

# HOW TO WRITE AN ARTICLE





# INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone! If you are reading this then you are part of the FOS writing team. If you are new, welcome! Below, you will find a ten step guideline of how articles should be written, edited, and shared for our magazines. Each step also has an example of one of my old “**Messages in Music**” articles to give you a visual. Don’t be intimidated! This guide is simple and effective and will make your article looking as professional as it can be! If you have any questions, don’t be afraid to contact the other FOS members or you can even connect with me directly. Most importantly, relax, have fun, and happy writing!

## – SARA FRANCIS

FOS Writer/Graphic Designer  
Author of The Terra Testimonies



FOS Contact: [fireofspiritonline@gmail.com](mailto:fireofspiritonline@gmail.com)

SF Contact: [sara.francisr1@gmail.com](mailto:sara.francisr1@gmail.com)

SF Site: [www.sara-francis.com](http://www.sara-francis.com)





# OVERVIEW

<b>Step 1: Pick a topic.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Step 2: Know Your Audience.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Step 3: Outline.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Step 4: First Draft.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Step 5: Re Draft.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Step 6: Edit.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Step 7: Send it to the Editor.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Step 8: Re Edit.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Step 9: Read one last time.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Step 10: Send it to the design team.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Things to remember.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TIPS.....</b>	<b>13</b>





# BEFORE YOU WRITE

## Step 1: Pick a topic

This step is pretty straightforward. Before you can write, you have to know what you are writing about! FOS sends out a list of articles we need written for each edition, but we are always open to suggestions. Just make sure your topic/theme fits within the magazine edition's theme, does not contradict the Catholic Faith, and is interesting and important.

### Example:

- » Magazine theme for this month is “Virtue has a veil, vice a mask.”
- » My chosen article topic is Messages in Music
- » Choose a song that has to deal with veiling, hidden self, etc.



---



---

## Step 2: Know Your Audience

Frankly, this one is the easiest. As a member of FOS, you already know who you are writing to: teens! So, that means you have to make sure that you write with them in mind. You are not writing an essay for your teachers at school. You are writing to your peers. Think about that as you begin to write.

### Example:

#### FIRE OF THE SPIRIT'S TARGET AUDIENCE

- » Teenagers and Young Adults
- » Christian/Catholic
- » Good understanding of the Faith but wants to learn more
- » Has the desire to be inspired and moved to take action



---



---

## Step 3: Outline

Nobody really likes this one. I understand, but I would highly advise you to do this. It should not be in full sentences. It should only contain the main points you need to get across. Sometimes we can just ramble on and on and make no sense at all! That is not what we want to do. We want to educate, evangelize, and entertain. Three Es of FOS. We don't need to be putting teens to sleep. (School does that already... just kidding. (Or am I?))

### Example:

#### MESSAGES IN MUSIC OUTLINE: THE REAL ME BY NATALIE GRANT

- » Open with song lyrics
- » Ask questions to keep engaged: What are we hiding?
- » Society is full of lies
- » We are not perfect
- » We all have imperfections
- » God sees us behind the mask
- » \$20 bill analogy
- » You are priceless





# TIME TO WRITE!

## Step 4: First Draft

Time to take all the points you wrote in the outline and put them together! Don't worry too much about editing just yet, you will do that later. First, just focus on getting your points into sentences that flow, make sense, and are necessary. Also, keep the word count in mind! Different types of articles require a certain amount of words. If you don't hit it, you may have too little information and need more research and thought. If you go over, you probably have a bit too much information and need to cut back on whatever is unnecessary.

### Example:

MESSAGES IN MUSIC: THE REAL ME BY NATALIE GRANT (EXCERPT)

(First Draft)

Why do we hide ourselves from the world? Is there something that we do not wish them to see? More importantly, what do WE wish not to see? Are we hiding we hiding from the world, or from ourselves?

The truth is we are not perfect. Nobody is, let's face facts. God does not expect us to be, and we must remember and accept that. The people society says are perfect, are far from it. They have imperfections and flaws just as we all do, but that's the side of them that is hidden from us. Do they realize that they cannot hide from the one Who knows all? The one Who sees behind the mask, and loves us anyway. In this day and age, society is constantly throwing lies at us, telling us who we are supposed to be like. They want us to be like this, that, and the other thing. Everywhere we look there is a billboard, a magazine, a television show, something portraying people who are perfect in their eyes. How does all this stupidity make this make us feel?



---



---

## Step 5: Re Draft

Now that you have put your points into paragraphs, it is time for you to make sure they are put in the right places. This isn't necessarily editing just yet. You may have to basically rewrite some or all of your article depending on whether it flows or not, makes sense, and so on. Your first draft should never ever ever be what you submit to the editors. They shouldn't have to outline your entire article in red. Save them as much work as possible and fix it yourself!

### Example:

MESSAGES IN MUSIC: THE REAL ME BY NATALIE GRANT (EXCERPT)

(Re Draft)

Why do we hide ourselves from the world? Is there something that we do not wish them to see? More importantly, what do WE wish not to see? Are we hiding we hiding from the world, or from ourselves?

