

“Homework” Assignments for Jump Start Your Novel

- Make a list of as many scenes as you can that may be in your novel.
- Draft roughly some of these scenes you haven’t written yet. Especially draft some of the ones in the final third of the novel.
- Write the last page of your novel even if you’ve only drafted 10 pages.
- Write two alternative beginnings– preferably from different points of view.
- Your main character walks into a place for the first time. Use as many of the senses as you can. This can be anything from a church to a crime scene to a mountaintop. Take a look at this place from a story called “Consultations” by Ariel Dorfman that has no visual details:

You don't answer. Sometimes that works. At this point you hope that it's one of those questions that don't require an immediate answer, that it's just one more exercise. That's the way it turns out. The minutes pass. The only thing you can hear is the sound of boots slipping off and dropping to the floor, and then feet dropping heavily on the nearby table that serves as a desk, and finally an expression of satisfaction, somewhere between a sigh and a grunt. The soldiers must have sat down, too; nobody is saying anything. Then, the sharp scratch of match, a cigarette being lit, its aroma spreading, a mild tickle of smoke visiting you. You're surprised that you have no desire to smoke. The mere idea claws at your throat and fills you with nausea. It must be your obsessive, overwhelming thirst: your body can't crave anything other than water. Now they are bringing in a tray. You hear them taking their seats around the table, the dragging of chairs, the shuffle of papers being pushed aside and murmuring of anticipation and camaraderie

- Described a minor character using senses other than sight.
- Put a holiday meal in your novel with all the senses included
- Put a bird in your novel and build a scene around it. (Can be a pet, a wild bird, a piece of jewelry in the shape of a bird, etc.)
- Write a scene you’ve already written, or a new one, a different point of view: if your novel is 1st person, try third. If yours is told in the moment by a child, try that child grown up and remembering or otherwise at a distance
- Check out **national novel writing month** at <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>
- Write some of the following scenes that could be in any novel
 - The main character wakes up with a hangover, literal or figurative (that is to say, something bad happened the night before.)
 - Someone chooses a gift for someone else.
 - Write a scene where an important character is in crisis and thinking about it
 - Write a kiss in your novel. This could be sexual or respectful or whatever.
 - Describe a knife and put it in your novel.
- – Go into a minor character and “overhear” their thoughts– write a monologue for them. I used visualize, approach person, on this too

For more ideas and information, look at

<http://www.meredithsuewillis.com/writingexercises.html>

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