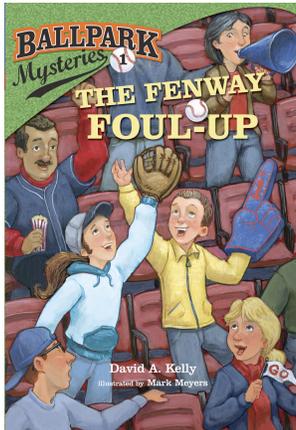


HIT A HOME RUN WITH WRITING!

Tips for young writers by David A. Kelly, author of BALLPARK MYSTERIES

www.ballparkmysteries.com



In the **BALLPARK MYSTERIES** series, Mike and Kate visit different big league ballparks and find mysteries to solve. At Fenway Park, they have to track down Big D's lucky bat. At Yankee Stadium, they have to investigate a ghost!

Writing about Kate and Mike and different baseball teams is a huge amount of fun...and a good amount of work. The funny thing is, when I was little, I never expected to be a writer. In fact, a lot of times when the teacher asked me to write about my weekend or my vacation, I had a hard time. I didn't know where to start, or what to write about. I also worried that I didn't have anything interesting to say.

But now I know everyone has something interesting to share. And the first step is to write something. Then, you can edit it or rewrite it to make it better. That means the first thing you write doesn't have to be the best. It's just a way to start.

Here are a few writing tips that I wish I had known when I was younger:

- **Start at the end or middle.** It can be hard to start a story. Sometimes I start writing at the end of the story. Or in the middle. Once I have something written, it's easy to come back and start the story. The point is not to get stuck because you don't know where to start.
- **Write about something you like or know.** It could be candy. Or basketball. Or books. Or movies. Or computer games. It doesn't really matter what you write about. Just write about something that's fun for you.
- **Draw.** You don't have to write to tell a story. If writing is hard, start by drawing some pictures. Try to tell a story with pictures. Write about what's happening in the pictures.
- **First, then, next, finally.** Once you know what you're writing about, keep things in order. Tell what happened first, then what happened next, and finally what happened at the end. For example, **First**, the frog jumped on the dog's back. **Then** the dog ran inside the house. **Next**, the mother chased the dog into a corner. **Finally**, the mother took the frog off the dog's back and put it outside in the forest.
- **Quirky characters.** Readers remember stories when they care about the characters. That's why it's a good idea to make sure your characters are interesting. Add details to describe the characters. Are they tall or short? Do they dislike pizza or candy? Give them a funny name or quirky hobby.
- **Write something short.** A famous writer once wrote a story that was only four lines long. Can you write a story in four words? What about twenty words? Or a hundred? You won't have to write that much, and you can still tell a story.
- **Re-write.** Good writers don't write things perfectly the first time. It usually takes many drafts to write a story, article, or book. That's why it's a great idea to ask someone (a teacher, a parent, a friend) to read what you've written. Have them tell you what they like about it. Ask them what you can do to make it better. Listening to feedback on your work is an important part of becoming a great writer!