



WRITE LIKE A WRITER

A creative's writing course

Welcome.

You are a creative. I get it, you don't want to write. Writing is hard. Writing is painful. Writing is out of reach...until now. This course will give you the foundation you need to start writing like a writer and blogging like a blogger. You probably think you don't need to know this stuff. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but if all you are doing is posting your pictures, you are leaving a lot of money on the table. Clients want to read about you, get to know you and, most importantly, find you on google. Through this course we will cover the basic blogging and grammar rules, help you find your own voice, teach you the formula for a good blog post and help create a year's calendar that is perfect for your target market. So, join me. Let's start writing and start making more money.

Write like a Writer: A creative's writing course

- Lesson 1: Why write and rules of blogging
- Lesson 2: Grammar basics
- Lesson 3: Finding your voice
- Lesson 4: The anatomy of a blog post
- Lesson 5: The anatomy of an about me/bio paragraph
- Lesson 6: How editors edit

A note from the teacher:

Hey You,

I'm Michelle Gifford.

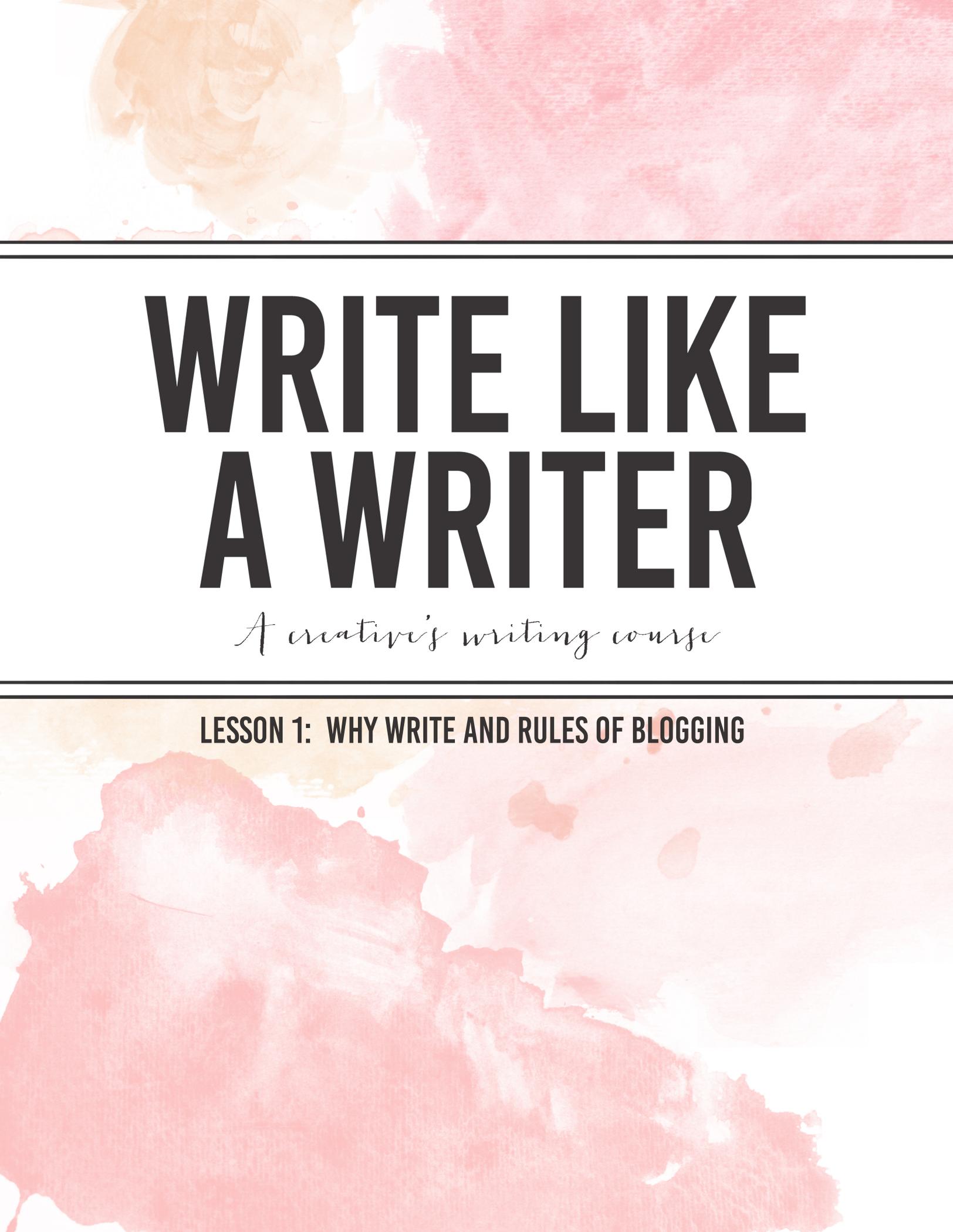
Thank you for taking this course. Whether you know it or not, you are a great writer. While some believe that you are either born a writer or that you just don't have it, let me be the first to tell you, that is wrong. Writing is a skill, not a talent. Anyone can write and everyone should write. Writing gives voice to your thoughts and personality to your online presence. I love to write, but I do understand just how painful it can be. My goal in this course is to take give easy to understand principles to help you start writing like a writer. This course has been organized into six digestible lessons that will take you through all areas of writing to give you the knowledge and confidence you need to start writing like a writer. My background is in public relations and business, which translates into: I learned to write and write a lot. I am the founder of Beauty Revived, editor and creator of Beauty Revived magazine, Southern California senior photographer, regular columnist for Senior Style Guide, wife to a handsome husband and mom to four (almost five) children.



