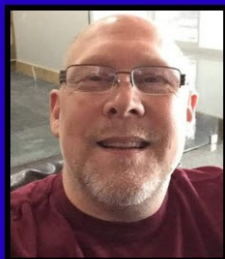


# Power Writing Tips For 2020: Free eBook



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## **Introduction**

Hello Everyone! The purpose of this e-book is simple: to help you accomplish more as a writer. I have worked in the field of technical software documentation for twenty years. So, I have acquired many valuable professional insights as a Technical Writer, to say the least, and will share these insights with you in this e-book. Today, writing is an integral part of many professional areas. So, with that said, it is important for you to optimize your time, energy, resources, and talents to produce quality documents that will benefit your reader base. The following book features writing and computer-related tips that I can honestly recommend and that I have used in some way during my Technical Writing career. I hope you can apply these tips toward your general writing experience.

Best Regards,

Keith Johnson, Senior Technical Writer and Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO), Hollywood, Florida, USA

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## **Power Writing Tip #1**

### **Accuracy**

Make sure your written summary is accurate. Only describe what the program or process actually entails. Do not exaggerate. For example, if you are writing about a screen that has five radio buttons where the user must choose one of the radio buttons, you can create an explanation like this. “The following screen contains five radio buttons. The initial display shows each of them as unselected.

However, to continue ahead in the survey, you must select one of them according to the text that is beside the button. First, read through each of the text entries and decide which text entry is most appropriate. Then, click inside the radio button next to that particular text. The online survey will then prompt you with the next feedback screen.”

## **Power Writing Tip #2**

### **Agility**

As you write, make sure you carry the interest of the reader forward. You don't want to leave them behind. You can truly call yourself an “agile” writer when you are able to carry the reader in both understanding and enthusiasm from the beginning to the end of your document. This is no easy task. Many times, readers get lost, confused, and even bored by what is presented. So, it is your job to make sure you use agreeable and reinforcing fonts, type-sizes, formats, divisions of text and content. If you have a lengthy presentation, perhaps you should use a Table of Contents. If you have a short presentation, perhaps you should write a summary at the beginning to show how the following pages relate and you arrive at your conclusion. Be creative and also try to identify your reader base before composing your document.

## Power Writing Tip #3

### Analytics



“Analytics” software is a tool you can utilize to analyze software performance and data that is handled by the software. Analytics is a big part of the computer software market. For whatever platform you use to acquire and aggregate data, try to find the best analytics tool for the best possible price if you cannot find a good open-source analytics tool for your particular scenario. Understanding your data is a key step in writing meaningful summaries and explanations and empowering others to understand what you have written.

## **Power Writing Tip #4**

### **Anonymity**

Computer software documentation, like many other kinds of writing, is not a biography. If you must include names (including yours), create a special section for that, if this is permissible. When you write about software functionality, you need to focus exclusively on what the program accomplishes and what needs to be done on the screen. The programmers who write the code and the technical writers who document the software may or may not be recognized due to their contractual terms with the software company. Perhaps they are employees. Perhaps they are third-party contractors. Perhaps the company only wants the end-user to know the company's name and nothing else. Make sure you check with authoritative sources about who can be mentioned and what permission you have as the writer to include sensitive product information.

## Power Writing Tip #5

### Anti-Virus Software



All writers must concern themselves, today, with online and offline computer security. In fact, the level at which computer hackers engage today is beyond comprehension. Their creativity at “hijacking” your computer’s data is unprecedented. With that said, it is good to have a solid and proven program that will protect your computer.

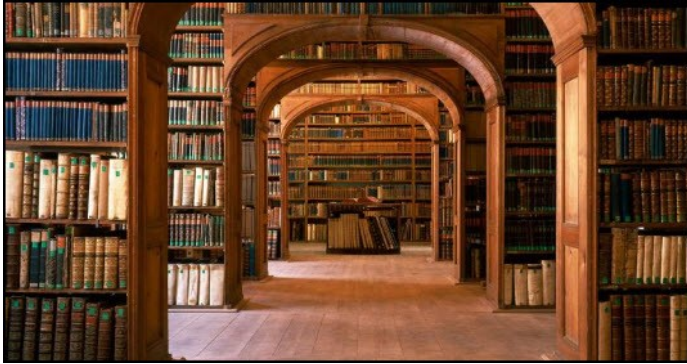
There are two programs which I use and that I recommend. Each has a free version and does a great job at detecting malware of all kinds.

