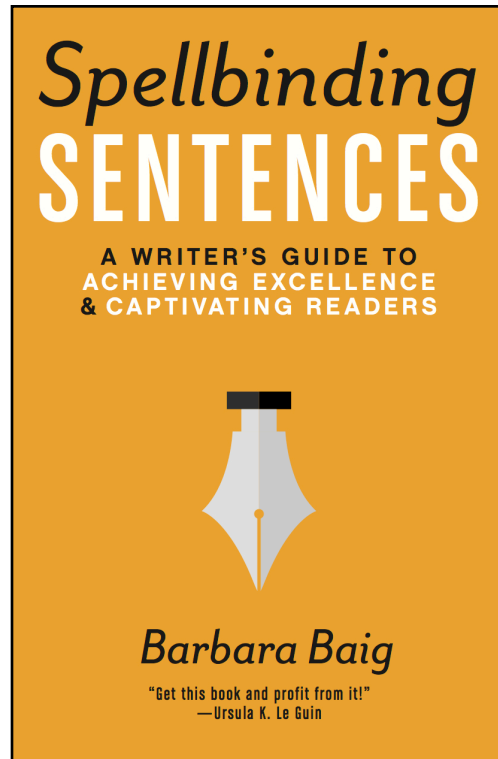


BARBARA BAIG MEDIA KIT CONTENTS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPELLBINDING SENTENCES: A WRITER'S GUIDE TO ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE AND CAPTIVATING READERS, by Barbara Baig

Writer's Digest Books, July 10, 2015

Contact: cris.freese@fwcommunity.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-59963-915-4; ISBN-10: 1-59963-915-7

304 pages; \$19.99

Spellbinding Sentences is the first writing how-to book to use the principles of expertise development discussed in such bestsellers as *Outliers*, *Talent is Overrated*, and *The Talent Code*. Using the proven principles of deliberate practice and imitation, the book gives aspiring writers a program that trains their minds to choose effective words and put them together in clear and powerful sentences.

Spellbinding Sentences has been endorsed by Ursula K. Le Guin, Jane Brox, Edward Dolnick (*New York Times* best-selling author of *The Rescue Artist*), prize-winning British novelist Emma Darwin, Mark Bauerlein (author of *The Dumbest Generation*), and others.

Maine writer Barbara Baig developed her innovative approach during a thirty-year career as a writing teacher, which includes two decades as the Writing Instructor at Harvard Divinity School. She now teaches in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Lesley University and online at www.WhereWritersLearn.com. She has written about her approach in *The Writer* magazine, for several Writer's Digest publications, at many websites for writers, including *Writer Beware*, and in her first book for Writer's Digest, *How To Be a Writer: Building Your Creative Skills Through Practice and Play* (2010).

More information about Barbara and her work can be found at her websites: www.BarbaraBaig.com and www.WhereWritersLearn.com.

Reviews and Endorsements

Spellbinding Sentences: A Writer's Guide to Achieving Excellence and Captivating Readers

I hope young writers find this book and profit from it! I give it the Vulcan salute – “Live long and prosper!”

– Ursula K. Le Guin

Barbara Baig's *Spellbinding Sentences* is a tribute to the pleasure and vitality of the English language. Never prescriptive and always clear, this enlightening book is sure to help all those wishing to add grace and strength to their writing.

– Jane Brox, award-winning author of *Brilliant: The Evolution of Artificial Light*, one of *TIME* magazine's top ten nonfiction books of 2010

Spellbinding Sentences is sophisticated and down-to-earth at the same time. Barbara Baig has distilled decades of experience into this wise book.

– Edward Dolnick, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Rescue Artist: A True Story of Art, Thieves, and the Hunt for a Missing Masterpiece* and *The Rush: America's Fevered Quest for Fortune, 1848-1853*

Spellbinding Sentences is a wonderfully clear, thoughtful and practical guide for any writer who wants to master the basic unit of our craft: the sentence. Starting with ways of flexing your writerly muscles, stocking your word-hoard and regaining the confidence that you may have lost, Barbara Baig moves on to explain the building-blocks of our language and the different ways they can be fitted together to create the effects that you want. This book will help any writer to move well beyond mere correctness, towards writing which is not just clear and accurate in meaning, but full of style and music as well.

--Emma Darwin, prizewinning UK author of *The Mathematics of Love* and *A Secret Alchemy*

Barbara Baig's exposition of 'sentence craft' is a wonderful and useful treatment for writers young and old, fiction and nonfiction, practical and personal. Here teachers and students will find a handy toolkit of developing the 'word mind,' whose achievement is the beginning of distinctive, effective prose.