Thanks again for taking this course! I'm excited for you to get writing.

Luvs,

Michelle



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LESSON 1: WHY WRITE AND RULES OF BLOGGING

LESSON 1

Let's face it. Writing regular blogs can be hard and overwhelming. We are great with a camera, sewing machine, designing or whatever but when it comes down to actually writing about the pictures, we get stuck. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so why should we have to write those thousand? We don't have to write a thousand, but you should try to write at least 300. But I'm getting ahead of myself. We will start at the very beginning. It's a very good place to start.

First off, you need to know **you are awesome**. You really are. The fact that you are a creative means two things: you have an eye for detail, which means you will be great at writing, and, two, you have the aptitude to learn. So, even though you don't know all the writing tools and tricks, you have the ability to conquer them. Don't be scared about writing. The more you do it, the better and more confident you will be.

Just a housekeeping item, each assignment has a worksheet to fill out. When writing the articles, I would recommend typing them so that you can edit and use them easily. If you are brainstorming and making lists, feel free to print the worksheets out and write on them. **Do what is best for you!**

This might seem crazy, but I want you to start this lesson by writing. Yes, I know you haven't read any of the techniques or helps, but this is an important step. And please don't tell me you thought there wasn't going to be any writing assignments in a writing course. We are starting off with a bang, my friend. So, loosen your fingers and get typing.

For the assignment, you are going to write two blog posts from the prompts on worksheet 1 and 2.

The rules are:

1. You can't read ahead in the lesson
2. You write it and then not look at it again until assigned. Set your timer for 20 minutes, 10 minutes for each post and just write (or type).

Next we will move on to the learning. (You aren't reading ahead are you? I thought so! Now get back and finish your blog posts.)

Why should you write a blog?

There are two reasons that you blog:

- 1) Search Engine Optimization
- 2) To reach **YOUR** people and let them see **YOU**. That's it.

SEO: Google has something they call "spiders" that crawl the web searching for content so that when your customer types in "Southern California Photographer" the photographer with the most applicable content comes up. You want that to be you. So how do you get to be number one? It takes consistent blog posts. Blogging can be hard work! But with a little knowledge and a dash of preparation, you can knock the blogging thing out of the park. Remember that even though you are a photographer, you don't have to write just about photography, and in fact it's better if you don't. You should write about all different topics. The following rules of blogging can help you choose which ones to write about. Reach your people and let them see you: It's all been written, so why should you write? **You are the only person with your unique view and experience.** Share this with your readers. This also helps your readers get to know who you are. If all you do is post picture after picture, your readers will grow bored and unattached. Sharing your personality online connects you to the readers and your readers to you. This connection is what will bring your readers back to you post after post.

Rules of blog writing

-Know your audience.

Your readers are not coming to your blog just to be nice. They want to come to your blog because you have something to offer them. If you want to be a good writer that draws your readers in, then you need to serve them. Write your articles in a way that you show complete empathy and compassion for them.