1. iObit “Advanced System Care”
2. Microsoft “Security Essentials”



## Power Writing Tip #6

### Astuteness



There is nothing greater than writing documentation or written instructions where readers trust what you say. The word “astute” really means “attention to detail”. So, if you write with great attention to detail, the reader will experience, first-hand, that you are delivering valuable instructions and that you have deliberated as a writer to ensure that the final document is worthy of final publication and release. Readers can generally perceive your attention to detail after the very first chapter or section of your written work. So, work hard to establish your credibility early in the document. As a result, the reader will be more accepting of your instructions and observations and will more likely consider what you have to say, even if you offer some conjecture at some point.

## **Power Writing Tip #7**

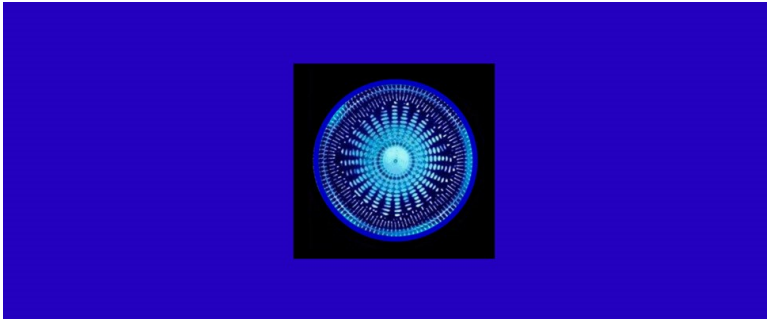
### **Attention to Detail**



Writers need to be able to read articles, blog posts, and other texts with a certain degree of insight and scrutiny. Remember that not everything you read can be used as an input to your document. So, you need to pay attention to details of each source file you are reading. Can this be used? If it can be used, how can it be used? These are important questions to ask yourself as you are gathering information that will contribute to the general content of your document.

## **Power Writing Tip #8**

### **Backup Work**



Make sure you back up your files on a regular basis. Today, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that your “one and only” word-processing file is safe and secure. After all, you don’t surf the web all that often and you are the only user of your computer. Right? Unfortunately, that is a dangerous conclusion. You should back up your most important files on a daily basis. If your company has a network drive, make copies to a secure folder there. If you are at home and have web access, make copies onto a secure location on the Cloud, like the Google Docs section of your Google Account. You can also back up your files onto a flash drive. What matters is that you don’t lose hard and long hours spent compiling and creating a document only for it to vanish due to some software or malware issue.

## Power Writing Tip #9

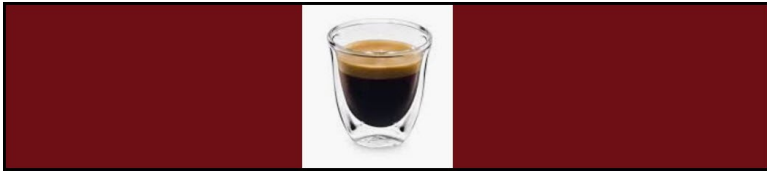
### Blogging

A black rectangular box with white text that reads "Best gig you ever went to?". The text is in a bold, serif font and is centered within the box.

The practice of "blogging" is a great way to share information and collaborate with others and thereby grow your knowledge base. In the modern-day blogosphere on the web, bloggers often collaborate by guest-posting on each other's blogs. Also, there are sometimes heated discussions about blog articles and comments from such posts. All of these are part of the phenomena of a growing and evolving collective knowledge base. Wikipedia is but just a small slice of this growing worldwide web based knowledge base. As a writer, you should blog at least part time to participate in this extraordinary opportunity. However, if you lack time or resources, at least subscribe to a few great blogs on the web. You will learn a lot and you will be able to infuse your writings. Some times with profound facts and insights that you have gained as a result of your exposure to the blogosphere on the web.

## Power Writing Tip #10

### Boldness



Have confidence in the product or program you are documenting. This way, you can be bold in your explanations. Even though most people initially think of “bold” as a thicker and higher DPI (dots per inch) expression of a font, the word “bold” really applies to the idea of “fortitude”. When you are delivering a written explanation about a process or procedure, convey your solid understanding through well-selected words and document formatting.

