



## Worksheet: Letter Writing

Creating a World in a Letter with Kerry Hudson

### **Who are you writing to?**

We write to do lots of different things, but at the heart of it, we're writing to communicate something. Perhaps that's never clearer than with letter writing. When you're writing to someone – whether in long-form on a page or through a series of text messages digitally – the person you're writing to and the way you choose to write your letter can dramatically change the power and impact of your letter. Writing letters doesn't need to only be about sharing information, but can be a creative practice, sharing big ideas or sometimes even expressing something you wish you had said to an important person in your life.

### **Get writing:**

#### **Plot out the main ideas of your letter. (10:46)**

**Write a letter (12.17)** - and then adapt it for different modes of communication. What changes in your characters when you translate your letter into a series of text messages?

#### **What does the form we write a letter in do to change the contents of the letter?**

Use the bones of the letter that you decided on during the workshop. You should know:

- **Who your letter writer is** and what their **relationship** is to the person they are writing to
- **Who your letter writer is writing to** - who the audience of the letter is and what other characters your letter will feature
- **What motivates your letter writer and the person they're writing to**
- **What the setting is** - what country, location, era and time of day you are depicting as the writer of the letter

**Remember:** The American writer Kurt Vonnegut wrote 'Every character should want something, even if it is only a glass of water'.

**What do your characters want?** This will give you a structure for your letter.

**How do your characters express what they want?** Do they ask for it directly, and what shapes the way they ask for it?

**Once you know all this, you can start to translate your letter into a series of text messages.**

Ask yourself:

- **What changes about your characters** when you write through text messages?
- **Do the ways in which your characters communicate about what they want change** when you translate them into texts?

You may also want to think about:

- **The impact time makes to your letter in different forms** - is the way time affects your letter different when you write it for paper post to when you write it for text message? How much of a difference does instant delivery make to the way you write your letter?
- **The ways in which your language changes when you write in different forms** - do you find yourself writing with a different tone when you translate your letter into a series of texts?

**Bonus challenge:**

When you've finished translating your letter into a series of texts, can you write replies as the character your letter writer has been writing to? What are the challenges to writing a series of letters from two different perspectives rather than just one? Does your writing style change for your different letter writers?

Your workshop today was led by **Kerry Hudson**, who has also designed your takeaway writing challenge too.

**About Kerry:**

Kerry Hudson was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and she writes fiction and non-fiction, for which she's won several awards. Her first novel was called *Tony Hogan Bought Me An Ice Cream Float Before He Stole My Ma*. Her first non-fiction book was called *Lowborn: Growing Up, Getting Away and Returning to Britain's Poorest Towns*, which told the story of Kerry's life so far and particularly explored the impact of social class and poverty on her childhood. She currently lives in Prague, Czech Republic.

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