

Writing FAST: How to Write Anything with Lightning Speed

by Jeff Bollow

Special Introduction to the Ebook Version

Let's cut to the chase.

You're here because you want to write something.

Or because you *have* to write something.

Either way: I'm going to show you exactly how to write *better* than you've ever written — *faster* than you ever thought possible.

How?

By demystifying the writing *process*. By turning it into a simple, step-by-step system.

Once you learn the simple steps, you'll move through them quickly and painlessly. As you *master* the process, you'll begin to write *intuitively*.

Here's how it works:

FAST is an acronym. It stands for **F**ocus, **A**pply, **S**trengthen, **T**weak — the four phases of this writing system.

In the **Focus** Phase, you “focus” your ideas into a plan. You explore *all* your ideas and shape them into a powerful roadmap that will guide your writing.

In the **Apply** Phase, you “apply” that plan. You use your roadmap to blast words onto the page as quickly as possible, so stray ideas won't derail you.

In the **Strengthen** Phase, you “strengthen” what you've written. You analyze your writing *objectively* and map out a rewrite that transforms your work into *exactly* what you want to say.

In the **Tweak** Phase, you “tweak” the read. You fine-tune your words to grab the reader's eyes and pull them down the page, so your work *reads* fast.

As the whole process snaps into place, you'll fly through the steps *as* a process — as if the entire system were one big step. You'll turn new ideas into quality writing with surprising speed.

And because it's a system, the more you *use* it, the faster and *better* your writing becomes.

A Universal Process

A lot has changed in the 8 years since this book was written.

Facebook and Twitter changed the way we connect with one another. The iPhone and iPad put the world's knowledge at our fingertips everywhere we go. Ebooks went mainstream and transformed the publishing world.

But you know what?

Absolutely nothing has changed with the writing process.

In fact, the *process* is the same today as it was *thousands* of years ago. It's the same in every country, in every language, with every project, for every writer.

Think about it. What *is* writing?

It's the process of turning the ideas in your head into *words* on the page so that when a reader *reads* your words in a different time and place, the ideas in *your* head will appear clearly in *their* head.

No matter *what* you're writing — books, blogs, screenplays, emails, or even a doctoral thesis — the *process* is the same. You have to *focus* your ideas, *apply* them to the page, *strengthen* until they're solid, and *tweak* for impact.

The *tools* and *techniques* you use may change. The distribution format might evolve. The *type* of writing may have a different purpose.

But the *process* will *always* be the same.

This book is about the *process*.

It's about getting *your* ideas into your *reader's* head... *fast*.

How to Use This Book

This book has only one rule: Don't just *read* it.

Do it.

Writing is *experiential*.

And *no one can teach you an experience* — it's something you need to go through in your own way.

You can't learn "how to write" by reading about it. You actually have to *write*. Physically. Like, sitting in the chair and banging it out. Even when you don't want to. (*Especially* when you don't want to.)

So in this book, I'm going to guide you through the *experience* — the experience of the *system*, which is by default an experience of the writing process.

I'll explain how the system works, and then I'll prompt you to *do it*.

In the first 3 chapters, I'll give you background info and setup, to prepare you for it. In the *last* 3 chapters, I'll snap it all together with a big payoff, so you can get the most out of it in the real world.

But in the middle — the 12 chapters at the heart of this book — is the system.

Each of the 4 phases of the writing process (Focus, Apply, Strengthen, Tweak) gets 3 chapters. At the end of *each* chapter are "5 Simple Steps".

Do those steps. The chapter *content* helps you understand them. The steps themselves are the *actions* to take.

There are two ways to do it. I suggest deciding upfront which way you prefer, and then sticking with it throughout the book:

1) Read the book completely, to understand how it works and how all the pieces snap together. When you're finished, go back and *apply* the "5 simple steps" to a real-world writing project.

Or:

2) Read the book *as* you write something. Preferably, use a short-form writing project (like an email or an article or short story) just to get the hang of how

the system works. You can apply it to a long-form project (like a book or screenplay) afterwards.

But be warned: If you choose the first option, you will *intellectualize* this process. Since reading is intangible, the ideas will exist *only in your mind*. It's like trying to learn the piano without ever tapping the keys. If you do that, you may find this book to be "chatty" or "wordy", or you might get hung up on some of my metaphors, or the way I write.