This will convey a message to your reader that “I understand that which I am presenting to you”. Readers definitely favor writers who convey self-confidence as they explain complex processes and procedures.

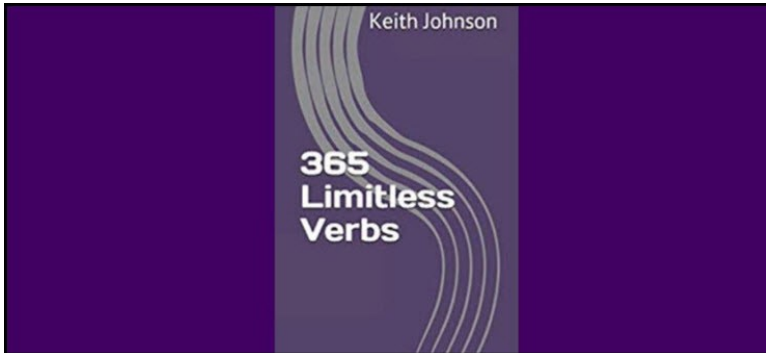
## **Power Writing Tip #11**

### **Bravery**

You can take small risks from time to time to show just how exceptional your program, process or product really is. Technical writers are usually labeled as “extremely boring people”. So I have heard! But, from time to time, technical writers can also “spice up” documentation and technical manuals by offering some conjecture. This is best done in introductory, notes, and summary sections. There is nothing wrong with drawing on years of personal experience with a program to offer an insight or slight piece of advice to add to the credibility and readability of a documentation manual. If you are student writer or freelance writer, you can also offer bits of text that diverge from your usual approach. So, keep your theme and direction intact, for example, in the case of a fiction story or a thesis on a specific topic or issue. However, go ahead and be “brave” and offer tiny nuggets of information that complement your text and offer the reader a refresher as he or she takes on your document. Maybe your professor will give you an A for such bravery!

## Power Writing Tip #12

### Brevity



Write *to the point* when it comes to difficult concepts, heavy data, routines, storylines, plots, lessons, instructions, algorithms, etc. Just remember the common acronym KISS: keep is super simple.

## Power Writing Tip #13

### Brightness



There is nothing greater than reading documentation composed by a writer with a positive outlook on life. Many times, the reader can get discouraged, especially when he or she is reading a technical document about how to use a specific software program or complete a specific set of instructions at the workplace. Like I have mentioned previously, it is actually favorable to interject positive ideas and thoughts from time to time to lift the spirits of the reader. I have seen, for example, quotations taken from famous technologists or theorists like Einstein. Ultimately, the writer empathizes with the reader and his or her desire to master the material at hand.



## Power Writing Tip #14

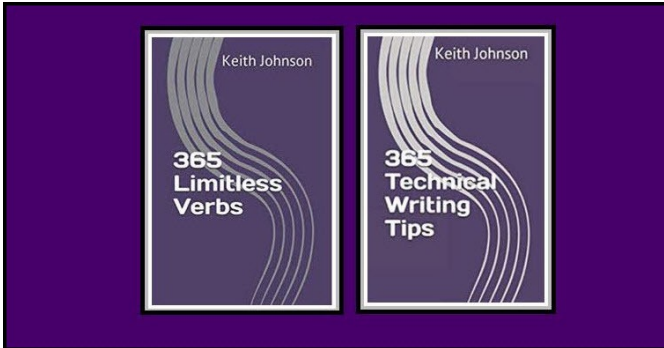
### Charity



Remember that some readers are afraid of learning and change. Be charitable in your write-ups and use examples. When I was teaching technical students in Brazil (1992-1996), the most challenging class for them was Visual Basic. Not only were they Brazilian and so spoke Portuguese as their natural dialect. They also had to master basic written English and absorb some heavy technical terms and ideas that were sometimes hard to translate back to their native language. So, this was an opportunity for me as their instructor to practice charity. I did my very best to listen to them and help them truly grasp the meaning of diverse technical terms that had to be utilized to program in Visual Basic for Windows. The good news is that the class went very well and all students learned a lot.

