

Lorain Mace – Talks About Writing Humorous Fiction

How did you start writing humour?

- My first attempt came from one of the WB assignment questions.
- I went on to write several more humour pieces based on my experiences as an expat in France and, after I'd had a few published, the editor of Living France offered me a regular column.

What makes your work funny?

- I use everyday situations that most people can identify with.
- I draw word pictures so that my readers can see the events unfolding.
- Generally in my articles I'm inviting readers to laugh with me about a series of events – often with me making a fool of myself.

Where do you find you ideas for your articles?

- From all around me.
- I tend to pick up on a tiny point, sometimes unnoticed by others, that I find funny.
- I use that as the basis for a humour article and build around it.

Tips to start writing humour!

- Remember that the genre works best when the tale relates to the writer's own life experiences.
- If something strikes you as funny, especially in a non-humour situation,

note it down. It's amazing how the best humour articles arise from events that aren't meant to be amusing.

What's the format for humorous non-fiction?

- You should write in a lively and chatty tone.
- Imagine you are telling a story to a friend and, like any story, it should have a beginning, middle and end.
- The tone should be signalled in the opening paragraphs, so that the reader knows from the outset that the article isn't going to be serious.
- The ending should refer back in some way to the opening paragraph – a punch line which nicely ties up the entire piece.
- Opening lines and closing paragraphs make or break humorous non-fiction.

Do you use humour in other genres?

- Yes. I have written a children's novel, which my agent is marketing for me, where I've used exactly the same style of humour as my articles. The book has horror elements interspersed with humour.
- I write humorous verse, winning the Petra Kenney prize.
- My latest non-fiction book of tips on moving abroad has elements of humour to offset the serious tone.
- I find humour helps people to read what would otherwise be very dry.