Did someone say RESEARCH?!

Personally, I adore research. The best thing you can do for yourself, and your potential reading audience, is to do your homework. If you're not keen on reading up on your subject, putting in the hours to bring new concepts and characters into your work, just don't bother; the second best thing you can do for your reader in this particular case is to write what you know. If I had a nickel for every novel I've ever read that was poorly researched, I'd have more than $2.50. I'm pretty good about choosing the work of writers I know are a sure bet in that department.

Part of being a writer is evolution. In high school, I wrote Sherlock Holmes-style fiction involving high school students in California. Did I research life in California, find a frame of reference for the high school I'd created, to make my stories believable? No. My frame of reference was Buffy the Vampire Slayer. I went with it.

All told, it was pretty terrible.

In terms of writing what you know, I had it half right. I was an avid reader so I knew Sherlock Holmes and the mystery genre. I knew high school because I was currently a high school student. When it came to teenage angst and whirlwind love, I was a certified expert in my field. In terms of knowing a little something about the world outside of not only my hometown and province, but my country, that world was completely unknown to me; I knew California had palm trees.

So, long story short, do your research. If you take your work seriously and you want your content to be both read and appreciated, head to the library. If it's worth your time to write 6k words a day, it's worth your time to make that content well researched.

Happy scribbling!
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