

21W.758 Genre Fiction - Instructor's Notes by Shariann Lewitt

Additional Notes & Exercises

RULE – EVERYTHING in fiction must do MORE than one thing

transitions -

beginning of every shift must give who, where, when
because we ALWAYS know THIS

As long as you set this up clearly, your transitions will work!

Dialog!

summary
indirect
direct

-- Eavesdrop!!

(and record good stuff!)

Sound natural, not be natural
brief, natural rhythm

content
set mood
reveal character
reveal Theme
be action
*reveal the past (flashbacks, remember - talk!)

NO Adverbs

When we speak we reveal –
class, education, background
region, emotion (tone)

a specific place (type) → Grandma's kitchen

smell

verb

Port leaving the dentist's office, which smelled of mint. He went to the airfield to check on the dirigible, which was in worse shape than he remembered. But he wanted to see it alone, without Althea. And there he saw a man in flying leathers inspecting the craft, a stranger.

(Tomas Byrne)

“She's not much,” Byrne said.

“When we're done with her, she'll fly like nothing you've ever seen,” Port insisted.

fact and fancy exercise - @ 500 words –

write down a short autobiographical incident, alternate one sentence of objective fact with focused details, without bias or interpretation. The next sentence should be personal opinion; it should reveal feeling; it should respond to the factual sentence, but it need not respond directly.

The best fiction to come from this exercise has been when the sentence pairings are tangential or associative rather than cause and effect.

agents –

Characters want
Characters Act
Characters CHOOSE.

Exercise for Person 1

What DIDN'T happen

Person 1 (fantasy life)

assign each person a Fantasy for a “Character”

Wizard

romance on Mercury

space pilot/trader

You are “character”

Exercise for Person 2

WHAT is “Character”?

Robot?

fully biological clone?

How is he viewed by his society?

How is “Character 1” different from “Character 2”?

What in pockets?

images?

Exercise for Person 3

Images/Collage -

Start with the port and the game

What other images do you get?
Make an image collage –
move out from the port

Port suggests: { images
images
images

rejection
24 hour rule
rejection letters (kins)

2 kinds of exercises -
accessing right brain creativity
(we're very good at getting to and using left brain, but right brain is a black box)

left brain - working on language skills

“You Lie”

Improv scene game to explore character.
Author is “X” (Character)
others are people in X's life who want something
Improv scenes-
Author can stop any scene by saying “You lie”
but then tells us why –
what really happened!

What's in its pockets?

Off the top of your head, very quickly, list ten things in the characters' pockets/backpack/bag-

Exposition –

slowing down-
fleshing
show, don't tell

PACING - an entire subject-
event

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