

50 Great Questions to ask an Author

Just don't ask what their favorite book they've written is.

1. What literary pilgrimages have you gone on?
2. What is the first book that made you cry?
3. What is the most challenging part of working with an editor?
4. What part of writing energizes you the most?
5. What are common traps for aspiring writers?
6. What is the best book feedback / review you've ever received?
7. What is your writing Kryptonite?
8. Have you ever gotten reader's block?
9. Did you ever consider writing under a pseudonym?
10. Do you try more to be original or to deliver to readers what they want?
11. What is more important when it comes to writing: creativity or empathy?
12. What other authors are you friends with, and how do they help you become a better writer?
13. Do you want each book to stand on its own, or are you trying to build a body of work with connections between each book?
14. If you could tell your younger writing self anything, what would it be?
15. How did publishing your first book change your process of writing?
16. What was the best money you ever spent as a writer?
17. What authors did you dislike at first, but have now grown to love?
18. What did you do with your first advance?
19. What was an early experience where you learned that language had power?
20. What are the most important magazines for writers to subscribe to?
21. What's your favorite under-appreciated novel?
22. How do you balance making demands on the reader with taking care of the reader?

23. As a writer, what would you choose as your mascot/avatar/animal?
24. Have you ever written a character inspired by a family member?
25. How many unpublished and half-finished books do you have?
26. What does literary success look like to you?
27. What's your favorite way to market your books?
28. What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?
29. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?
30. What's the most difficult thing about writing characters from the opposite sex?
31. How long were you a part-time writer before you became a full-time one?
32. How many hours a day do you write?
33. What period of your life do you find you write about most often? (child, teenager, young adult)
34. What did you edit out of this book?
35. Have you read anything that made you think differently about fiction?
36. What are the ethics of writing about historical figures?
37. How do you select the names of your characters?
38. If you didn't write, what would you do for work?
39. Do you read your book reviews? How do you deal with bad or good ones?
40. Do you hide any secrets in your books that only a few people will find?
41. What was your hardest scene to write?
42. Do you Google yourself?
43. What is the first story (even as a kid) that you remember writing?
44. What are your favorite literary journals?
45. What is your favorite childhood book?
46. What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?
47. Does your family support your career as a writer?
48. If you had to do something differently as a child or teenager to become a better writer as an adult, what would you do?
49. How long on average does it take you to write a book?
50. Have you ever thrown out an entire book after finishing it?