



The A-Z of writing

K-I

From K to I. Next in the series revisiting John Simmons' book *The Invisible Grail*. This week it's all about memory and imagination to create something new. Follow the weekly series for a workout in writing agility that will influence and improve your words for work. Next week – L to m, published on Friday 26 June.

Kilimanjaro, Kyoto, K-2, K-9. Words that release different memories, mainly from childhood. Words that I had not been conscious of in recent times until I forced myself this morning to answer my own challenge: think of some words beginning with K. I could go on from there to explore the memories invoked by one of those words and it would become the starting point for a story.

Our imaginations are like sponges waiting for a little moisture to soften them into active use. Memory provides the moisture. It's hard to think of any imaginative writing that has not been sparked into being by memory. So my advice is simple for anyone wishing to practise writing skills. Follow the advice of Nabokov's title: *Speak Memory*. Memory does not recognise writer's block, it flows, and your words can flow with it. "Remember me!" speaks the ghost of Hamlet's father – meaning not just 'use your memory to think of me' but reassemble me into living form. It's a double meaning that I have remembered every time I use that word since I first heard that explanation of 're-member'. Our memories become real again, fleshed out, by the exercise of imagination. It was also used to talk about the opening of Shakespeare's Globe, but could equally and poignantly apply to any theatre at the moment wistfully longing to perform again before a live audience.

Take a childhood photograph and put yourself back into the time of that photograph. Were you the same person then? What were you feeling and thinking? Do we remember what really happened or are we just remembering what we think happened? Who knows? Do a piece of automatic writing (see [C-d](#), writing without stopping, without editing) and make your first words 'I remember'. Remembering the past becomes a means of inventing the present and the future, and the only truth that matters is what seems to you to be true. Believe that you remember and you will.

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With a new chapter released weekly, look out for the next in the series, L-m, arriving with you on Friday 26 June. Follow us on [Linked In](#) or via our [Insights page](#) to find your weekly dose of writing inspiration.

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