



Information pack

This document details the **Write a Non-Fiction Story course** presented by GetSmarter and Random House Struik.



Random House Struik and GetSmarter, a high-touch online education company, are proud to present the **Random House Struik Write a Non-Fiction Story course**. This course is compiled and facilitated by leading South African author Mike Nicol.

About the course:

This 16-week online course, presented in English, has been designed to mentor writers through the process of writing a non-fiction story. By the end of the course, you will have completed a compelling 10-page non-fiction story – an autobiography, memoir, biography, travel adventure, or even historical event. The course includes 12 weeks of teaching and a 4-week writing interval, during which students work on their stories.

The course allows you to form part of an online writing community where you interact with fellow writers, share writing and ideas, and review one another's non-fiction writing pieces. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to be showcased on the Random House Struik website and be considered for publication by eKhaya, Random House Struik's straight-to-digital imprint.

Need for the course:

Many people want to write, but feel that they don't have the time, opportunity or skills to do so. However, almost everyone feels that they have a personal story to tell – a startling life experience, a travel adventure, or the fascinating life of a relative. Writing a personal non-fiction story is the ideal way to express this and to leave a legacy for family and posterity.

About GetSmarter:

GetSmarter is a high-touch online education company that works together with top universities and industry experts to present courses throughout South Africa.

GetSmarter is accredited by the Services SETA (Sector Education and Training Authority) as an education and training provider. GetSmarter is the first and only entirely online training company to be accredited by any SETA in South Africa. Institutional accreditation no.: 3692.

About Random House Struik:

Random House Struik is the largest general trade publisher in southern Africa, with six local imprints – Struik Lifestyle, Struik Nature, Struik Travel & Heritage, Zebra Press, Umuzi and eKhaya.

About the Course Convener:

Mike Nicol is a journalist and writer from Cape Town. He taught at the Centre for Creative Writing at the University of Cape Town and has been a writer-in-residence both at UCT and the University of Essen, Germany. Mike has written various works of non-fiction, including a biography of Nelson Mandela, and several novels. His latest book is *Monkey Business*, an analysis of the murder of Anni Dewani. He also works as an editor.

Course modules:

The following modules are covered during the course:

- Module 1: Finding your story
- Module 2: Researching your story

- Module 3: Writing biographies
Module 4: The first-person narrator
Module 5: Characters
Module 6: Preparation for the writing interval
Four-week writing interval
Module 7: Story review
Module 8: Writing descriptions
Module 9: Dialogue
Module 10: Starting the story
Module 11: Concluding
Module 12: Preparing your story for publication

*See Appendix A for a detailed overview of each module and on the writing interval.

Who should attend:

This course is designed for both current and aspiring non-fiction writers who want to write an autobiography, memoir, biography, travel narrative or historical account. It is suited to journalists, freelance writers, authors or anyone simply interested in telling their personal story.

Entry requirements:

Students must have a current email account, must have access to a computer, and must be able to read documents in Adobe PDF, create documents in Microsoft Word and access the internet. A matric certificate is recommended, but is not required. Any course requirements that are for assessment purposes must be completed in English.

Course delivery:

The course is conducted online through the **GetSmarter Learning** website (<http://www.GetSmarter.co.za/learning>).

Each module is divided into the following components:

- Course notes
- Video lectures
- Discussion forum
- Online multiple-choice quiz
- Writing assignment
- Reading material

For the duration of the 16-week course, except during the writing interval, a new module is released to the student group each Monday. Students complete each week's module by working through all of the components listed above. Proactive support is provided to all students by the Course Convener, Mike Nicol, and the Course Coordinator, Llewellyn Dawe.



Award of the certificate:

Certificates of attendance are awarded to those students who complete all assignments. Successful students will receive the GetSmarter and Random House Struik Write a Non-Fiction Story certificate.

Course dates:

Registrations close: 3 May 2013
Course starts: 13 May 2013

A course calendar and module mind map are available on request.

Payment details:

Course fee: R8,500 (excl. VAT)
R9,690 (incl. VAT)

Payment deadline: 3 May 2013

How to register:

Four-step registration process

1. Visit www.GetSmarter.co.za.
2. Click "Non-fiction Story" on the left menu and then click "Register for this course".
3. Complete the online registration form.
4. You will receive confirmation of registration by email and SMS within 24 hours.

