

The writing shop on HollysWritingClasses.com is now live

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Even though my new Holly's Writing Classes site is still in high beta, I'm delighted to [finally have the writing shop open.](#)



Holly's Writing Classes
Write Your Own Sky

We haven't made the site pretty yet, and for the moment the shop is very plain and simple (no frills), but things work now.

So I've brought back many of my previous classes, and am still working on getting the rest of them live.

I'm also building new workshops and classes.

The one I'm working on currently is **Title. Cover. Copy. Book Marketing for Fiction Writers.**

That's going to go live in the next couple of weeks. Following that will be a workshop on developing your writing voice.

I'm excited. It's taken a long time to get to this point, but I'm glad to finally be here.

And a quick note. **Both How To Think Sideways** and **How to Write A Series** are coming back, but are not back yet. Both classes are so big that we're having to develop better ways for students to navigate through them easily.

Just getting from page to page was a problem in previous versions. That will not be a problem when they go live on this site.

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Things Don't Look Good for My Future With Apple

[By Holly Lisle](#)

This is the follow-up post to [Uncrippling the Lesson](#).

As I said I would, I paid my book packager to create a separate version of **How To Think Sideways, Lesson 6** that did not include links to Apple.

I uploaded the corrected version.

A couple days later, I got this message:

Dear Holly Lisle,

One or more assets from your submission, How to Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers, need to be replaced:

Ticket #: 1438977

Ticket Type: Book Asset

Apple ID: 541126811

ISBN: 9781937533304

Vendor ID: 9781937533304

Please note that the changes in this ticket were not executed. The ticket has been returned to you for additional corrections. Please make all of the changes requested below.

Full book asset:

Competing Website(s)

Rejected Reason(s):

Competing Website(s)

Notes:

Jun, 29 2012, 12:13PM – Apple:

Book file contains links from competitors: Amazon, in the chapter Q&A 6, under “Question 9”

Jul, 18 2012, 4:54AM – Apple:

The following ticket task(s) have been updated by the feed:

Full epub

Jul, 18 2012, 4:54AM – Apple:

Epub internals validation passed

Jul, 18 2012, 1:21PM – Apple:

Please Note: The original change request was not fulfilled. Your changes were not saved. Previous issue was not addressed. Please review your file before resubmitting it. Thank you.

Problem is, the changes WERE executed.

And I tested and uploaded the corrected file again, just to be sure. It's still blocked with the "Fix this first" ticket attached.

I've contacted Apple through their producer customer service. Best case, I'll hear back from them Monday, and this file and Lesson 13 will be cleared, and I'll be able to continue adding the rest of the course. In the best-case scenario, it may take longer than Monday.

Worst case...

...between Lesson 6, which Apple has rejected three times now (in spite of the changes it requested having been made), and Lesson 13, which is still unavailable, though with no error message to let me know why, I'm going to end up having to pull the course off of Apple permanently. I cannot offer just SOME of the lessons.

So for those of you who are die-hard iBookstore fans, I'm preemptively stating here: **"I have done everything I am willing to do to fix this."** If Apple does not want my course content, or the content of some of the lessons, on the iBookstore, **I CANNOT fix that.**

And if I have to pull the **How to Think Sideways** course from the iBookstore because some lessons do not meet whatever criteria Apple has set that are beyond what I can fix (*MEANING I will NOT rewrite ANY portion of the lesson content itself*), I will not waste my time trying to get **How to Revise Your Novel** accepted. Nor will I offer my novels there. Nor will I continue to make available those courses that have been deemed acceptable. Such of my presence as I am capable of removing, I'll remove.

(I have no control over my work offered by other publishers.)

If that means you'll no longer buy my work, I'm sorry. I'll note that [DRM-free epub's of the course are available from my own shop](#), and they will work on your iPhone and iPad. **If your issue is buying things from Amazon, you don't have to.** If your issue is punishing me because I am not willing to jump through hoops beyond those through which I've already jumped...

...well, **you** wouldn't have gotten anything useful out of the course anyway.

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This is the price for a Short Courses Community membership.

[By Holly Lisle](#)



Thinking of Joining?

I'll offer two ways to pay:

PAYMENT PLAN PRICE: The price for a [SHORT COURSES Membership](#) is going to be \$5 a month for six months. After the final payment, the student becomes a lifetime member at the SHORT COURSES level.

