

**Stephanie recommends writing a 'blog' as practice for your book**



## HOW TO GET STARTED AS A WRITER

At just 25, Stephanie Brookes is already a published author and is joint-owner of Spiritual Philosophy Publishing Limited ([www.spiritualphilosophy.co.uk](http://www.spiritualphilosophy.co.uk)). Her book, *Some Silent Hero* (Spiritual Philosophy Publishing Ltd, £7.99), is the first of a planned trilogy. Here are her quick tips to becoming a successful novelist...

**1** When you're writing a book I'd recommend starting with the characters. Look at what you want each character to do before you start working on your plot.

**2** Literary agents have general submission guidelines on how they prefer you to send them your work, but they're all different, so I'd suggest calling them first. They may want to see a couple of chapters or the whole book, and ask them what kind of books they're looking for, and whether they need any background information about you.

**3** Include a covering letter and a stamped addressed envelope whenever you submit work to a literary agent so that they can get back to you with any feedback and return your manuscript.

**4** You can pick up a copy of *Writers' & Artists' Yearbook* (A&C Black, £13.99) from any bookshop or library. It contains the details and addresses of every literary agent and publisher in the country.

**5** Loads of aspiring writers use a weblog or 'blog' as a way to practise. Okay, it's not quite a celebrity autobiography but blogging is like an online diary that is accessible to anyone surfing the net. If you want to set up your own blog, go to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) or [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com).

