ignorant.

What are the three literacy programs Mr. Sommer was writing?

Reading Success—a phonics-literature based reading program for adults.

Reading Adventure—a phonics-literature based reading program for children.

Number Success—a math program from addition to trigonometry consisting of 47 DVDs.

How long has Mr. Sommer been working on his three literacy programs?

Mr. Sommer has been working on them for 15 years.

Why didn't Mr. Sommer get discouraged and quit?

Mr. Sommer didn't quit because he wanted to help boys and girls, as well as men and women with a dynamic and interesting program. He also has a passion for excellence.

What is Mr. Sommer's definition of "passion for excellence"?

Mr. Sommer says that passion for excellence means his works needs to be outstanding. Mr. Sommer wants his literacy programs to be top quality.

What does Mr. Sommer mean when he says about his writing that he didn't want to "reinvent the wheel"?

One doesn't want to do something that has already been invented.

What did Mr. Sommer do so he would not reinvent the wheel?

Mr. Sommer did extensive research on other reading and math programs. Then after extensive investigating, he looked for ways to make his reading and math programs better than anything that was currently available.

What does Mr. Sommer do after he investigates the material and writes what he believes is a better program?

Mr. Sommer asks other people to evaluate what he has written.

What does Mr. Sommer say about the criticism he receives?

Mr. Sommer welcomes criticism.

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Mr. Sommer quotes King Solomon: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of the enemy are deceitful (Proverbs 27:6). What does this mean?

A true friend will tell the truth, even if it hurts; but an enemy will praise what is harmful.

Example: If you write poorly, a true friend will tell you that what you are writing is not good; an enemy will tell you your writing is excellent. By praising you for your poor writing, you will become satisfied and never become a successful writer.

Before Mr. Sommer had his picture books published, what did he do about having his books reviewed?

Mr. Sommer paid people to critique his books.

What advice does Mr. Sommer give to students for the next time they have their papers corrected by their teachers?

Mr. Sommer says, “The next time your teacher corrects your paper, say, “Good, I can learn from that.”

What kind of assistance did Mr. Sommer get to help him write his *Number Success* math program?

Mr. Sommer had numerous math teachers review the materials he wrote.

What does Mr. Sommer say is unique about his math series?

Mr. Sommer says his math program is unique in that he is demonstrating at hundreds of sites the practical application of math.

Mr. Sommer has written over 100 books: technical books, three large literacy series, and numerous award-winning children’s books. What advice does Mr. Sommer give to beginning writers?

1. *Listen to your teachers. When the teacher marks your papers, welcome the marks. Look at them and study the corrections.*
2. *Read lots of books. And when you read—think. What makes this an interesting book?*
3. *Look at other people who have become successful writers, and ask yourself, “What makes this writing successful?”*
4. *Learn how to use a computer. Don’t type with one finger—discipline yourself to type properly.*
5. *Write, write, write.*
6. *Have a passion to want to help others. That’s Mr. Sommer’s motivating force on why at age 73 he still keeps on writing.*