



# Hello, I'm

## **Sarah Parrott**

Founder of Write Sparks  
Creator of the Dear 2020 Project

[www.writesparks.co.uk](http://www.writesparks.co.uk)

## MY JOB DESCRIPTION

I'm the founder of Write Sparks and the creator of the Dear 2020 Project. As an experienced teacher and writing specialist, I have taught writing to many hundreds of young people over the last decade. I lead fun, creative events and workshops for writers of all ages.

## 10 TIPS ON HOW TO FOLLOW IN MY FOOTSTEPS

### **Write, write, write!**

The very best way to become a writer, unsurprisingly, is to write! Try to write every day. Keeping a diary or journal is one of the easiest ways to hone your writing skills. Write for your mental health, for fun, and to capture your memories for your future self.

### **Find your voice:**

Don't worry about what you think people want to read; tell your own story, in your own voice.

### **Enter writing competitions and prizes:**

Check out #Merky New Writers' Prize, BBC Young Writers' Award, Wicked Young Writer Awards, London Writers Awards and Queen Mary Wasafiri New Writing Prize.

### **Submit your writing to zines and anthologies:**

It's a great way to get your first taste of publication and there are so many to choose from, including ours at Write Sparks. Anthologies are particularly great if you write poetry, but many zines accept submissions of prose, nonfiction, graphic stories and illustrations too. The best way to find zines looking for submissions is on Instagram, using the hashtag #submissionsoopen or by finding a few publications you like and following them for announcements of their new issues.

### **Write first, edit later:**

Forget about handwriting, spelling and grammar for your first draft. Let your ideas flow and tidy it all up later.

### **Reading:**

The best teacher of writing is reading. Quite simply, the more you read, the better your writing will become. Try to mix up what you read, to get the widest range of voices. Read modern and classical fiction, poetry and nonfiction, articles and essays by writers from the broadest range of backgrounds you can find.

**Power of social media:**

Use social media (safely!) to showcase your writing and refine your craft. The restriction of character limits can teach you to select your words carefully and blogs are helpful for sharing longer pieces of writing. Follow writers, journalists and publishers you admire and engage with them when appropriate.

**Take some free courses:**

There are plenty of free writing courses online. Take a look at the National Centre for Writing and the Open University Free Courses, as well as classes at local colleges, libraries and bookshops.

**Mix up your writing:**

Try different styles and types of writing. Experiment with poetry and stories, informal blogging and nonfiction reporting. Trying out different styles with different rules will develop your skills and refine your writing voice.

**Find your support team:**

Once you're happy with a piece of writing, ask a teacher, friend or family member to read your writing and give you feedback. If you're serious about becoming a writer, you might want to find a mentor. Be brave and reach out to authors online or via their agent, go to literary events and festivals and chat to people, visit author events at bookshops and libraries. If you're interested in journalism or publishing, Google newspapers, magazines or publishing houses and ask for work experience.