

Writing Exercises Winter Workshop 2019  
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Some of these are tricky to do on your own, but they could be fun with a writing group! At Winter Workshop, we actually did these in reverse order of how I have them here.

**Writing Exercise One: Dialogue**

1. Either pick a scene from your manuscript where you have two characters talking to each other for a bit in a heated or angry conversation that's a couple paragraphs long. OR if you have a scene you're wanting to write that has a conversation, you could write something from scratch as well.
2. We're going to write it three different ways.
3. First, we're doing rapid fire dialogue. You're going to rewrite the conversation where each character only gets 1-7 words for each line of dialogue. (5 minutes)
4. Now, same conversation, except that only one of the characters is talking. The other one is limited to all non-verbals. (5 minutes)
5. Last, you're going to rewrite this conversation however you like.

**Writing Exercise Two: Setting the character's mood.**

1. Pick a scene from your manuscript where your character could feel a variety of things, where they have several options. So it would probably be good if this was some kind of surprising news or development.
2. Write down three different emotions your character could feel after receiving this news. (30 seconds.)
3. Now write down three more. (30 more seconds)
4. Pick the most interesting one on the list. Now, we're going to take 5 minutes to write a paragraph where your character is feeling that way and you're going to write about it. The only rule is you cannot say the mood, nor can you cheat by using any of its synonyms. You have to rely on word choice in your descriptions and actions alone to express the mood.

5. Do it again with a different mood.

### **Writing Exercise 3: Clear seeing = clear writing**

- Pick a scene you like in your book that takes place somewhere specific. Ideally this is a scene that you haven't worked with a whole lot, or maybe you haven't written it yet at all. Your choice. Ideally a scene where:
  - Your character feels something
  - Something interesting happens, like a meaningful conversation or event.
- First we're going to try and see clearly. Then we're going to write our scene.
- Close your eyes, and I'm going to ask some questions to help guide your imaginations. This is just for you to think about, not write down. (I asked these questions slowly, so the participants have time to think for a bit before the next one.)
  - Where is your character? Imagine them in that place.
  - Who are you they there with?
  - Whoever it is, how do they feel about them?
  - What time of day is it?
  - What's the lighting like? Sunshine? Twilight?
  - What else is there with them? Are there plants or objects or furniture that are unique to where they are?
  - What can they smell?
  - What kind of textures are around them? What could they feel if they reached out their hands?
  - What kind of sounds are in the air? What can they hear?
  - Can they taste anything? Is there food?
- Open your eyes. Write the scene as you saw it. (10 minutes)