

How to Find Time to Write When You Have 11 Children

 blog.leeandlow.com/2014/07/24/how-to-find-time-to-write-when-you-have-11-children/

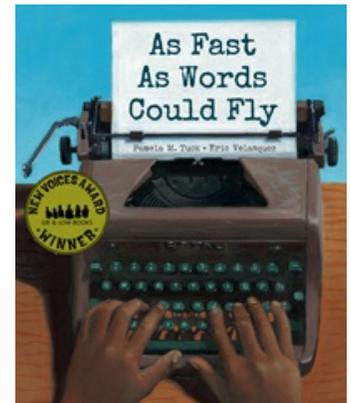
Pamela M. Tuck is the author of [As Fast As Words Could Fly](#), winner of our [New Voices Award](#) and named to the International Reading Association's Teacher's Choices list. Tuck lives in Boyerstown, Pennsylvania with her husband and their 11 children. In this post, we asked her to share advice on how to find time to write.



One common question people ask me is, “How do you find time to write?” I simply answer, “I don’t *find* time, I *steal* it, and play catch-up later.” In other words, I MAKE time.

Growing up as an only child, writing served as a source of entertainment for me. I found that expressing my inner thoughts on paper became therapeutic and helped me cope with stressful situations. So, as a mother of 11 children, writing, quite naturally, became a safe haven.

I don’t have a daily writing routine like some writers: waking up at 5 am, going for their morning run, eating a cup of yogurt topped with homemade granola, then sitting at their desk, with the picturesque mountainous view, and writing several pages of their next best-selling novel for 5 hours. Instead, my day begins with waking 11 excessively sleepy children, facing mountainous heaps of laundry, in between cleaning, cooking, homeschooling, and potty training. You get the point. So here’s how I steal prioritize my time for writing.



When I homeschooled my children, I incorporated timed journal writing assignments for everyone (including me). I had my children think of random words, and then I’d write the words on cut pieces of paper, fold them, and place them in a basket. We all picked one word from the basket. I set the timer for either three or five minutes, and we wrote anything we wanted about the word we picked. Some words prompted poetry, non-fiction pieces, nonsense pieces, and creative story starters that could be developed into longer works. That’s just one way I kept my inner writing flame lit.

I usually find inspiration to write from reading articles, seeing interesting photos, hearing conversations, or from life experiences. If I stumble across a story idea, I simply allot time, either during the day or in the evening, to write. These one or two hour time allotments serve as refreshing rewards during my busy days. Fortunately for me, my husband encourages my writing projects and he, along with my children, comply with my writing antics of having complete silence and/or isolation while I write. I use the time allotments to do research, if necessary, and to read other books similar to the type of story I’m writing. My family serves as a huge inspiration for my writing. They are my “sounding boards” as I bounce ideas around, my audience, as I piece those ideas together, and my cheerleaders when those ideas find a home.

So, going from one end of the spectrum (as an only child, with plenty of quiet time for writing) to the other

(as a mother of a large family, with hardly any quiet time at all), I would like to share a little piece of advice that was given to me by my husband. After attending my first writing conference with the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators in June 2007, and hearing all the wonderful writing regimens of different authors, I thought my lifestyle would hinder my dream of becoming an author. My husband told me, "You are a writer. You don't have to write on someone else's schedule. Write on your OWN schedule."

"You are a writer.
You don't have to
write on someone else's
schedule. Write on your
OWN schedule."

My husband found out about Lee & Low Books offering a [New Voices Award](#) and encouraged me to write my dad's story of desegregating the public school system in 1960s Greenville, NC. My dad's experiences of determination and courage inspired me to take my husband's advice. I submitted my story to Lee & Low Books in September 2007. In December 2007, I received a call announcing me as the winner of the 2007 New Voices Award! Now, my dad's *family* story has transformed into a picture book, [As Fast As Words Could Fly](#), that can be shared with many families across generations. So, regardless of your lifestyle, your limitations, your oppositions...grab those ideas that are close to your heart, and write the story that only YOU can write. Unleash your dreams, and let them fly!

More information:

The **New Voices Award** is given each year to an unpublished author of color for a picture book manuscript. Find more information on how to submit [here](#).