## Power Writing Tip #15

### Clarity



Regardless of your college/university degree (English, Chemistry, Engineering, etc.) use a thesaurus to provide words with maximum clarity. It is easy for writers to offer conjecture and sometimes great ideas to enhance and empower text that is being used to deliver instructions and explanations. At the same time, the same word may need to be reused to continue further explanations about a similar idea. To avoid redundancy, call upon similar words with nearly the same meaning. Use a good thesaurus to accomplish this task. By doing so, you will be offering your readers a break, visually, yet they will continue to progress through your text by taking advantage of your well-selected synonyms, or even antonyms, for that matter.

## **Power Writing Tip #16**

### **Cloud-Computing**

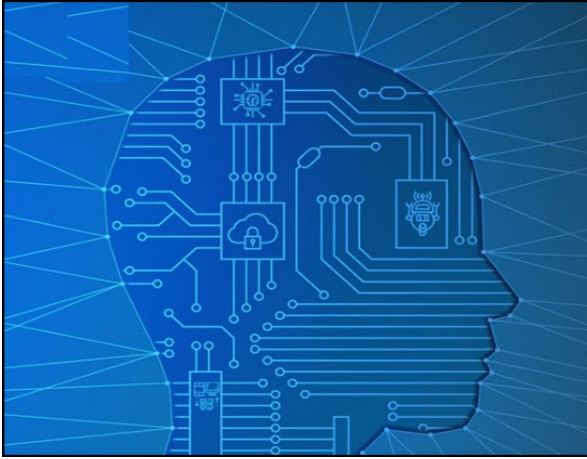
The "cloud" refers to any place on the Internet, but usually where you can store documents or access applications, in the remote sense. The cloud is a way of referring, without specific details, to a virtual location of a file, data, app, or web-service that is not on your immediate and local machine. Rather, its location is on a server somewhere in the world, and through your Internet access, you can obtain such data, information, or services from this remote machine. As a writer, you should familiarize yourself with the "cloud" because this is a new phenomenon that is growing and emerging. Many students today, for example, just use their laptop computers to go online onto the Internet. They access all applications and data through "the cloud". So, their papers and research actually reside on a machine other than their immediate laptop. This holds true for many working professionals (including writers) as well.

Note: Google Drive is on the Google Cloud.

Note: My book "[Google Productivity Guide](#)" will tell you more about both Google Drive and the Google Cloud.

## Power Writing Tip #17

### Configuration



“Configuration” is a type of user guide where, after software is installed, you help the end-user "set-up" the program for optimal use and benefit. Usually, the application needs to be set-up within the environment of an operating-system if set-up on a local system. Otherwise, the software needs to be correctly configured so that it can run over the Internet. Configuration is a great and significant area of the field of Computer Operations. All software vendors today depend greatly upon these professionals to ensure their programs are accessible and working. As a writer, you should study basic facts about how to compose a configuration guide, so that if you must deal with particular software, you can address its installation and setup as well as its basic functionality.

## **Power Writing Tip #18**

### **Consistency**



The least you can do for your reader is use the same approach in your document. Consistency means readability. As a Technical Writer, I try to use the Verdana or Calibri font as much as possible. Microsoft, for many years, employs Verdana and Calibri as its foremost font choices. Regarding document layout, choose a successful technique that has already been proven with respect to the kind of document you are creating. There are different templates that can be used for technical writing, business writing, fiction writing, and academic writing, to name a few. When you have a consistent document from start to finish, the reader will enjoy reading this document more than if you had used no structured formatting, design, font choice, etc. Remember that you always want to do the most to facilitate the reading experience of your reader.