At any point during the six months in which payments are being made, the student can quit and receive a refund for the current month, and will no longer be a member.

SINGLE PAYMENT PRICE: One payment, \$30. Student becomes a *provisional* lifetime member at the [SHORT COURSES level](#). At any time during the first 60 days, the student can request, and receive, a full refund, and no longer be a member. After the first 60 days, the student becomes a lifetime member.

100% of either membership will be applicable to upgraded memberships. Meaning that at ANY TIME you choose to upgrade, you can apply the \$30 you paid for SHORT COURSES membership to your Think Sideways or Revise Your Novel memberships; in other words, you can give yourself a \$30 discount on either of those memberships. (Likewise, you'll be able to apply the cost of upper-level memberships to OTHER upper-level memberships.)

This was the price I'd originally intended to charge for SHORT COURSES, and no one gave me a good reason to raise it.

But SHOULD you join?

[The price discussion brought up some interesting questions](#) about the community and its value to writers, along with the question, "Why should I join?"

The short answer to this question is, in most cases, **you shouldn't**. Most writers are looking for a social venue, and won't benefit from the community.

The point, the purpose, and the value of the Writers' Boot Camps Community

I'm going to quote myself from one of my replies in in the price discussion:

*I'm **already** publishing HTTS and HTRYN as individual lessons on the big platforms (the HTTS lessons will go out to Hitch for compiling in about another week, once I have all the links updated in the lessons to reflect the new workgroups and the worksheet landing pages. This is old news. But I don't intend to charge Kindle's top 70% royalty price (9.99) for each lesson. I'm coming in significantly under that. (That MAY be new news. I'm not sure if I've mentioned this before.)*

*But my personal statistic (**90% of people who get the community for free don't use it**) is **WHY** I don't want to charge the maximum amount possible for the lessons, and to use that money to offset the price of community membership: I don't want people to pay for something they don't use. In other words, I don't want ten people to buy the course on Kindle, and have nine of them subsidize the one member who joins the community and gets as much out of it as my active current students do.*

So the question becomes...what does my community offer to students that makes it worth paying for, and why will some writers want to join?

And the answer to that is:

***The community supports the courses. Period.** It isn't a "social" community. (It has social elements—there are open discussion boards and the writers who use them have a LOT of fun discussing various topics.) This is a hard concept for*

most people to get, because almost all forums are essentially social gatherings, where people talk about work, but don't work.

The Writers' Boot Camps are built around work.

I've written something like a dozen courses now (HTTS, HTRYN, HTWAS, Plot, Plot Outline, Character, Language, Culture, Scenes, Dialogue and Subtext, Beat Writer's Block, Motivate Yourself, Writing Discipline, 21 Ways to Get Yourself Writing, the upcoming *Mugging the Muse Second Edition Course*..., and the upcoming *Create A World Clinic*) okay, so *FOURTEEN* now available with two more on the way—*MTM: 2nd Edition* is due for release next week and *Create A World Clinic* is due for release when I wrap up this overhaul and get *WARPAINT* finished...

...And the community is the place where the people who bought the "textbooks" have a live class where they can work through their lessons with other folks who are taking the same courses.

The workgroups are now open, not assigned, and set up lesson by lesson. I'm currently building out the Short Courses boards with the individual lesson posts. (These have been empty until now, because until I had the software with which I could invite Short Courses students to join, there was no point in doing the work of building out the boards.) If you're already a community member and you log in and go to the new [Mugging the Muse: 2nd Ed Workgroup](#), you'll see how the Short Course Workgroups will work.

The community is my duplication of

the process I used to get published.

This is why I've gone to such trouble and expense to build the community and to build a way for new people to join it by choice.

I learned much of how to make my work publishable by belonging to a writers' group when I was just getting started. I didn't learn much from what the other members told me about what I was doing wrong. Or right. I learned from figuring out what THEY were doing wrong. And right.

So I've set up the community based around workgroups, where writers can present snippets of work that are giving them problems, and receive comments from other students on these. Where, lesson by lesson, they can work through my processes and techniques, and get and GIVE feedback from other students doing the same lessons. And where they can read through solutions discovered by students ahead of them.

