
When you get an idea for a piece of writing, do you **FLOW** it or **GROW** it?

Answer the questions below to the best of your ability, **adding up your score as you go**.

Don't peek at the 2nd page before you've finished!

If you can't answer either way, maybe because your approach to writing shifts with the situation, that's OK. Just give the best answer you can, and if any question leaves you really unsure, take **half a point**.

But don't get too serious about all of this – it's not an exam or test, just a bit of (useful) fun!



1. When I have an idea, I usually **let it evolve (for a while) in my head** before I write anything down. **YES = 1 point**
 2. If I feel a new piece of writing coming, it can **hover in me for hours, even days**, before I get it written. **YES = 2 points**
 3. When I decide to write, I usually **get some key phrases quite quickly**, and I generally start by writing those down. **NO = 1 point**
 4. If I do an exercise (or am asked to write something new in a workshop or class), **I rarely get going straight away**. **YES = 1 point**
 5. I often **plan or structure** the ideas/images first, before I write. I sketch things out quite carefully; then I begin. **YES = 2 points**
 6. I love starting with **absolutely no idea where I'm going!** I can even write things **at one go** without pausing much. **NO = 2 points**
 7. I tend to make myself wait until **the whole thing has formed in my head** (and I can mostly *hear it*) – then I write it. **YES = 3 points**
 8. Writing is often something I have to squeeze out, word by word, phrase by phrase, line by line. **It's hard-won**. **YES = 2 points**
 9. I usually write something new by **getting myself 'still' first**, almost like a meditation. I wait for it to 'happen'. **YES = 1 point**
 10. I mostly scribble down ideas/phrases **in any order, as they come**. Then I work to stitch them all together. **YES = subtract 1 point**
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Write down your **TOTAL score here** first... [] ... then **read the notes** on the next page -> -> ->

RESULTS

- 0 – 5** **You definitely can FLOW!** Words happen as they happen, then you sort it out afterwards (or is it ‘after-words’?)
- 10 – 15** You’re almost certainly a **‘GROWER’**. You prefer (or need) to allow the writing to build energy first. The words follow later.
- 6 – 9** You seem to be a bit of both. You mix **certain elements of ‘FLOW’ and ‘GROW’** in your overall approach to writing.
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OK, we’ve had a bit of fun! That’s great. But this ‘test’ isn’t *really* about telling you what you are, or what you’re not. There’s no real value in shoving you into one of those little boxes! The true value here has been to get you *to look inward for a moment*, to reflect on how things happen for you creatively. That awareness, that FAMILIARITY WITH YOURSELF, yields all kinds of benefits.

As in any relationship, a loving attentiveness to writing helps things to grow – it’s usually the REASON they grow. Being attentive isn’t the same as being self-conscious. Self-consciousness tends to stifle; attentiveness nurtures. So, be attentive to YOU as a writer (as well as in other ways) and take an interest in how writing happens – for you, in you, with you. Eventually (if not straight away) your writing will flourish.

Meanwhile, with your test score in mind, here are some ideas for you to ponder. Good luck, and all the best.

Mario Petrucci

1. First things first. There isn’t anything **BETTER** about being a Grower or a Flow-er! They’re BOTH good. The point here isn’t ‘*Oh, so I’m THAT one!*’ but ‘*Can I learn from the approach I’m less familiar with?*’ If you’re mainly FLOW or mainly GROW, you can **DOUBLE THE OPPORTUNITIES** for your writing simply by expanding into the mode you don’t use. **Try it.** It might feel strange at first, or even a little uncomfortable... but, in the end, no one’s watching! And what do you have to lose? See this as play and exploration, not as a test.
 2. FLOW and GROW are intimately linked to **KINETIC ENERGY & POTENTIAL ENERGY** in writing. *Kinetic Energy* is about actually writing, often without a conscious sense of where it’s going; *Potential Energy* is about building pressure, letting things evolve in the unconscious *before* fixing them on the page. That evolution *before you write* isn’t the same as what happens when you consciously edit: it has a ‘silence’ to it. You’ll find more on *Kinetic* and *Potential* energy (among many other ideas and exercises) in my ‘**Elements of Surprise**’ audio course at:

www.writingintofreedom.com
 3. How do you feel about your score in the ‘test’? Do you agree with it? If you scored in the middle, do you *really* feel comfortable with both approaches in **all** situations? Are you able to choose? Whatever your score, next time you write, **consciously try both approaches.** So, write the same thing *both ways*, and see how the results differ. Keep at it. Will you get the same test score, do you think, in a year’s time?
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