

# The Do's and Don'ts of Fanfiction

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*I decided to post this because there are a number of things in fanfiction that I find annoying and I've had discussions with many others, and they seem to have similar opinions. So, this is a compiled list (with contributions by many fanfic readers/writer*

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/Moonchild10/35834/The-Dos-and-Donts-of-Fanfiction>

**Chapter 1 - Basic Do's and Don'ts of Fanfiction**

**2**

# 1 - Basic Do's and Don'ts of Fanfiction

## The Do's and Don'ts of Fanfiction

### **A handy pocket guide to effective fanfics**

Ok, first let's explore the things that make for a *bad* fanfic

#### Donts

1. The first thing to think about is the **title**. Try not to make spelling or capitalization errors here. Aside from that, there really is no right or wrong way to title a fic.

2. Next, we've got the story's **summary**. Several orders of business here:

- Again, try not to misspell, and avoid capitalizing random words. It makes things sloppy.
- Adding "plzz r&r!" is not necessarily going to make people read and review, and to some people it's quite annoying. Try to steer clear of that.
- Check your length! I cannot stress that enough. Summaries that stop in the middle of a sentence or word are confusing and not at all appealing.

3. Now we get into the actual **story**.

- Don't attempt to write about something you don't know. You'll probably end up coming off sounding pretty naive.
- I'm not going to tell you that you can't write Mary Sues, but... for the love of God, people... those get annoying. If you're going to have an OC, make them believable.
- Self cameos can be fun and in times even more effective than not including them, but try not to make the whole plot circle around you. Try to be perfectly honest, not many people want to read about us fanfic authors. They want to read about the characters. If you're writing the fic just for yourself or for a friend, it's fine, but the general public doesn't really appreciate it.
- Don't use netspeak in stories. It's fine for IM, but has no place in writing. Seeing "and then the Tree fell on Beast Boy and Raven was like OMG WTF!?" is distracting and... kind of annoying.
- Correct spelling and grammar, please! We don't want to read stuffs that Look like this.

- please, please, if you're writing a fic based on an anime/manga... don't add in random Japanese words if the story is in English unless one of the characters is saying for a reason. To be honest, most readers won't know what you're talking about, anyway.

- Revenge/hate fics (fics written to attack or bash a character or person because you don't like them) are old and annoying, and at times offend people. (For you TT writers: yes, the Terra bashing fics are getting irritating. The vast majority of writers I've talked to agree.)

- Adding notes at the beginning/end of chapters saying "I'll continue when I get X many reviews" is another thing that gets annoying.

Ok, now that we've been through the major no-no's of fanfics, let's go through some tips that can help make your fanfiction more effective.

### Do's

1. First, let's take a look at the **title**. Try coming up with something that's unique and makes a reader want to click on your story. When trying to pull readers in, the title of a fanfic can make all the difference.

2. And now, **the summary**. Filling it only with information about the story is a good thing. You can add a disclaimer before you start in on the story content inside the chapter and it's not needed in the summary.

- Try to make your summary as relevant as you can without giving away the entire plot.

- Teasers are always good. If you make the story sound extremely interesting, chances are, more people will read it

3. Now, let's move on to the **story**.

- First of all, if you don't know about the subject you're writing about, do some research before you attempt to write your fic. If it's about Christmas in Japan, research what it's like first. Accurate fics are way more enjoyable than ones that make no sense.

- If it's your first time writing for a particular show or book, that's fine! It's not necessary, but a lot of the time writing a few quick descriptive paragraphs or a quick dialogue scene or two between the characters can help make all the difference between writing like an experienced fan and writing like a newbie (even if you are one)

- Getting to know the characters' surroundings is also a crucial part of the writing process unless you'd rather do it freestyle. If you're writing a fanfic about the band Gorillaz for the first time, take some time getting to know your way around Kong Studios through official websites, episodes of MTV Cribs, etc. For Teen Titans writers, you can get a tour around Titans Tower on the Divide and Conquer DVD, if you're in desperate need. Stories tend to feel awkward if the author makes it obvious that they are avoiding mentioning the surroundings because they don't know enough about them.

- Unless it's a goofy fic that goes OOC on purpose, **stay in-character as much as possible**. Readers

despise seeing their favorite character going completely against their own nature without a plausible explanation or reason for it in the plot.

- Build on the plot gradually. Often what makes the best stories are the subtle little moments. Don't hurry them by, and don't worry about being boring. If the readers are really there for a serious read, they'll appreciate a gradual building of the plot.

- Try not to write things that completely contradict the original plot. Unless you're doing a rewrite or new version of it, you should probably figure out what's really going on in the characters' world before you decide to rush in and start a story. Unless the story takes place farther back in the storyline, it should probably make sense with the characters' current situation.

- Interaction is what it's all about, baby. Taking time to have the characters have emotional interactions often makes for a more readable and interesting story. The interaction doesn't necessarily have to be romantic, no. But having the characters get closer in some way is usually good.

- Build any romance that the story includes slowly. Rushing it makes the story sloppy.

- Try to explain things in the story rather than in dialogue. People don't like reading long dialogue if it's something that could have easily been explained using some other method.

- Use words that you know. Using big words trying to sound smart is a bad idea. Unless you have intimate understanding of a word, you probably shouldn't use it in your story.

- Avoid author's notes in the flow of the story and spoilers at the end of chapters. It's annoying and ruins the story for readers.

- If you don't get many reviews, keep on going anyway! Chances are you have dozens of readers, they're just too lazy to review.

- Don't be afraid to explore new things. New situations in your plot can be rewarding. If they don't turn out like you planned, it's fine. At least you got to give it a shot, right?

- I can't stress this one enough: don't let others influence what you feel comfortable writing. Write what *you* want, and don't stop just because someone else doesn't like it. Because, although novelists have a certain responsibility to give their readers what they want, fanfic writers don't make a profit and therefore, their writing is mostly for them alone. If you enjoy writing slash, and someone thinks it's "gross", ignore them and keep writing it if it's what you like to do.

- If it's taking you forever to update a story, it's fine! Don't worry about it. If your readers are loyal, they'll wait until you get an idea for the next chapter.

- If you have writer's block, you might want to try taking a walk or going somewhere that inspires you. Parks often have a pleasant effect. Taking a hot bath is also a good idea, or hanging out with friends. You can be inspired by anything at any given moment if you allow yourself the chance.

- When you get excited because you've come up with the ending, let the story continue at its normal

pace. Don't rush to get to the ending because you're excited or too lazy to keep writing a quality fic.

- If you really have a passion for writing, and you love the way you do it and don't want to listen to anything I've said, then don't! Writing is a beautiful thing, and no one can really tell you how to do it right. People can offer tips, but in the end, you're the only thing that can get the story done.

Peace, and happy writing!