– Mark Bauerlein, professor of English, Emory University, former director of Research and Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts, and author of the award-winning *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*

With the exception of the fortunate few, most writers don't just “happen.” They must study their craft. With that in mind, when it comes to creating compelling prose, Barbara Baig's *Spellbinding Sentences* is a great place to start.

– Nancy Lamb, author of *The Art and Craft of Storytelling* and *The Writer's Guide to Crafting Stories for Children*

Barbara Baig's course on sentences is one I return to often when I want to practice my craft. She has collected it now in this book: a graded course from words to sentences, with an emphasis on hands-on practice and reflection, both of which lead to true growth. Barbara knows that mastery comes from practice, and that practice yields power—a message sorely neglected in the writing world today. I recommend her *Spellbinding Sentences* to beginning and experienced writers alike.

—Janet Pcorobba, Assistant Director, MFA Program in Creative Writing, Lesley University

Writing a book, or a story, or even a legal brief, is a lot like building a house. The story must be built sentence by sentence, just as a house comes together brick by brick. Barbara Baig's new book is a master course in the most fundamental of a writer's skills – how to build sentences that readers want to read. She goes well beyond the basics, teaching elegance and grace as much as grammar, and offering the exercises that are essential to true mastery of the craft. Barbara Baig loves writing, and it shows.

—Stewart Baker, former Assistant Secretary for Policy, Department of Homeland Security, and author of the award-winning book, *Skating on Stilts: Why We Aren't Stopping Tomorrow's Terrorism* (www.skatingonstilts.com)

I took Barbara Baig's course "The Art of the English Sentence" while I was enrolled in Lesley University's MFA in Creative Writing program. By that time I had been writing for publication for years with some success, but knew that my style of writing needed improving. What I didn't know was how to make that improvement. Through Barbara's lessons and assignments I gained a deeper understanding of the power of words. I am delighted that those lessons are now available in a book. Learning to write, like learning to build, begins with understanding the fundamentals. Master them and you can create anything from a wall to a soaring cathedral. *Spellbinding Sentences* will take you far on your journey to mastery.

—Laurie A. Jacobs, author of *Silly, Frilly, Grandma Tilly*, winner of the Gelett Burgess Children's Book Award

Barbara Baig has done something that needed to be done: break down the craft of writing into understandable and digestible sub-skills that can be mastered one step at a time. Working with her book is like hiring a great tennis coach, one who guides you to ever-better performance and who evinces equal passion for the game, for technique, and for the process of mastery itself. Whatever you wish to write—fiction, non-fiction, professional reports, or even memos—and whether you are building from scratch or wish to rebuild your foundations, this book can help you improve. It's a book, not just to read, as Ms. Baig emphasizes, but to *do*. And, if you do, you will no doubt be rewarded.

—Philip Holland, writer and principal, The Center for Leading Organizations, Boston, MA

How To Be a Writer: Building Your Creative Skills Through Practice and Play

If you are a writer in search of your unique voice, creative authority, and natural way with words, make *How To Be a Writer* the first book you read. Aspiring communicators in any genre will benefit from Barbara's sound, timeless advice on the importance of skill-building, learning by doing, and making the most of the frustration certain to arise along the way. You'll walk away with a more complete understanding of how successful writing happens and how you can tap into your own innate writing ability.

– Christina Katz, Author of *Get Known Before the Book Deal* and *Writer Mama*

Barbara Baig's approach to writing as 'practice and play' makes good sense—and yet we've never heard it before. In strong, clear, humorous prose, Barbara teaches writers skills they can use right away to start making the writing process their own.

–Janet Pocerobba, Assistant Professor and Coordinator, Lesley University
MFA Program in Creative Writing

Barbara Baig's passion for teaching writing infuses every lesson she offers. She demystifies the most complex writing techniques and makes them accessible to all writers.

–Lisa Robinson, M.D., Child Psychiatrist in private practice, Instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School

Barbara is a wonderful and inspiring writing teacher, offering clear and helpful suggestions and enthusiastic support!

–Liz Walker, M.Div., host of *Better Living* on WCVB Television and former CBS4 (WBZ-TV, Boston) news anchor

I have been writing stories for children for many years and wrote many memoranda and briefs during my career as an attorney, but I still found the course I took from Barbara invaluable to my growth as a writer. Any guide to writing that Barbara authors will be a welcome and well thumbed addition to my bookshelf.

–Laurie A. Jacobs, author, *A Box of Candles*, winner of the 2005 National Jewish Book Award for Family Literature

Barbara Baig is that rare writing teacher who has a great deal to offer experienced writers as well as those new to the craft. She inspires students and gives them the tools to hone their craft—no matter what level they begin on.