But if you *do the steps*, the explanations make more sense because you unlock the "hidden layer" of this book — *your experience*. You personalize it and make it tangible.

And it will transform the way you write.

Please don't consider the book "finished" until you've physically taken a writing project *through* the steps. These are not just words on a page. They're a prompt to action.

A Quick Word About My Style

As you can see, I've written this book in a *conversational* tone.

There's a reason for that.

I'm assuming you're like me — or like the thousands of writers from around the world that I've had the privilege of teaching.

I'm assuming you write *reluctantly*.

Most of us *struggle* to write. We often stare endlessly at the blank page. When we *do* put down some words, we second-guess them. And ourselves. Sure, sometimes it flows effortlessly (and in those moments we *love* writing), but *most* of the time, it's just hard. It's a chore. It's painful. But in the back of our minds we *know* if we don't *do* it, it won't get done. So we put pressure on ourselves to be "good" and to "hurry up", and it scares us and frazzles our nerves!

Sound familiar?

Of course it does. We're all in the same boat. Writing can be scary. You're putting yourself out there.

So here's my thinking:

What if a *friend* could guide you through the *experience*? Wouldn't the whole thing be a lot less daunting? *I* think so. And I've chosen this conversational tone in order to *be* that friendly guide for *you*.

I've tried to write this as if I'm standing right next to you. Looking over your shoulder with a smile.

I'll speak casually. Use sentence fragments. Paint word pictures. Probably even get a little silly at times.

But I'll encourage you. Maybe even *inspire* you. And I hope to absolutely convince you that *you can do this*.

Sometimes I'll get so excited *myself* that you may think, "Oh come on. Does this guy *really* feel that way? I don't buy it."

Yes!, I *really* feel that way! I promise I won't use any exclamation points I don't mean.

See, here's the thing:

I want you to write. Seriously. My efforts are wasted if you don't.

And I *know* you can do this. (If *I* can do it, *you* can.) I want to push you through whatever procrastination, fear, self-doubt, or hesitation is holding you back.

If I can get a little philosophical for a minute:

I really believe that every man, woman, and child who has ever lived (or *will* ever live) has something valuable to say. I believe that you *exist* to share what's in your mind. You have experiences *no one else will ever have* — which give you an imagination *no one else will ever see*. I believe the rest of us *need* you to share it. Whether it's fiction or nonfiction, whether it's a huge novel or a mid-term report or a tiny email, I believe that when *you* share your ideas, *my* world can be better. Because ideas spark ideas. Yours could have a far-reaching impact, in ways you can't possibly predict while it's still spinning in your head.

But if writing is hard, you might not do it.

And that's *not* okay.

So my job here is to simplify it, make it easier, and help you do it *fast* — so that we can *all* benefit.

And I don't mind looking a little goofy, if that's what it takes.

FAST and the Lightning Bolt

I chose the "FAST" acronym for a very specific reason:

Great writing *reads* fast.

Let's be honest. Nobody will ever care how fast you got the words onto the page. Your reader only cares how fast it *reads*. And it only *reads* fast if it's fluid, dynamic and powerful writing. FAST helps you achieve that.

But FAST is also about *writing* fast. Make no mistake about it: I want to close the gap between your *thought* speed and your *writing* speed. The closer you get to writing at the speed of thought, the more *pure* your communication will be.

The human mind is an extraordinary organ.

Your brain is made up of a hundred billion neuron cells. *Each one* has up to ten *thousand* nerve endings, called synapses. When you have a thought, millions of tiny electrical impulses fire across these synapses to connect those neurons with other neurons in massive integrated arrays.

It all happens in a fraction of a second. And in the next fraction of a second, you're off to the next thought, with different neural arrays lighting up.

Think about that.

Your ideas are made up of trillions of little bolts of lightning.

Our goal is to harness them. And put them on the page.

Our goal is to put those bolts of lightning into the mind of your reader.

If I've done my job effectively in this book, *my* ideas will be clear in *your* mind. And they will empower you to use the FAST System to capture your ideas, and write anything you imagine with "lightning speed".

I hope you enjoy this ride. I hope you take action. And I hope you share your imagination.

May it light up the darkness.

This special introduction appears in all Kindle, iBookstore and Nook versions of *Writing FAST: How to Write Anything with Lightning Speed*.

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