

Still building the website... Asking for help from HTTS students...

written by Holly
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Most of the classes are built, but there's this series of "Quick-Fix" bonuses I was building for *How to Think Sideways* before the site software broke (and then hurricane... and hurricane... and then we moved, and my programmer moved on, and I got kind of buried in stuff)...

...that I'm having a helluva time finding.

This is kind of a long list, but I'm requesting that if you're a current or graduate *How To Think Sideways* student who has any of the PDFs or MP3s for the quick fixes on your hard drive, you contact me in the forum.

NOT ALL OF THEM ARE DONE! But I don't want to re-do the ones that are... and a vigorous search of my hard drive and BOTH backup drives suggests that somehow I managed to not SAVE some of these. Probably because I did them on my laptop – which does not get the same rigorous backups my work computer gets.

Get Beyond The Blinking Cursor

Get words—good words—on the page in just minutes, without anxiety, without dread, without second-guessing yourself, without struggling for the ONE perfect word, or sentence, or paragraph your mind insists you must have.

No. More. Wire. Hangers.

Or any other picky details, world-building procrastination, backstory bingeing, character indulgence, costume mania, or

the rest of the fun distractions you've been chasing so you can tell yourself you're working while you avoid writing. Do this, get story words now.

"But I'll Never Be Shakespeare..."

Stall out because you compare yourself to writers you aren't and never will be? Here's a quick and dirty solution to stop THAT little problem dead in its tracks.

Write A Starter Scene That Doesn't Suck

Smack your inner critic over the head with this one mean, fast sledgehammer, and get on with your words before the bastard wakes up.

Defenestrate The Dwindling, Superfluous Self-Aggrandizement Of Perambulating Verbosity

Description dragging your story through frozen molasses? This quickie will pitch the blather out the window in a hurry.

"I Don't Love You Anymore... I Don't Know If I EVER Loved You."

Keep leaving your unfinished stories at the altar so you can run off with that hot young idea that looks so much better? "Hang on for one more day" with THIS short exercise.

"I Can't Make Myself Write."

If this is your problem, I have a fix. I call this one the "Ice Water" exercise. It's a shocker.

Cure Hummingbird Brain

Write, delete, backup, fidget... New idea—"Hey, that's cool,"—new character magically appears... "SQUIRREL!"—glass of water, check the email... Sound familiar? This frikkin' defines me. Here's how I fight it—and win—every damn day.

Fix Day-Week-Month Stalls

You're moving along at a steady pace, getting your daily word count... until you hit a story problem. And you stop to figure it out... only the quick stop turns into a day... a week... a month... This one is an EASY fix.

Write Interesting Plot Ideas

Plotting out your story in advance and all of a sudden, you're faced with characters and story going nowhere fast? Take only a few minutes, and stir your anthill with this BIG stick.

Conquer Wild Bob, The Plot Destroyer

So you have this out-of-control character, and he insists that your story is going to go HIS way, in spite of the fact that HIS way bears no resemblance to the story you want to write. You have some new alternatives to get him to toe the line.

He won't like them.

But you will.

Create Lightning Conflict for Every Situation

Struggling with what conflict is, how it works, or how to get it into your story now? I once plotted an entire novel using JUST this trick. (Deadlines, again, and howling desperation).

Hammer Out Human Dialogue

While consistent dialogue problems come from story issues rather than a failure of technique, and call for a more comprehensive fix, this quick trick can help you get your folks to sound like real people for the scene you're writing.

Stop Rushing Your Stories

There are a lot of reasons for rushing. The need to eat is a big one, and can't be fixed by this technique. But if you're galloping to the end of the story for no reason but to start writing the next one, my "tunnel" will help you take the time you need to do the story right.

Break the Perfectionist Freeze

Can't write anything because it doesn't turn out perfect the first time through? Yeah. I remember that. You may have to repeat this exercise, but you'll get wonderful first-draft words when you're done.

Writing In The Midst of Chaos

Writers love the ideal of the silent room away from everything where they can be alone with their thoughts. But I've written whole novels at a desk jammed against one wall of a living room with a TV behind me, kids arguing on the couch, cats with the rips tearing through the house... and you can, too. If you can't get silence or alone time, you can still write.

Fixing Transition Terrors

Some writers dread transitions like vampires dread pointy fire-hardened aged oak stakes. Unnecessarily (for the writers), as it turns out. Two minutes, five quick questions, and you'll have your transition. And it'll be a good one.

“So... I'm In the Middle, And I Finished a Scene, and... and... and...”

Lost in the vast desert of your story's middle? Let's chop this sucker down to size, and give you the next thing to write, right now.

Make the Time to Write Today

I have to thank my father for this one. It was his solution to all the time crunches he had when I was a very small kid, and it's worked for me for everything, not just writing. Mix this one with Get Beyond the Blinking Cursor, and you can write every day for the rest of your life, no matter how hellish the day's schedule.

Write Compelling Description

Ever write like you were flying, have the words just shoot from your fingertips, only to discover on rereading that you have written action, you have written dialogue, but the whole thing might as well have take place in a vacuum? This quick fix will give you immersive, fast-paced description. Fast-paced description? Seriously.

Stop Changing Your Mind Mid-Story

You want to welcome the ideas that help you move your story

forward. This is how good stories become great stories. You DON'T want or need to welcome ideas not related to your story, that derail you, that prevent you from finishing anything, and that are in the end, destructive to your success. With this tiny workshop—as long as you USE—it, the ideas that destroy your progress will no longer bother you.

Muzzle Your Over-Controlling Inner Editor

This workshop is a walk on the weird side, a couple minutes of focused fix you can put into play when your Inner Editor (left brain) starts stomping on your Muse (right brain).

Learn Your Plotting ABCs

Have trouble with plotting? Need a quick, simple, no-jargon no-theory way to just get the damned story to roll in the right direction? In this micro-workshop, you'll learn exactly that.

Gun-To-The-Head Emotion

Do you have a hard time getting characters to react with believable passion, fear, dread, shock, humor, lust, or rage? Need to give your story an emotional jumpstart? You'll get the quick fix for that.

Speak With Different Voices

All your characters sound the same? Need to give each one a unique voice without resorting to the ear-torturing dialect of novels from the 1800s? This is simple, fun... but don't let the neighbors catch you.

Pacing: Pick It Up

In this second Pacing Quick-Fix, kick a dragging scene into high gear with a 1, 2, 3 exercise that will both pick up the pace, and make you grin.

Pacing: Slow It Down

Have a scene you know is racing away from you that must go slower? Use this little technique to put the brakes on.

Life Is Short and Art Is Long and Marathons Are HARD

Writing and finishing novels—good novels—requires endurance. Patience. Unrelenting focus for long periods of time. And life has so many emergencies, urgencies, and bumps that can pull you away. SOME emergencies really are... but this trick will help you winnow out the chaff and keep your attention where you want it to be.

Butt In Chair

Want to write, but find yourself polishing the brass scones or folding underwear into 6" squares (you know because you measured), or mowing your lawn with scissors instead? Okay—this one you may not like... but one way or the other, you'll come to terms with the issue.

If you have any of these, log into your account here:
<https://hollyswritingclasses.com>

Then go to THIS FORUM LINK, and let me know which ones you have.

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