

Obscenity, how to write it

The Craft of Writing · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

How to write obscenity

Obscenity . . . how do you deal with the use of profanity in print? Today swearing, sexually-charged words and scatology are widely used.

Well, you could write:

Smith said: "Go to - - - - hell." OR "Go to **** hell."

But these days most publications would print some letters to give readers some idea of the words used:

Smith said: "Get f - - - ed, you f - - - ing c - - -. You little sh - - . Stick it up your a - - -.

And go to f - - - ing hell."

But it all depends on the policy of your target publication.

Some publications print obscenities this way, using the punctuation signs on the top line of keys on your computer:

Bill said: "%#@* you!"

Tom replied: "No, +*&^% you, you #@\$*^%."

Anyway, if you have been reading and studying every edition of your target publication, you should have a feel for what they expect in this area.

Many ordinary publications today are willing to print swear words in full.

If you don't know what to do, print the words in full but put a note on your story bringing you editor's attention to the words so he can edit them, or not edit them, according to the publication's policy.

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