

There Are No Rules; Here Are 10

Elmore Leonard's 10 Rules of Writing

*A Discussion of the Invisible Author
with*

Johnny Worthen

www.johnnyworthen.com

“I always refer to style as sound,” says Leonard. “The sound of the writing.” Some of Leonard’s suggestions appeared in a 2001 *New York Times* article that became the basis of his 2007 book, *Elmore Leonard's 10 Rules of Writing*. Here are those rules in outline form:

1. Never open a book with the weather.
2. Avoid prologues.
3. Never use a verb other than “said” to carry dialogue.
4. Never use an adverb to modify the verb “said.”
5. Keep your exclamation points under control!
6. Never use the words “suddenly” or “all hell broke loose.”
7. Use regional dialect, patois, sparingly.
8. Avoid detailed descriptions of characters.
9. Same for places and things.
10. Leave out the parts readers tend to skip.
11. If it sounds like writing, re-write it.