Once you know who you are writing to, knowing what to write and how to write become easy. So who is your target audience? They are the people that you want to attract to your site. If you are a newborn photographer, you want new moms and expectant moms to be reading your content. If you are a home decorator, you need to talk about all things home: recipes, decor, do it yourself projects, etc... If you are a senior photographer, you probably don't need to address what to take to the hospital when you are having a baby. That may seem obvious, but it's helpful to picture your ideal client when thinking of topics to address. If you are a senior photographer, talk about fashion, hair and makeup.

It is also very important to realize that when you find your target market and write just to them, you might lose some readers, but that is okay because in this area, you want quality over quantity.

If you really want to get to know your readers, there are some steps that you can take to understand them. (The list comes from the book *Everybody Writes*, the explanation comes from me).

Spend time with your readers or prospects. Interact as much as you can with your readers. Follow them on social media and look for patterns in what they are interested in. Understand their habitat. Try figuring out how your readers use your information in their day-to-day life. I struggled a lot with my senior photography business when I first began photographing only seniors. The products I was offering, the social media I was spending time on, everything just seemed out of sync with what my seniors were doing. It was frustrating. I decided that I needed to get out from behind my screen and talk to my seniors and ask them what they liked. Turns out teenage girls will tell you exactly what they like and what they don't like, you just have to ask. It was then that I realized that knowing exactly how your clients or readers are viewing and using your content or products changes your whole approach.

Be a natural skeptic. Ask "why?" Figure out why you are doing something the way you are doing it. Then ask why do they do it. "Ask why and then ask again. And keep asking until you understand the bigger picture of what people value and what they need from you." (from the book *Everyone Writes*)

Share stories, not just stats. Stories are always better. People remember stories more than stats. Use that to your advantage.

To really get a handle on this rule and to feel like you've mastered it, fill out worksheets 3 and 4. These will help you find your target audience and really understand them and how they work.

-Blog writing is different from social media writing. The posts should be well planned and well thought out. If you want to just check in and let your readers know what you're doing, try Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc... Those social media outlets are perfect for quick entries. When people read your blogs, they should leave feeling that they learned something new and their time was well spent.

-Be interesting! Give readers a reason to come to your blog to see what you have to say. If you are boring and don't write about things that matter to your target audience, then they probably won't find your blog in the first place and if they do, they probably won't come back.

- Be clear and concise. Don't say something in 20 words that can be said in 10. This is being respectful of the reader and their time.

-Use your unique writing voice, (Don't imitate other people's writing) This is a hard one because we read so much and there are really great writers out there. Here's the problem with stealing someone else's voice: you will never be as good as they are at being themselves. With all of the millions and millions of things that have been written, there is only one thing you can bring to the table that is different and unique and that is you and your voice. You have unique experiences and views that are worth reading. Don't get stifled by comparing yourself with other people. You just need to write to write. Not sure what your voice is? We'll talk about finding your voice next week.

-Be consistent. Have a schedule so that your readers know what to expect. It is a lot easier than you think to make a schedule. In week 4, we will help you create a schedule that will be easy to maintain and will keep your readers coming back.

-Always edit your post. My friend once told me that he thought I was very eloquent on Facebook and wondered how I did it. I laughed and told him that I read through what I write before I post. It makes all the difference and sure makes you look a lot smarter than those around you. So, with blogging, always edit your posts. It is a good idea to write your post, walk away for a while and then come back and read it later. This will help you from suffering from blogger's regret. That goes for everything you write, whether on Facebook or Instagram. You will save a lot of embarrassment if you will just read through your posts. If you struggle with grammar rules, find a friend that rocks at it. My two sisters serve as my (free!) editors. After I am done writing a big blog post, I read through it and send it to them. A second or third set of eyes helps you to see clearly and to write cleanly. In week 4, we will be learning how editors edit their writing.

-After you write and edit your post, read through and ask yourself, "would I enjoy reading this?" If you wouldn't, make some changes to your content! After you do your assignments this week, you will have confidence that what you are writing is, indeed, interesting to your readers. Although it is great to have an editor, it is so much better to get good at these things yourself. In Lesson 2, we will talk all about how to use proper grammar.

Now get to work at your assignments.

Assignments:

Worksheets 1 and 2- Freestyle first blogs

Worksheets 3 and 4- Who is your target audience and what are their interests?

Worksheet 3

Describe your target audience

What does your target audience like to do for fun?

Where does your target audience live and work?

Where does my target audience shop?

Worksheet 4

Where does my target audience spend their time online?

What do the social profiles of your target audience look like?

Where does my target audience get their information?

What do their friends do?