In this day and age, society is constantly throwing lies at us, telling us who we are supposed to be like. They want us to be like this, that, and the other thing. Everywhere we look there is a billboard, a magazine, a television show, something portraying people who are perfect in their eyes. How does all this stupidity make this make us feel? (Taken from Para 3)

The truth is we are not perfect. Nobody is, let's face facts. God does not expect us to be, and we must remember and accept that. The people society says are perfect, are far from it. They have imperfections and flaws just as we all do, but that's the side of them that is hidden from us. Do they realize that they cannot hide from the one Who knows all? The one Who sees behind the mask, and loves us anyway.







## Step 6: Edit

Here is where you start picking apart your own article. Go over it again and find/fix grammar mistakes and things that still may not make sense.

### Example:

MESSAGES IN MUSIC: THE REAL ME BY NATALIE GRANT (EXCERPT)

(1st Edit)

Why do we hide ourselves from the world? Is there something that we do not wish them to see? More importantly, what do WE wish not to see? Are we hiding ~~we hiding~~ from the world, or from ourselves?

In this day and age, society is constantly throwing lies at us, telling us who we are supposed to be like. ~~They want us to be like this, that, and the other thing.~~ Everywhere we look there is a billboard, a magazine, a television show, something portraying people who are perfect in their eyes. How does all this stupidity make ~~this make~~ us feel?

The truth is we are not perfect. ~~Nobody is, let's face facts.~~ God does not expect us to be, and we must remember and accept that. The people society says are perfect, are far from it. They have imperfections and flaws just as we all do, but that's the side of them that is hidden from us. Do they realize that they cannot hide from the one Who knows all? The one Who sees behind the mask, and loves us anyway.

## Step 7: Send it to the Editor

Need I say more? Just make sure that it is in a Word Document format, not a PDF. Your editor will also determine what way they want your article delivered.





# WHEN YOUR ARTICLE IS RETURNED

## Step 8: Re Edit

Okay, so your editor just returned your article with its edits. You may not have much or it may be totally covered in red! Either way, you have to read over it and make sure that you have added necessary changes to your article.

### Example:

MESSAGES IN MUSIC: THE REAL ME BY NATALIE GRANT (EXCERPT)

(Editing in Editor's suggestions)

(Indent first paragraph) Why do we hide ourselves from the world? Is there something that we do not wish them to see? More importantly, what do WE wish not to see? Are we hiding from the world, or from ourselves?

In this day and age, society is constantly throwing lies at us, telling us who we are supposed to be like. Everywhere we look there is a billboard, a magazine, a television show, something portraying people who are perfect in their eyes. ~~How does all this stupidity make us feel?~~ (Remove)

The truth is we are not perfect. God does not expect us to be, and we must remember and accept that. The people society says are perfect, are far from it. They have imperfections and flaws just as we all do, but that's the side of them that is hidden from us. Do they realize that they cannot hide from the one Who knows all? The one Who sees behind the mask, and loves us anyway.





## Step 9: Read one last time

I know you've done a lot and you are almost there! Read your article to yourself with your audience still in mind. Once you know it's good, you are ready for the final step. If you feel like it needs more work, repeat steps 6-9.

## Step 10: Send it to the Magazine Team

You made it! Congratulations! Now it is time to send your finished article on its journey. In a word document format, please send the final article to [fireofspiritmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:fireofspiritmagazine@gmail.com). In the subject line, please include your name, the article title, and the magazine issue.

### Example:

SUBJECT LINE:

Sara Francis. Messages in Music. October 2015.





## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- » **Due Dates**- We need your articles on time. If you sign up to write one, we expect it to be done on time. We give you plenty of time in advance and understand if problems arise but we do need you to take responsibility for your article. Without you and your article, the magazine is left empty and lifeless.
- » **Audience** - Keep your audience in mind, as said before.
- » **Make sure content doesn't contradict Catholic Teaching**- Our mission is to spread the truth! Make sure that your articles are filled with only the truth and contain clear meanings and explanations. Each article will be reviewed by the Chief Editor of Theological Content to ensure accuracy.
- » **Word Count** - Each article has a rough word count but it varies depending upon your topic. Ask an Admin if you are unsure of how many words you should write.
- » **Works Cited** - Make sure to cite any outside sources you use. We don't want to plagiarize other people's hard work just like we wouldn't want them stealing our own.
- » **3 Es - Educate, Evangelize, Entertain** - Don't forget these! We are a group for teens by teens. Act like a (responsible, mature) teen! Let them feel as if they are being talked to by a friend, not a nagging teacher.
- » **Write with personality** - This one is very important. Don't throw facts at them. They won't listen. Rather, think of stories, your personal experiences, and so on. Don't be afraid to bring your own testimony into the article. They can relate to you, a teen, better than facts and information. Give them something they can understand and connect with.





## TIPS

- » **Keep multiple files** - Sometimes you may delete a point in your redraft that you want to put back in your final revision. This is why keeping files of each draft is important! You want to be able to see your own progress and keep track of what you've done.
- » **Ask for help** - Never be ashamed to ask a fellow writer or FOS member for help! We are always glad to answer questions you may have.
- » **Pray before writing** - Asking the Holy Spirit to work through you while you are writing your article can work miracles. God needs you to say something for Him. Why not let Him tell you what it is?

**Good luck and happy writing!**

