

Book Review: 50 Writing Tools by Roy Peter Clark

Name:

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The writing process cannot be considered as an easy task, even for experienced authors of best-selling books and people for whom writing is the main way of earning money. Among existing lists of writing problems and their solutions, Roy Peter Clark's book *50 Writing Tools* remains an irreplaceable assistant in the intricate maze of composing words and sentences as coherent content. The best way to present this book before a formal and quick review is as follows: *50 Writing Tools* is the first step under the careful guidance of a parent who teaches how to find meaning in the writing process and in the text itself.

The most remarkable fact about *50 Writing Tools* is that Roy Peter Clark has started his book as a blog, and initially, the pieces of advice were less than indicated in the title. In the distant 2004, Steve Buttry interviewed Roy Peter Clark about when he had created his first 20 tools; at that moment, he had only 30 tools and "hoped to reach 50 within the next year" (para. 3). Apart from that, many websites and blogs provide a list of writing tips as a constant variable without an attempt to alter the presented content. In its turn, *50 Writing Tools* is a life of thirty years; it is a journey in which Roy Peter Clark interviewed and consulted with a variety of writers, starting from children and ending with Pulitzer Prize laureates ([BookTV Bus], 2006). As a result of his tireless work, the author collected and adapted fifty tools in order to help everyone in need to weave a writing masterpiece.

The content of the book can be divided into four categories to help people choose the most necessary of them in the struggling hours of writing fictional or non-fictional texts. The first one is the beginning, and it extends to ten chapters from "Begin sentences with subjects and verbs" to "Cut big, then small." The second category (includes the next thirteen chapters) is intended for people whose texts should be creative and interesting. It is for young writers who

want to engage their readers, and it is for students who do not want to make their technical papers boring and difficult to understand. The third category with sixteen chapters is aimed at advising on how to end and strengthen an already-written text. The remaining eleven chapters form the fourth category, the one that will be helpful for new writing assignments or the desire to create a new story. They are designed to teach writers how to form useful writing habits and to understand that even procrastination can be effective practice.

One can use *50 Writing Tools* as a desk book, a pocketbook, or a guidebook to understand difficult writing issues. Nevertheless, one of the useful ways to use *50 Writing Tools* is to introduce it to students if a reader is a professor or to turn it into an exercise tool if a reader is determined to improve his or her writing skills. Such an approach to using this book can be explained by the fact that Roy Peter Clark not only collected useful information under the guise of short essays, but also composed workshops after each chapter. For instance, a reader can practice eliminating an excessive passive tense in texts, create a new list of inspirational authors (Roy Peter Clark used example passages from novels and poems), and develop creative skills through short story exercises.

References

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