Payment details:

The following payment options are available and are inclusive of VAT:

Payment option	Amount and payment date
1. Once-off payment	R9,690 by 3 May 2013
2. Payment plan	R3,300 by 3 May 2013 R3,300 by 31 May 2013 R3,300 by 28 June 2013
3. Capitec Personal Loan Apply for a 6-12 month loan from Capitec Bank. For more information visit www.GetSmarter.co.za/capitec	

GetSmarter accepts payments by direct deposit, electronic funds transfer (EFT) and credit card (Mastercard and Visa). Students opting to pay by credit card will be contacted by phone to obtain their credit card details. Students opting to pay by direct deposit and EFT are required to use their name and surname as a reference.



Banking details:

Account name: GetSmarter
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Claremont
Branch code: 025109
Account number: 07 251 0684
SWIFT code: SBZAJJ

Contact details:

If you have any queries, please contact Roxy at GetSmarter:

Contact: Roxy
Tel: 021 447 7565
Fax: 021 447 8344
Email: roxy@getsmarter.co.za

Appendix A

The table below describes each of the 12 modules covered in the course.

Module 1: Finding your story
Everyone has a personal story, but what makes it worth telling? This first module looks at ways of presenting your life story. By using examples, the module will help you decide whether to write an autobiography (an account of your life), a memoir (an account of your life and times), a biography, a travelogue or a history.
Module 2: Researching your story
Research is a major part of any non-fiction writing, even when you are telling your personal story. This module looks at sources of information: libraries, archives, photographs, letters and family documents that might have relevance to your story. The notes also cover interviewing techniques.
Module 3: Writing biographies
All non-fiction stories involve the lives of other people. Interviewing these people or finding out about their lives is a critical part of the research for a life story. This module will focus on compiling and writing short biographical sketches.
Module 4: The first-person narrator
This course is designed to put your perspective at the centre of your writing project. In non-fiction, the author is the narrator. But a first-person narrative is also a literary device: it allows for the author's subjectivity. You must present your narrator as an empathetic character, someone with whom the reader will identify and trust. This module looks at several ways to create an intriguing first-person narrator.
Module 5: Characters
In many respects, people are the story: they make your narrative compelling because readers identify with these characters. This is also true of travel and historical writing. This module teaches you styles that will flesh out the real people in your story, while guarding against legal actions, such as defamation.
Module 6: Preparation for the writing interval
This module provides guidance for the writing interval: from the practicalities of writing (facing the blank screen, writing every day), to suggestions for organising your raw research and secondary documents.
Four-week writing interval
During this interval, you will write two chapters – 2,000 words – of your non-fiction story. This means writing 500 words a week, building on previous writing exercises. You will submit

your two chapters at the beginning of module 7.

Module 7: Story review

Voice and style are the all-important qualities that make a writer's work compelling. This module looks at examples of particularly strong style from well-known writers. It also teaches you how to develop a writing technique that will bring out your unique voice.

Module 8: Writing descriptions

Descriptive writing is one of the biggest challenges of non-fiction writing. Setting the scene so that it comes alive is a high priority. This module looks at ways to achieve this without resorting to flowery adjectives and adverbs. Examples from travelogues and historical accounts will showcase the effectiveness of concise yet poetic descriptions.

Module 9: Dialogue

Dialogue is as vital in non-fiction as it is in fiction. How characters speak gives them personality and makes them stand out. But what is dialogue? Is it the truthful reporting of what was said, or the truth behind what was said? This module deals with constructing and writing these scenes, and looks at ways of transforming interviews into readable English.

Module 10: Starting the story

The most important part of any story is the beginning. But sometimes the beginning can only be written once the rest of the story is finished – which is why this module appears towards the end of the course. It explores opening sentences and strategies for hooking the reader from the start.

Module 11: Concluding

One of the greatest difficulties with personal stories is ending them. Lives and stories continue after you stop writing, so you have to create a convincing end. Deciding at what point to get out of the story can determine the success of your project. This module suggests various strategies to end a work of non-fiction.

Module 12: Preparing your story for publication

The final module involves peer review of the non-fiction stories and examines ways of redrafting and restructuring narratives for dramatic effect. This also means cleaning up the story to get rid of spelling mistakes and creating an attractive layout. In addition, the module touches on preparing for online submission or self-publication.

We hope to welcome you to the course!