

Writing Games, Writing Tips, Writing Exercises.

by Mat Clarke

First release on January 2014

Produced and published by Last Page Pty Ltd at Kindle Direct Publishing
ISBN 9781310690419

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Don't wait. Write now!

**Learn to write creatively in a fun and explorative way.
Tips on becoming a better writer are included as well.**

Do you want to become a writer?

Do you have a story in you that wants out?

Maybe you like to dabble in writing or keep a blog?

Maybe you like the idea of writing but never get past the *idea* stage?

If any of the above sounds like you or your writing interests, then you will enjoy reading this book and trying out the many writing games within.

The great thing is you don't even have to do these on your own. Try them with a friend. Read the stories out to each other as soon as they are written (with no editing - you'll be surprised at how well you do).

Post them online for others to read once they have been edited. The Story Mint Writers Pad is a great place for you and other writers to do so.

Don't be shy, it's only words on paper or a screen. Jump in and enjoy yourself!

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to the people from my writing group for participating in the continuing writing games workshops I hold in Melbourne, Australia.

The Melbourne Writers Social group:
Melbourne Writers Facebook
Melbourne Writers [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com/melbourne-writers/)

Chapters

Introduction

About writing & this book.

Chapter 1

Short and long games.

Chapter 2

Minimal writing, fast writing.

Chapter 3

Tips, editing and help with becoming the writer you want to be.

Also information on being published, entering writing competitions, and sending your work off in a proper and professional way.

Lastly, uploading your work to Smashwords and Kindle.

Links to Mat Clarke

Introduction

About writing and this book

How could a jumble of words with a little punctuation become something that's interesting to read?

Is it a gift from the gods? Something only the highly educated can produce? Or maybe anyone can do it?

If you want to know if YOU can achieve your writing goals, then why not have a play around with some words and sentences using my writing games. All tested many times on willing subjects from my writing group.

What you know

Most people write what they know. Be they writing a blog, a blurb on a non-fiction topic, a book, or possibly poetry or songs (must be a lot of break ups going on out there!). This makes sense considering it requires no research. If it happened to you then you are the best person to write about it. The only thing you need to do then is make it interesting for people to read and put it in a format that people will want to read.

If you would like to test your knowledge on worldly affairs and social issues to see what *you* know, then list five topics or things you like, love or talk about often, and then write as many things about each you can. At the end you'll discover what you want to write as your next piece.

Free Writing or Stream of Consciousness

This involves writing anything and everything that comes into your head. Some of it will be garbled nonsense, some will be like a twisted dream where scenes overlap and people's faces change from one person to the next. Then, if you're lucky, the rest will be something you can work with - or will give you ideas for something you wish to work on next.

To begin as simply as possible, start punching any and all words/sentences you can think of into your word processor (or pen to paper if you prefer), don't worry about how insane what you type sounds, just type. Think of it as a dream you are having where anything can happen; you may be walking along a road that stretches for miles, then there is someone next to you and they're talking about how they love to travel, suddenly you are in Egypt, etc.

That's very basic, don't stop there, write anything that pops into your head. It could be that your arm becomes disconnected from your body and moves by its own accord, it finds a snake and they have a "romantic" time together. An enormous tidal wave washes that away and you see from the corpses floating around you that the entire planet has been engulfed by floods killing all land life.

Sentences don't need to make sense, words don't need to be spelled correctly and a full

stop doesn't need to be used at all. Just go!

Everything I have just mentioned sounds absurd, but this is how I first began to write. I later learned that there were books written on this style, making it an exercise to try when learning to write or if you want to free your mind up. It's called free writing or also stream-of-consciousness writing. Look it up.

This kind of writing has a habit of freeing your thoughts, but also being a constructive method in getting words down when otherwise you may be staring at a blank page. After writing for fun with no direction, you can begin moulding a story that you are interested in and making it your first short story, novel or other writing piece.

The idea of these games is to concentrate on just writing.

If you follow the game completely, well and good. If not, it doesn't matter. Just write!

The basics are, I give you some objects and scenarios and you start writing whatever pops into your head. As long as words are going down, it's all good. Even if you end up only doing a single paragraph.

Sometimes you'll generate a great story, sometimes it will be a whole lot of words but not much else. Which is fine, because it may give you ideas for something else.

Chapter 1

Short and long games

For each of these games I would like you to set a timer. Approximately 20-30 minutes. If that doesn't suit you, then anywhere between 15-44 minutes will suffice as well. It would benefit you if you alternate how long each game runs. For example, the first game you try you set the alarm for 20 minutes. The next game you set the alarm for 35 minutes. The next one you set the alarm for 25 minutes. And so on.

This helps you work to a deadline. Helps you write rather than procrastinate. Helps you increase the pace of a story rather than writing three paragraphs on how yellow a person's shirt is.

Writing more concisely is an art. It's something you have to practice, and it doesn't come easily. Get help from an editor if you want someone to help you trim the fat from a story you have created.

