



What Every Dedicated Writer Must Do

by Zee Ahmad (Two Marshmallows)

Label and date your electronic files. Save them in a single primary location. Back up these files in two or more locations.

This is not optional.

- Create a folder on your computer titled 'Writing', or something similar. No matter what you write, it goes into that folder. Create subfolders as necessary, e.g., Poetry, Ideas, Stories, and any individual projects
- Immediately label new documents with a name and date. Not yet having a title is no excuse. You can label it with the date and what it is for now, e.g., Short Story 08 August 2023. As soon as you come up with a title, use it, e.g., The Stolen Cookies 08 August 2023
- When you next work on this file, save and rename it with the current date, e.g., The Stolen Cookies 09 August 2023.
- Always use the name of the month. 09/08 will mean the ninth of August in some places, and the eighth of September in others
- If you are using numbers lower than ten, place a zero in front of them for easy organising
- **If you send your work to another person, such as an editor or publisher, you must include your name as well, e.g., The Stolen Cookies by Mira Spirulina 11 Aug 2023. A document titled 'My story version 3 revised (1)(2)' will be seen as disrespectful and lazy at best, or deleted unread at worst**
- Store your documents in two or more of the following locations: your email, a cloud storage service, at least one external hard drive, a thumb or USB drive, or print out a paper copy.

Remember that the cloud is just someone else's hard drive. If the company decides to close down or they delete your account, you'll be in trouble if you don't have your own copies

- When you are typing, press 'ctrl s' as often as possible to save the document. Computers can and do crash while you're working
- **Back up all your computer files at least once a month.** Add this task to your calendar and do it.

All the writing advice in the world won't mean anything if you can't find or don't have access to your work. Label your work properly and save several copies in different locations.