*This is why the boards are private, why moderators monitor them, why I don't make the thing public and invite everyone to join. **It's a place for my students who want to accelerate what they're learning in the lessons** by taking what they've learned and applying the concepts and principles to work other than their own.*

My objectives with the community are:

- **High signal to noise ratio**—conversation stays focused on writing
- **High content to filler ratio**—the majority of the posts should give students something valuable for the time they've invested in reading them
- **High work to play ratio**--the boards are primarily dedicated to classwork, publishing, marketing, and self-promotion, not to general conversation

I've managed to maintain that so far...and while eventually I'd like to have enough active students in there to have regular posts on all boards all the time, I want to continue to do that by focusing on quality, not quantity.

And because my purpose with the community is to create a resource that will help writers publish their work, if they spend all their time hanging out on the boards rather than writing, I'M DOING SOMETHING WRONG.

I hope that answers your questions.

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How much should I charge for Writers' Community Membership?

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I'm FINALLY almost ready to open the Boot Camps

Students of my smaller courses have been asking me for a long time if there was any way they could join my writers'

community.

It's taken me something like two years to figure out a way to do it, and Margaret and I have tested and shot down a multitude of different softwares and processes to get here.

But I'm about ready to open the doors of my private writers community to students other than my Big Course Students.

Here are my questions:

Lifetime membership, or a monthly (or other subscription time) fee?

If lifetime membership, then one payment, or multiple payments, or the option of both?

What price?

So I'm going to show you what I'm offering, and then I'm going to ask you to tell me what a lifetime membership to this level of the community would be worth.

Remember that this is a private writers' community with a focus on writing for publication. We have (and tolerate) no spam, no trolls, no flames.

It's moderated, my moderators are spectacular (they've all taken or are taking all of my courses, they're all writers.) The community members are amazing. I attend personally, and once I get my life overhaul finished, will attend regularly as I'm writing my way through my novels.

You can take a peek at the public areas of the community here:

<http://howtothinksideways.com/forum>

You can take a look at the boards I'm opening up for the new level of membership here:

<http://howtothinksideways.com/short-courses-intro>

(Most of them are new, because I'm starting to offer workshops

for courses that have never had them before.)

So, please take a moment, reply to this post, and tell me how much I should charge for access.

Thanks for your help.

I really appreciate it.

P.S. [Here's what current students say about the community.](#)

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What Would You Recommend About Joining the Writers' Boot Camp Community?

[By Holly Lisle](#)



Holly Lisle's Writers' Boot Camps

[Since my last birthday, when I decided I was going back to writing full time](#), Margaret and I have been working on a way

for folks who haven't taken **How to Think Sideways**, **How to Revise Your Novel**, or **How to Write A Series** to join my private writers' community.

Professional Plot Outline is coming out first, NOT **How To Think Sideways**, because I'm still not done writing the Self-Pub lessons, but I'm finally getting ready to take the first little section of the roll-out live.

So anyone who has taken **Professional Plot Outline** will receive an invitation to join the writing community in the next few days to a week. (As soon as the course becomes available no Kindle, Nook, iBookstore, and shortly before it will be available in print.

Following them, I'll open the doors for students who've taken the Clinics (Character, Plot, Language, Culture, and Scenes) and the motivational courses.

And then I'll switch HTTS over to Kindle, Nook, iBooks, and print, followed by HTTS and HTWAS. As each course rolls out, people will be able to join the boards for that course.

There are a lot of writers who are eligible to join the writing community who don't yet know why they'll benefit from it.

I know what I love about the community. I love watching writers "get" the process and start succeeding.

But what do YOU love?

If you're current member of ANY of the Writer's Boot Camp sections (HTTS, HTRYN, or HTWAS), would you please take a moment and use the comments below to tell other writers why

you'd recommend joining?

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The Apple iBooks Author Issue: Small things, and large principles

[By Holly Lisle](#)

The short version: I have removed my books from sale on iBookstore because Apple has included a clause in software I don't use and wouldn't have used anyway a clause claiming the right to refuse publication on its platform of works created with this software (which is fine and I applaud their right) and further stating that if they reject your work you cannot sell it **in the format the software created** anywhere else.



THE LONG VERSION:

Here's the clause:

B. Distribution of your Work. As a condition of this License and provided you are in compliance with its terms, your Work may be distributed as follows:

(i) if your Work is provided for free (at no charge), you may distribute the Work by any available means;

(ii) if your Work is provided for a fee (including as part of any subscription-based product or service), you may only distribute the Work through Apple and such distribution is subject to the following limitations and conditions: (a) you will be required to enter into a separate written agreement with Apple (or an Apple affiliate or subsidiary) before any commercial distribution of your Work may take place; and (b) Apple may determine for any reason and in its sole discretion not to select your Work for distribution.

