



Day 5: Exploration—Image Journal

Instructor: Jackie Cangro

Is your “writing hat” something you put on only when you sit at the computer and open your WIP document? Then you remove that hat and go on about your day—doing the laundry, taking care of the kids, commuting to the office? I want you to be a writer 24/7. Because you’re always writing whether you realize it or not. Everything you take in through your senses; all of your experiences, your emotions; the stories you hear and share...they’re all coming together to help you craft your WIP. But you have to connect with them. This journal will help you do that.

Image Journal

Images should work on two levels: They should portray the way things are in the world of your story, and they should connect the reader to the characters on an emotional level.

But first...we are going to connect you to the images in your world. This exploration is going to give you permission to wear your writing hat no matter where you are or what you’re doing. Soon enough, you’ll be incorporating these techniques in your WIP. Your characters will thank you.

Exploration

Carry your notebook with you, and when you encounter something to which you have a strong reaction, write it in your journal. It’s important to get the description down on paper as you experience it. Waiting until later will dilute the emotion connected with it. (Of course you can refine your words later.)

For example, if you're looking out your office window and see a beautiful rainbow, record this in your journal. Describe the rainbow, making sure to convey why you noticed it and your feelings connected with it.

Don't forget to use as many senses as possible. It's easy to rely on sight alone, but compelling descriptions utilize all of your senses. Your descriptions can be as long—or as short—as needed.

Deeper Dive

Keep your image journal going! Bring your notebook with you wherever you go. I think writing is the best way to go here. But if a pen and paper are too old school for you, keep a note system on your phone or tablet so you can add new descriptions to the same document.

Before long, you'll find that images are jumping out at you and you'll be looking for interesting things to jot down. Then you'll find that when you do open that WIP document, you'll be seeing the world through your protagonist's eyes a bit differently. Your characters will notice things they hadn't before

Forum

Please go to the [Forum](#) link in the classroom. I'd love to read a few of your images from today's journal, if you'd like to post them.

Since today is the last day of the class, the forum will remain open until Sunday. Also, please take a few moments to complete the course feedback form. I want to know what you liked about this class, what you'd like to see improved, and what kinds of courses I can offer in the future. Thank you in advance!