One:

This is a game where you write a story involving a few different things or places or settings. Your job is to write a story (fiction, non-fiction, poetry) using all, or most of these few things:

A truck
A bridge
The military

Tricky part: Before starting this game you will need to write **two** possible endings. A few sentences will do. A paragraph or two is fine as well if you would prefer to write a little more.

One of the endings needs to be leaning towards a happy ending, while the other needs to be a not so happy ending.

Then try and work towards at least one of those endings.

If you have time, write another story that works towards the other ending.

Two:

Write a story involving an argument between two people. Three if you want. Dialogue is really hard to do and make it sound real/believable.

Use, said, rather than exclaimed or murmured or other speaker attributions. Said, is almost always the right word to use. Said, is like a full stop, most readers will glide right over it without really noticing it consciously. Other speaker attributions draw the reader out of the story to take note of the person *grimacing* a sentence.

Cut out speaker attributions where the reader knows who is talking.

If you get sick of the word, said, try some actions in your dialogue instead, for example:

“I don’t blame you Marge,” Bob said.

“Thank god for that!” Marge put her hands on her hips

Bob gulped and his face whitened. “I... I’m sorry I said that.”

Try not to interrupt your dialogue with too many descriptions.

Use these things:

Disabled

Light headed

Baggage

Poor lighting

Three:

Write a short story, up to 500 words, but leaving out anything that gives it feeling or depth (very few adverbs, few adjectives, no similes or metaphors, etc.). Then once you’re done, put the detail and feelings and description in and make your work sing!

Another thing, when you are putting in your adverbs etc., try and leave out unnecessary adjectives and adverbs and “ly” adverbs.

Your first work should be sterile, consisting mostly of bare-bones descriptions and skeletal dialogue.

When you change it, consider adding richness to interior monologue (this is basically the character thinking in his or her head, just don’t over do it, and avoid having your characters ask questions in his or her head. One or two is okay).

When you’re describing something (during the fix up stage) make sure you show and not tell, express not explain. Try expressing how, say, a damaged car looks by a character doing something.

Jobe touched the edges of the panel where the door had been torn away.

Theme: An old man visiting his home town after many years. Feel free to include old friends and other characters as you see fit.

Four:

Write a story involving an argument about how driving is better than public transport, or vice-versa, involving two people, or three if you find the conversation becomes dry.

Use, said, rather than exclaimed or murmured or other speaker attributions. Said, is almost always the right word to use. Said, is like a full stop, most readers will glide right over it without really noticing it consciously. Other speaker attributions draw the reader out of the story to take note of the person *grimacing* a sentence.

Cut out speaker attributions where the reader knows who is talking.

If you get sick of the word, said, try some actions in your dialogue instead, for example:

“I don’t blame you Marge,” Bob said.

“Thank god for that!” Marge put her hands on her hips

Bob gulped and his face whitened. “I... I’m sorry I said that.”

Try not to interrupt your dialogue with too many descriptions, especially during an argument where you want the text to sizzle.

Five:

This is a game where you write a story involving a few different things or places or settings. Your job is to write a story (fiction, non-fiction, poetry) using all, or most of these few things:

A dark room

A sewing machine

A key

Note: the story can not involve escape or trying to find a light source.

Six:

This is a game where you write a story involving a few different things or places or settings. Your job is to write a story (fiction, non-fiction, poetry) using all, or most of these few things:

An old man sitting up against a tree

Fast cars

Write this in intimate third person, keeping one point of view only (your main character). You can only describe what the main character can see, hear, touch, smell, is thinking about, etc.

Notes: One of the most vital and difficult tasks is creating believable and engaging characters. An intimate point of view is a great way to do this.

Allowing a character’s emotions to seep into descriptions will be much better than simply conveying information to your readers.

Seven:

In this game I would like you to write something that could be entered into a short story competition.

Here are some limitations sometimes set by competitions:

- 1) Short story of around 1500 words or less (500 if you wish to do poetry)
- 2) Theme is: The December holiday / festive season in a major city. This can involve Christmas, New Years, summer or winter, with family on the holidays, camping over the holidays, etc.
- 3) Post this online, email to friends, talk to people from a writers' group and gain some feedback. Think about any information you received from people and then decide if it is right for you.

Eight:

This is a game where you write a story involving a few different things or places or settings. Your job is to write a story (fiction, non-fiction, poetry) using all, or most of these few things:

A bad driver
The moon
A small child

Hard part: It is not night. The child is not in a car. No cars are moving or idling in the immediate area.

Nine:

Write a story about two boys or girls around the age of 10-13. 70% of your story must contain dialogue.

This is not a regular thing, most stories contain very little dialogue for a few reasons:

- 1) It's often hard to have characters talk about interesting things and keep your story balanced.
- 2) It's often you'll insert exposition into your dialogue if you write this much dialogue. Refrain from doing this, you want the talking to be natural and realistic. Show us what is happening through actions as well as words. Show emotion through what a person says and does without using tricks like this:

'Go and take a walk,' he said sincerely.

Instead, change the dialogue so we understand he is being sincere. Or add an action.

Ten: