

THE WRITER COMMUNITY'S  
INTRODUCTION TO

# *Writing Description*



# 1

## *How to avoid Over-describing*

- First draft - Don't worry about over describing. **JUST WRITE.** The first draft is your brain dump. Unless you are a writing prodigy, your first draft is **NOT** going to be a masterpiece. That doesn't mean it can't be fixed later on, but don't worry about it right now.
- First time writers often fall into the "info dump" trap, so that is what you want to avoid. That is also why a good editor is so important. There is an art to trickling information throughout your story, but it's not something you are instantaneously good at. You have to practice.
- Aim for 2-3 sentences of description, not whole paragraphs.

# 1

## *How to avoid Over-describing*

- There is nothing wrong with description (Let's take Charles Dickens for example. He describes just about every little detail you can think of.) However, if you're writing to market, you need to be aware that most readers are fast paced. You're competing with television and movies, which give the reader what they want, when they want it. That means if you start writing all about your magic system and how the world was created and why this character acts the way he or she acts, you may lose your reader.
- The amount of description you write into your story may vary depending on genre. So know your genre.
- Beta readers can help point out over-descriptions.

# 1

## *How to avoid Over-describing*

- Tips to avoid over-describing (to be done in the editing phase)
  - Ask yourself if the description you're providing is driving your plot or character arc. Why is it there? Why does it matter? If you don't know. Take it out! ALL descriptions must be essential.
  - Kill your darlings includes overly descriptive scenes. Cut without mercy. We all know it hurts.
  - Chekhov's Gun - try to only mention things if they have a significant importance to your story.
- Don't try to be too creative in describing, it can come across as overdone and just not work (again that's what editing is for)

## 2

# *How to avoid White Rooms*

- Less is more.
- Pick one or two things that would stand out to your character and use that to describe
- Trust your reader to fill in the blanks and trust your ability as a writer to give enough description
- Often, when you describe in too much detail, you're doing it because you like it and not because your story needs it or your reader needs it
- Try a non-traditional approach and describe something different
- Try the angle of small description of little things

# 3

## *How to avoid Repetition*

- Repetition can look like:
  - Using the same dialogue tag over and over again
  - The same words
  - The same phrases
  - Using the same descriptors to describe a character / their ticks or quirks (if you've done your job right, you shouldn't have to always bring it up)
  - When having to summarize a past event, doing it over and over and over again
- Programs to help you with this step during editing:
  - Grammarly
  - ProwritingAid

# 3

## *How to avoid Repetition*

- Read your story out loud. It's far easier to catch these moments when you're reading aloud (or having your computer read to you)
- Beta Readers, ask them to look out for this if you think it's a problem
- Ask yourself if there is a reason you're bringing something up again. If there isn't a reason then don't bring it up
- Show don't tell, this will help you avoid redundancy to a point.

# 4

## Show Don't Tell

- Remember your five senses:
  - Sight
  - Taste
  - Touch
  - Scent
  - Sound
- These senses will help you establish what is happening in your story without just telling you reader. Anton Chekhov says it very well: “Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.”
- Don’t worry about this during your first draft phase, but during editing, pay attention.
- Highlight your adverbs and adjectives. There is nothing wrong with using them unless you’re overdoing it. Writing in an active voice can help you with this.

DID YOU FIND THIS USEFUL?

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