

Tips for Writing Flash

1. Begin at the flashpoint, the point of energy, tension, or drama.

“The brief essay needs to be hot from the first sentence... The heat might come from language, from an image, from voice or point-of-view, from revelation or suspense, but there must always be a burning urgency of some sort translated through each sentence, starting with the first.” - Dinty Moore

2. Enter your story sideways

No time for polite introductions, background, backstory or a large cast of characters. Don't use too many characters. [Make sure you have a character arc.](#)

There's nothing more disappointing than a character who doesn't grow/change/learn. Sure, it happens, but does it make a fulfilling experience? Not particularly.

3. Show don't tell - focus on the powerful images

Paint your characters and actions in small vivid scenes. Pay attention to detail and use poetic language. Using strong verbs is better than lots of adjectives

4. Poetic devices and techniques

Compression, sparse language, strong verbs

Rich imagery and feeling; make room for all the senses and sensual details

Make use of metaphors and symbols to hint beyond the literal.

5. Strike a universal chord, or reveal a larger truth

*Flash Nonfiction requires an alertness to detail, a quickening of the senses, a focusing of the literary lens, **until one has magnified some small aspect of what it means to be human.** - Bernard Cooper*

6. The Title Counts

Name your piece. Take your time to think of the perfect title. These few words are part of your word count and can reveal an idea you didn't have room for in your story.

7. Dialogue

“Even the inclusion of one line of dialogue in a flash can offer support for story line and character strength. Keep dialogue tags simple: he said, she said.” Kaye Linden, *Tips*

8. Make your last line ring like a bell.

The last line should leave the reader with something which will continue to sound after the story has finished. It should not complete the story but rather take us into a new place; a place where we can continue to think about the ideas in the story and wonder what it all meant.

9. Edit with passion and pizzazz

Start with a longer word count and then cross out, delete and tighten every line of your story. Experiment with slashing out entire sections and reducing your story to just a few lines. **Throw yourself into writing and crank out a beautiful story**, regardless of length. Then take away anything that doesn't need to be there. Beware adverbs and adjectives.