–Karen Rafinski, award-winning medical and science journalist

For anyone who worries that writers are born, not made, nothing is more terrifying than a blank page waiting to be filled. Barbara Baig takes the mystery out of the process and shows that, with a little practice and an open mind, good writing can come to anyone.

–Jumana Farouky, former student, now Associate Editor, TIME magazine

Any writer, beginner or experienced, will benefit from reading Barbara Baig's book. She shows us how to develop the skills we need as writers and, best of all, she removes the pressure to produce a finished piece before we are ready. Instead, she invites us to enjoy

the freedom of practicing writing in our own time and at our own pace, and she sets out in clear, convincing words how the practice of writing can free up the writer within all of us.

– Dorothy Stephens, author of *Kwa Heri Means Good-Bye: Memories of Kenya, 1957-59*

Get ready to take your writing ideas across the finish line by learning the skills and strategies that will give you confidence -- and get you practicing.

– Sage Cohen, author of *Writing the Life Poetic* and *The Productive Writer*

Barbara Baig Bio

Barbara Baig is the creator of *The Mastery Path for Writers*, a new approach to learning to write that focuses on achieving excellence through deliberate practice.

This approach is grounded in the findings of research scientists in the field of expertise studies, especially Professor K. Anders Ericsson (featured in the best-sellers *Talent is Overrated* and *Outliers*). These scientists have shown that people who become great in a particular field are not naturally gifted. Instead, they have developed their skills through years of focused, intentional practice. Although not every aspiring writer can become great, we can all take our skills to higher levels using the same approach as experts in other fields, such as professional athletes and musicians. All we need to do is practice.

Barbara is an expert writing teacher and coach, having honed her skills over thirty years of teaching undergraduate and graduate students, working adults, and aspiring creative writers. She spent two decades as the Writing Instructor at Harvard Divinity School and now teaches in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA.

Barbara's passion for teaching shows itself in her two books: *How To Be a Writer: Building Your Creative Skills Through Practice and Play* (2010) and *Spellbinding Sentences: How to Achieve Excellence and Captivate Your Readers* (2015), both from *Writer's Digest Books*, as well as in her many articles on writing. She offers free writing lessons at www.WhereWritersLearn.com.

Article

Maine Writer Teaches the Power of Words

Barbara Baig believes everyone can master the power of words.

A writer and a teacher of writing for over thirty years, Baig has taught undergraduates, graduate students, working adults, and aspiring creative writers. She founded the Writing Workshops at Harvard Divinity School and conducted them for two decades. Now she has developed a new approach to helping writers develop their skills. She calls it The Mastery Path for Writers and offers free writing lessons at www.WhereWritersLearn.com.

“For too long,” she says, “the teaching of writing has focused on the writer’s self, rather than the writer’s skills. As a result, people think that all you have to do to become a good writer is ‘express yourself.’ But expert writing – whether it’s a novel or a business report – is always the result of trained skills. Unfortunately, these days few people have the opportunity to learn those skills.”

Baig set out to remedy that situation, first in her 2010 book, *How To Be a Writer*, and now in her new book, *Spellbinding Sentences: A Writer’s Guide to Achieving Excellence and Captivating Readers* (Writer’s Digest Books, July, 2015).

Spellbinding Sentences has been endorsed by many top writers, including Ursula K. Le Guin, Jane Brox, and Edward Dolnick.

“It’s not a book of rules or quick tips,” Baig said. “It’s a program of skills development, based on the findings of scientists in the field of expertise studies. They have shown that certain people become great at a particular activity, not because they were born with special talent, but because they devoted themselves to a kind of intense, focused practice known as ‘deliberate practice.’”

Spellbinding Sentences, she says, is the first writing how-to book to use the deliberate practice approach to show people how to improve their writing skills.

Baig based the book on a popular course, The Art of the English Sentence, which she has taught for many years in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Lesley University. But while the book’s main audience is aspiring creative writers, anyone who needs or wants to write can benefit from it – and Baig hopes they will.

“Every year studies show that more people are graduating from college without the writing skills they must have to succeed in white-collar jobs,” she says. “We’re producing generations of young people who can’t communicate because they simply don’t have the skills they need.”

She makes it clear that acquiring those skills demands hard work. “If you want to hit a baseball like Big Papi (David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox),” she says, “then you have to put in years of practice to develop your skills. The same thing is true with writing.”

The work is worth it, she insists. “Words have power. And if you understand how they work, if you learn to arrange them into sentences that grab and keep a reader’s attention, then you’ve mastered that power. Whether you want to write a best-selling novel, or get a promotion at work, mastering the power of words will get you there.”

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WORD COUNT: 506

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