And then the next paragraph is bold-faced, just so you don't miss it:

Apple will not be responsible for any costs, expenses, damages, losses (including without limitation lost business opportunities or lost profits) or other liabilities you may incur as a result of your use of this Apple Software, including without limitation the fact that your Work may not be selected for distribution by Apple.

Here's [the guy who found, dissected, and posted about it, along with his dissection](#), and it will save us a BUNCH of time if you read his article.

So what's the problem? You're not going to use the damn software anyway!

Nope. I'm not. But I *had* ten books up on the iBookstore, which I put there using iTunes Producer, which is software. I do my epub versions of most of my books in iWorks Pages, which is software. And I work on Apple computers, an iPad, and an iPhone, all of which use Apple software. OS X and iOS 5 at the moment.

And the rule of software is this: Software does not get to dictate the use of output. Period. Software does not get to tell you WHERE you can sell what you've created, only that you have the right to sell it (in the cases where software requires a commercial license if you are producing for profit).

Software does not get to tell you, "If you create this work on our software and we don't want to distribute it, **we own the rights** to the version our software created, and if you want another version, you will have to disassemble this one, and rebuild it from scratch on other software."

The purpose of purchasing and/or using software is to make your work easier.

It is not to have the software claim ownership of any part of what you have created with it.

There is no difference—except in number of people affected—between a company claiming ownership of the rights to something you created with its ebook publisher, and something you created with its OS.

The principle is identical.

(Apple is not claiming to own rights to your work if you work on OS X. My removal of my own work from their site is on principle, not because my own work is affected.)

And there is no number of people affected that is insignificant. The smallest minority is the individual, and minority rights protect the rights of the individual because those are the only rights there are.

So THAT is why I pulled all my books from distribution on the iBookstore, why none of my further books or any of my writing courses will be going to the iBookstore, and why I can no longer recommend the iBookstore to my students.

And this in spite of the fact that Apple makes my favorite products in the world, and I hate like hell having to do this.

And if they remove their damn clause and respect the purpose of creative software and the rights of the individual, I'll go back.

[COMMENTS have now been closed on this post. Please read the follow-up post, and if you choose, comment there.](#)

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iBooks, My Clinics, and the Magic Button

[By Holly Lisle](#)

My Magic Button at iBooks showed up today, and I have now uploaded Plot Clinic, Culture Clinic, Language Clinic, and Page-Turning Scenes to Apple.

Probably on Friday you'll be able to find them there.

Virtual double-chunk chocolate-chip cookie to the first person who spots them before I do.



5:04 pm – Just Heard...

The queue for books to go live at iBooks is apparently about three weeks long. So figure the 48 hours thing as “would be nice” and the last of this year or the first of next as a LOT more likely.

But still—that cookie is waiting.

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NovelWritingSchool.com coming in November

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I have the temporary front page up here: <http://novelwritingschool.com/>

I have beta testers going through a free plot-outline course (a major upgrade on the current version done via e-mail on THIS site). We’re finding bugs and getting them out of the way

now. Once we get the bugs out, this will go live for EVERYONE, well before November. Probably next week. I'll post here with a link when it does.

I'll have some of the simpler existing courses ready for you in November, and will gradually build out until all of my courses and existing freebies are transferred to the new school—and then I'll start adding new courses.

The reason? Site maintenance on a bunch of different platforms and at a bunch of different domains has become too much for me to handle. So **Holly Lisle's Novel-Writing School** will free me up to concentrate on course building, NOT web work.

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My Birthday Bash: Presents for You

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Yeah, my birthday is almost here, and I decided this year to celebrate by giving presents to other people. And not just on my actual birthday, either. I'm giving away presents every day next week, plus a couple of presents starting today.

So what are your presents?

- **Day One** (that's today): Any **two** of my e-courses from the HollyShop, up to and including Page-Turning Scenes (but not the the writer's block course.) I can't give away other folks' stuff, of course, so this is limited to

just what I've written.

–Minimum value \$15.95, max value \$31.95–

▪

Day Two (Friday 3): Any **three** of my e-courses from the HollyShop, up to and including Page-Turning Scenes (but not the the writer's block course.)

