



The A-Z of writing

T-u

From T to u. This week, an exercise to find your own voice and boost your confidence in the way you use words. Next in the series revisiting John Simmons' book *The Invisible Grail*. Follow our weekly series for a workout in writing agility that will influence and improve your words for work. Next week – U to v, published on Friday 28 August.

Talking in someone else's voice – is it ventriloquism? Impressionism? If so, a kind of impressionism that has nothing to do with Monet. Ironically, since I've been writing about finding your own voice, let me suggest an exercise that aims to do that by casting off your own voice altogether.

In *We, me, them and it* I wrote about 'letting your twin brother have all the laughs'. The writer develops a persona that is close to the real self but is different in that it is a writer's persona. It exists slightly outside the person. Often you get a strange feeling reading something you have written and you ask yourself: 'Did I really write that?' I'm eerily aware, even as I write these words (written in their first form twenty years ago), that the same question will face me some months on from here as I read them in a different time and place. It's like a Russian *matryoshka* doll about time.

“Often you get a strange feeling reading something you have written and you ask yourself: 'Did I really write that?'.”

An exercise that has, at the very least, caused a lot of fun in workshops, is to get people to write a letter in the tone of voice of a well-known personality. Decide what the subject is going to be for the whole group: let's say a reply to a letter of complaint from a customer. Then assign a different personality to each of the participants: Boris Johnson, Jamie Oliver, Sandi Toksvig, Donald

Trump, even the Queen. The letters written in response to this challenge show how perceptive people are and how easily understandable the whole concept of tone of voice is.

It's a bit of fun but there is also learning. What it does, when you then turn back to your own tone of voice, is to boost your confidence in the way you use words – and in the kinds of words, phrases and sentences that are really **you**.

With a new chapter released weekly, look out for the next in the series, U-v, arriving with you on Friday 28 August. Follow us on [Linked In](#) or via our [Insights page](#) to find your weekly dose of writing inspiration.

 [Invisible-grail](#)

 [@InvisibleGrail](#)

 [www.invisiblegrail.com](#)