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# How To Suppress Women's Writing

*She didn't write it.* But if it's clear  
she did the deed . . . *She*  
*wrote it, but she shouldn't have.*  
(It's political, sexual,  
masculine, feminist.) *She wrote it, but look*  
*what she wrote about.* (The bedroom, the kitchen,  
her family. Other women!)  
*She wrote it, but she wrote only*  
*one of it.* ("Jane Eyre. Poor dear,  
that's all she ever . . .") *She wrote it,*  
*but she isn't really an artist, and*  
*it isn't really art.* (It's a thriller, a romance,  
a children's book. It's sci fi!)  
*She wrote it, but she had help.*  
(Robert Browning. Branwell Brontë.  
Her own "masculine side.") *She wrote it, but*  
*she's an anomaly.* (Woolf. With Leonard's  
help . . .)  
*She wrote it BUT . . .*

How to Suppress Women's  
Writing **by Joanna Russ**



## Synopsis

By the author of *The Female Man* "a provocative survey of the forces that work against women who dare to write.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For reasons both good and bad, *HOW TO SUPPRESS WOMEN'S WRITING* by Joanna Russ reads like it could have been written yesterday. Actually, the book is older than me "published in 1983" but Russ's smirking, clear-eyed perspective is still relevant. *HOW TO SUPPRESS WOMEN'S WRITING* investigates historical and social reasons that may have kept whole generations of women from writing in the first place (things like differential rates of literacy, disparate access to education, women's historical lack of leisure time and position as wife as a second work shift). She also interrogates how it is that when women somehow do manage to write that women's writing is ignored, slandered or undercut. The book was published by the University of Texas Press, which puts it squarely in the realm of academic works, but the writing is colloquial and accessible throughout. You do not need to be steeped in literary criticism or feminist theory to read and understand Russ's arguments here, which is a great strength. She argues that what is considered "good" or "worthy" literature (and by extension, that which is taught and thus survives across generations) is designated as such by privileged groups who have a vested interest in keeping themselves privileged. The ways in which they limit entrance or access to literature are

by mental acrobatics such as assuming women writers didnâ™t really write their works, or that it doesnâ™t matter if they wrote it because itâ™s the wrong kind of work, or that maybe they wrote it and maybe itâ™s good but itâ™s the only good thing she ever wrote. Some of this is deliberate, but just as much is unconscious bias.

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