–Minimum value \$25.90, max value \$41.90–

▪ **Day Three** (Saturday 4): Any **four** of my e-courses from the HollyShop, up to and including Page-Turning Scenes, **OR** the the writer's block course.

–Minimum value \$35.85, max value \$59.95–

▪ **Day Four** (Sunday 5): Any **five** of my e-courses from the HollyShop, up to and including Page-Turning Scenes, **OR** the the writer's block course.

–Minimum value \$45.80, max value \$61.80–

▪ **Day Five** (Monday 6): Any **five** of my e-courses from the HollyShop, up to and including Page-Turning Scenes, **AND** the the writer's block course.

–Minimum value \$105.70, max value \$121.75–

▪ **Day Six** (Tuesday 7): **All of my e-courses** from the HollyShop.

–Value \$151.64–

▪ **Day Seven** (Wednesday 8): **Full scholarship** to How To Think Sideways.

–Min value \$282 (6-month course), max value \$300 (\$12-month course)–

▪ **Day Eight** (Thursday 9): **Full scholarship** to How To Think Sideways, **and ANY two e-courses** from the HollyShop.

–Min value \$297.95, max value \$376.95–

- **Day Nine** (Friday 10): **Full scholarship** to How To Think Sideways, **and any four courses** from the HollyShop.
–Min value 307.90\$, max value \$386.85–
- **Day Ten** (Saturday 11): **Full scholarship** to How To Think Sideways, **and ALL of my HollyShop courses.**
–Value 451.64–

Total value of my birthday presents?

Absolute lowest value–\$1720.33

Absolute highest value–\$1987.43

But it's more than that, really.

- Because today five people will win. (\$79.95 minimum, \$159.75 max in presents)
- Friday four people will win. (\$103.60 minimum, \$167.80 max in presents)
- Saturday three people will win. (\$107.55 minimum, \$179.85 max in presents)
- Sunday, two people will win. (\$91.60 minimum, \$123.60 max in presents)
- Monday, two people will win. (\$211.40 minimum, \$243.50 max in presents)
- Tuesday, two people will win. (\$303.28 in presents)

AND...

- Wednesday two people will win. (\$564 minimum, \$600 max

in presents)

So the minimum total in presents I'm giving away for my birthday is...

\$2518.87

And the maximum total in presents I'm giving away for my birthday is...

\$2993.22

But that's not all. EVERYONE who enters will receive one gift on Monday, October 13th.

The total value of my birthday bash giveaway including **those** gifts should be well over \$5000. Could be a lot more. I'll let you know once the confetti settles. ☐

RULES

Who can enter?

Anyone but my immediate family.

And...

You could win twice, if you enter early. Here's how:

Anyone who wins an e-book gift cannot win any further e-book presents, but will be re-entered for one of the full scholarships.

What if you win and you're already a student in the Think Sideways course? Then I'll refund the tuition you've paid to this point, and you are in free for the rest of the course.

Will I refund you for e-books you win but already own? No. Therein lies a madness of paperwork I will not even consider. HOWEVER... I'll be very happy to send any prizes you win (INCLUDING a full scholarship if you want to be that generous) to someone you choose. If you win and this is an issue for you, contact me.

So...

How do you enter?

Follow me on Twitter. Here's my page:
<http://twitter.com/hollylisle>

It's free, it's easy, and I'm already discovering that Twitter is a lot of fun.

If you're already following me, you're already entered. If you're already a Twitter member, go to my page and click Follow and you're entered. If you're not already a member, it's free and it only takes a minute to join. Then return to my page click Follow. The Follow button is right under my picture on the top left corner.

I'll print off the complete list of my Twitter followers every day, and do a random drawing from those pages, PLUS the pages from every day's pages before. Yes, this means that if you start following me today, you'll get one new entry in the drawing every single day. Yes, this will improve your chances of winning, at least a little. I have no way of figuring odds. I have no idea how many people will enter. Today, right this minute, you're odds would be about 5:32. I expect they'll get a bit steeper over the next few days.

I'll announce the winners at around noon my time every day. On Twitter. ☐ (Except today, when I'll announce at around two, because I am SO behind schedule.)

And I'll do a final listing of everyone who won here after it's all over. Probably on Tuesday the 14th. Finally, EVERYONE who's following me on Twitter will get a link to one gift on that day.

So. Does that count as a cool way to celebrate a birthday?

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What About YOUR Success Story?

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Have you had success with one of my courses? If you have, I really want to hear about it. Please tell me below.

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