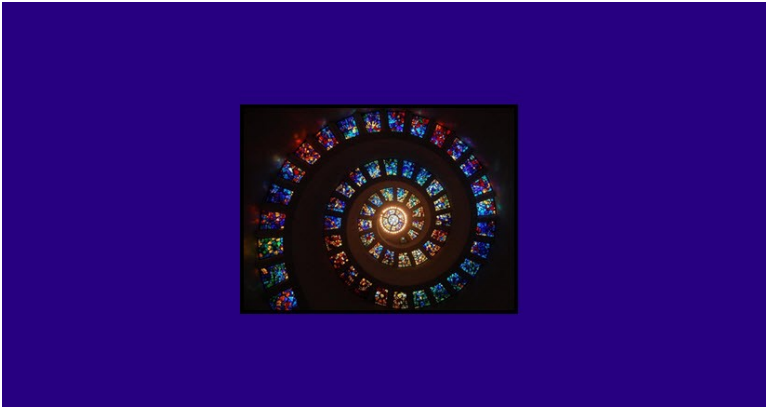
## **Power Writing Tip #19**

### **Content Management**

A Content Management System (CMS) is used to store, revise, and publish information. Regardless of the kind of writing you do, blogging is always a great way to gain exposure and share your talents and insights with others over the web. Today, WordPress is considered to be the easiest and potentially the most popular CMS on the web. There are two ways you can work with WordPress. At [wordpress.com](https://wordpress.com) you can create a blog that is hosted by WordPress itself. So, you don't have to worry about hosting details in any way. On the other hand, if you want only the CMS software and already know about hosting, you can visit [wordpress.org](https://wordpress.org) and download the CMS software from that site. Then, you can install and customize the software according to your individual needs and applications. Whether you are a fiction writer, technical writer, or poet, WordPress is a fantastic Content Management System that will help you to express yourself and make your work visible to web page visitors on the Internet. A blog is a direct communication between you as a writer and other as a reader. The blog of today has practically replaced the editorial newspaper that was still popular only a decade ago.

## Power Writing Tip #20

### Creativity



Technical documentation and most kinds of business documents do not need to be creative. These documents are primarily concerned with content and accurate presentation. However, with moderation, you can add some graphics to enhance readability. Graphics always offer the reader a chance to verify that he or she understands the concepts at hand and where the document is going in terms, factually and conclusively. Graphics are a way to be creative without affecting the overall consistency of a document's tone and seriousness, if it is an important document.

**Power Writing Tip #21:**

**Be decisive as you think and write.**





**Power Writing Tip #22:**

**Deliberate before you write.**



**Power Writing Tip #23:**

**Descriptiveness helps the reader greatly.**



**Power Writing Tip #24:**

**Determination will empower you to completion.**



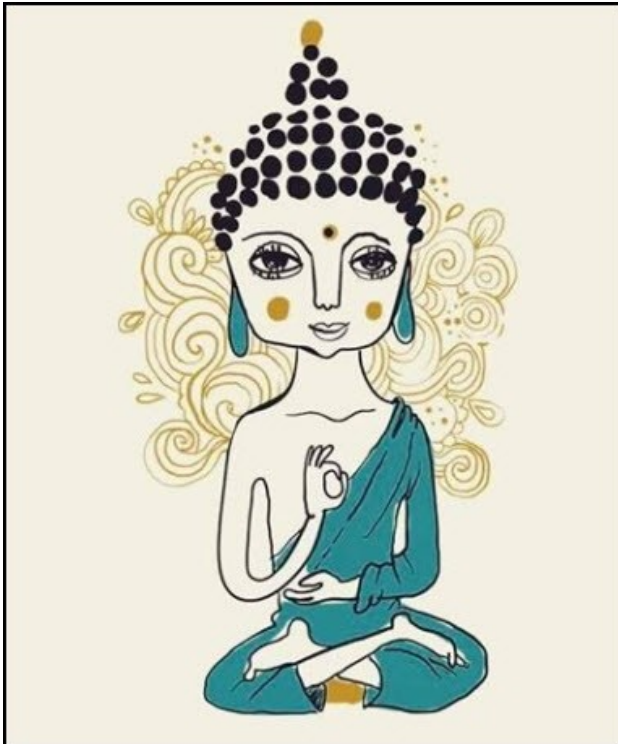
**Power Writing Tip #25:**

**I personally recommend the Webster Dictionary.**



**Power Writing Tip #26:**

**Explain as if you are saying it for the first time.**



**Power Writing Tip #27:**

**For MS-Word to PDF converts, include bookmarks.**



Power Writing Tip #28:

Encourage readers to read the entire document.



**Power Writing Tip #29:**

**Educate the reader, do not just explain randomly.**





**Power Writing Tip #30:**

**Be effective through careful word choices.**



**Power Writing Tip #31:**

**Encourage your reader; they need your confidence.**



**Power Writing Tip #32:**

**The World Wide Web is today's encyclopedia.**



**Power Writing Tip #33:**

**Energize your explanations with examples.**



## Bibliography and References



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[kcjwriter@hotmail.com](mailto:kcjwriter@hotmail.com)

## **Thank You**

Thanks for taking the time to read this book! I hope it comes in handy the next time you sit down to write.

Best Regards,

Keith Johnson, Senior Technical Writer and Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO), Hollywood, Florida, USA

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