

By the Newbery Honor author of ELLA ENCHANTED

GAIL CARSON LEVINE

♦ W R I T I N G ♦

Magic*



CREATING STORIES THAT FLY

CHAPTER 1



A Running Start

THIS IS A BOOK about writing fiction. But it should help you write anything: e-mails, essays, greeting cards, love letters, skywriting.

Pick one of the options below and use it as the beginning of a story. You can revise the sentences a little or a lot to make them work better for you. Feel free to change the names and to turn boys into girls or vice versa. Write for at least twenty minutes.

Oh, and have fun!

- ♦ I have one green eye and one brown eye. The green eye sees truth, but the brown eye sees much, much more.
- ♦ The ghost was eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- ♦ “Be nice,” my father said. “After all, he’s your brother.”
- ♦ I am the most famous twelve-year-old in the United States.

- ♦ Jason had never felt so foolish before, and he hoped he'd never feel so foolish again.
- ♦ If somebody didn't do something soon, they were going to have a catastrophe on their hands.
- ♦ Alison was the runt of the family, born small and ill-favored, and by the time she was thirteen, she was still small and ill-favored.
- ♦ It was a witchy house: the low-slung roof; that quiet gray paint; those squinting, shuttered windows; and the empty porch rocker that rocked, rocked, rocked day and night.
- ♦ The first time I saw Stephen, he painted a hex sign on my right arm, and I couldn't move my fingers for three hours.
- ♦ Ms. Fleming's wig had gone missing.

Okay, you've done it. Congratulations! If you haven't finished your story, save it so you can work more on it later. If you have finished, also save it.

At this point if you want to go back and use one of the other beginnings to write another story, please help yourself. Two stories are better than one, and three are better than two. If you like, you can write ten stories, or double up and write twenty!

Now here are a few rules for this book and for writing:

1. The best way to write better is to write more.
2. The best way to write better is to write more.
3. The best way to write better is to write more.
4. The best way to write more is to write whenever you have five minutes and wherever you find a chair and a pen and paper or your computer.
5. Read! Most likely you don't need this rule. If you enjoy writing, you probably enjoy reading. The payoff for this pleasure is that reading books shows you how to write them.
6. Reread! There's nothing wrong with reading a book you love over and over. When you do, the words get inside you, become part of you, in a way that words in a book you've read only once can't.
7. Save everything you write, even if you don't like it, even if you hate it. Save it for a minimum of fifteen years. I'm serious. At that time, if you want to, you can throw it out, but even then don't discard your writing lightly.

That last rule needs explaining. I used to think, long ago, that when I grew up, I'd remember what it felt like to be a

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In *WRITING MAGIC*, Newbery Honor author Gail Carson Levine shares her secrets of great writing. She shows how you, too, can get terrific ideas for stories, invent great beginnings and endings, write sparkling dialogue, develop memorable characters—and much, much more. She advises you about what to do when you feel stuck—and how to use helpful criticism. Best of all, she offers writing exercises that will set your imagination on fire.

With humor, honesty, and wisdom, Gail Carson Levine shows you that you, too, can make magic with your writing.

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