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Ten Tools and Tips for Genealogical Writing

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1. Recognize the necessity. We need to write in order to prove, preserve, and propagate what we have learned. Without it our work will be dust in the wind.
2. Understand the options. These include instructional writing, proof arguments (usually journal articles but sometimes embedded in lineage-society applications), reviews, family histories (usually books), narratives (be careful), historical fiction (be even more careful), client reports, and more.
3. Furnish the mind; follow the best, but don't ignore the also-rans. An imperfect effort may be easier to take apart and understand than a perfect one. Know your audience.
4. Practice! Don't postpone writing until the research is finished. Write as you go insofar as possible. Schedule writing to match your best times of day or week. Consider setting stepwise goals.
- 5. WRITE FIRST, EDIT LATER!** Do not try to engage two different gears at once.
6. Revise early and often.
7. Start (almost) anywhere. Often the best opening paragraph appears only as we near the end of our work. Ideally it will both summarize the work *and* provide a vivid example.
8. Make the reader's task easier by doing four things:
 - (a) follow the logic. No amount of eloquence or trickery can overcome a flawed logical structure, any more than a badly framed house can be held up by stapling siding onto it. See Genealogy Standard 68.
 - (b) unless you are knowingly writing a narrative, keep the documentation in the footnotes and the people of the past in the main story.
 - (c) strictly scrutinize needless adverbs, adjectives, and the passive voice, and
 - (d) by contrast, be generous with verbs, nouns, and connectives (verbal signposts).
 - (e) just for good measure, read Standard 69's list of nine things we should NOT be doing!
9. Find good critics and treasure them. They make the task easier. Writers' groups can help.
10. Understand editing and editors. Editing can take place on at least three levels: logical structure, organization of paragraphs and sentences, and detailing of word choice and punctuation. And editors can proceed in at least three ways: rewriting, making suggestions, and asking questions.

Level / Mode	Rewrite	Suggest	Question
Thinking (Overall Structure)			
Organizing (Paragraph, Sentence, and Rhythm)			
Detailing (Word Choice and Punctuation)			

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