



WORKBOOK 05

World-Building WORKBOOK

Create a world your readers can feel.

THIS WORKBOOK BELONGS TO

WORKBOOK 05 · WRITE YOUR FIRST NOVEL

World-Building

Create a world your readers can feel.

DESIGNED FOR

The Write Your First Novel
course

FORMAT

Fill-in module workbook

YOUR OUTCOME

Create your story's world

INSIDE THIS WORKBOOK

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Purpose

WHY THIS WORKBOOK

To create a world your readers can feel, using sensory and immersive technique and language.

Your world shapes atmosphere, mood, and meaning. This snapshot keeps your world consistent and immersive — with consistent mood, sensory detail and emotional tone.



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Instructions

To get the best out of this worksheet, read and consider each prompt carefully. There's no right or wrong answer. Use your creativity and imagination to design a world, adopting the five senses rule to describe details the reader can begin to see, hear, smell, taste and even feel vividly.

01

STEP ONE

Complete each section.

02

STEP TWO

Focus on sensory detail and emotional tone.

03

STEP THREE

Use the sample (Pearl's story) as a guide if needed.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Introduction

World-building is not just for fantasy or sci-fi. Every story — even contemporary fiction — takes place in a world with rules, textures, atmospheres and emotional tones.

This activity helps you define the key elements of your story world so your scenes feel immersive, consistent and alive.

A STRONG WORLD

Anchors your characters

Shapes your plot

Influences your protagonist's choices

Creates mood, tension and emotional resonance

INSTRUCTIONS

- Read each section carefully.
- Answer using short, clear statements or bullet points.
- Focus on sensory detail, emotional tone, and the “rules” of your world.
- Use the sample (Pearl’s story) as a guide if needed.
- You can expand these notes later during drafting.

This worksheet guides you through the essential components of world-building in a simple, structured way.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Four elements of a *living world*

01

Rules of the world

Every world has rules — spoken or unspoken. These rules shape what is possible, acceptable, dangerous, or forbidden.

EXAMPLES

- Social rules
- Cultural expectations
- Economic limitations
- Magical or supernatural laws (if applicable)
- Power dynamics
- Community norms

02

Sensory detail

Your world becomes real when readers can feel it. Use sensory detail to create texture and atmosphere.

EXAMPLES

- What does this world look like?
- What sounds define it?
- What smells linger?
- What textures or temperatures dominate?
- What tastes are associated with this place?

03

Atmosphere

Atmosphere is the emotional tone of your world. It shapes how readers feel when they enter it.

EXAMPLES

- Warm and hopeful
- Cold and oppressive
- Chaotic and unpredictable
- Quiet and melancholic
- Tense and foreboding

04

Meaningful locations

Your story will revolve around a handful of key places. Each location should matter emotionally or narratively.

EXAMPLES

- The protagonist's home
- Workplace
- A symbolic place tied to their past
- A location where major events occur
- A place that represents transformation

PART A · WORLD-BUILDING OVERVIEW

Sketch your *world*

1

World overview

A brief summary of the world your story takes place in.

2

Rules of the world

What governs behaviour, opportunity, danger, or possibility in this world?

3

Key locations*List the places that matter most in your story, and why they matter.*

PLACE

WHY IT MATTERS

4

Sensory details*Describe the sensory experience of your world.*

SIGHT

SOUND

SMELL

TOUCH

TASTE

5

Atmosphere*What emotional tone defines your world?*

WORKED EXAMPLE

Pearl's *world*

SAMPLE · PEARL'S WORLD

WORLD OVERVIEW

Pearl's world is a gritty, urban environment shaped by poverty, survival, and the hustle of working multiple jobs. It's a city full of opportunity but also danger — a place where trust is rare and independence is essential.

RULES OF THE WORLD

- People look out for themselves first.
- Vulnerability is dangerous.
- Money equals safety.
- Trust must be earned slowly.
- Those with privilege move through the world differently from those without it.
- The past has a way of resurfacing when least expected.

KEY LOCATIONS

- **Pearl's tiny rented room:** symbolises survival and independence.
- **Her workplace(s):** represent exhaustion, hustle, and determination.
- **Charlie's neighbourhood:** a world of stability and privilege she has never known.
- **The café where they meet:** a neutral space where trust begins.
- **A location tied to her trauma:** a place she must confront to heal.

SAMPLE · SENSORY DETAILS

SIGHT	Crowded streets, flickering neon signs, worn buildings; Charlie's clean and quiet neighbourhood.
SOUND	Traffic, shouting, music from shops, the hum of city life.
SMELL	Street food, dustbins, exhaust fumes, damp stairwells; Charlie's world smelling of fresh coffee and clean air.
TOUCH	Rough fabrics, cold metal railings, the warmth of Charlie's home.
TASTE	Cheap takeaway meals, bitter coffee, the sweetness of new experiences.

ATMOSPHERE (SAMPLE)

Pearl's world feels tense, gritty, and survival-driven. Charlie's world feels calm, safe, and full of possibility. The contrast between these atmospheres mirrors Pearl's internal conflict.

YOUR WORKBOOK JOURNEY

Workbooks & worksheets in this course

Complete each one within the course. Tick it off as you finish — every box is a step closer to a finished first draft.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 01 | The Writer's Identity Declaration
WORKBOOK | ☐ |
| 02 | The Story Seed
WORKBOOK | ☐ |
| 03 | The Protagonist Profile
TEMPLATE | ☐ |
| 04 | Plot Mapping
WORKBOOK | ☐ |
| 05 | Immersive World-Building Snapshot
WORKBOOK | ☒ |
| 06 | Scene Starter
TEMPLATE | ☐ |
| 07 | Revision Roadmap
WORKSHEET | ☐ |

COURSE MODULES

Track your progress

Eighteen modules across three parts. Tick each module as you complete it.

MODULES

Part One

- ☐ The Writer's Mindset
- ☐ Creative Identity
- ☐ Finding & Refining Your Novel Idea
- ☐ Building Believable Characters
- ☐ Plot Architecture
- ☐ Story Mapping

MODULES

Part Two

- ☐ World Building & Story Settings
- ☐ Immersive Story Writing
- ☐ Story Mapping and Arcs
- ☐ Rule with Your Imagination
- ☐ Reinforce with Factual Research
- ☐ Write Your First Draft Fearlessly

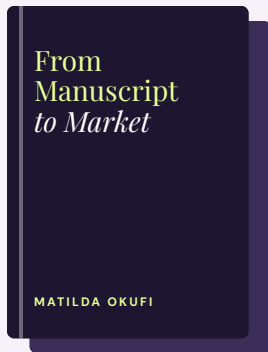
MODULES

Part Three

- ☐ Finding Readers – Pre-Edit
- ☐ Editing and Proofreading
- ☐ Platforms and Formats
- ☐ Where Is Your Audience?
- ☐ Your Author Persona
- ☐ All About Publishing

KEEP GROWING

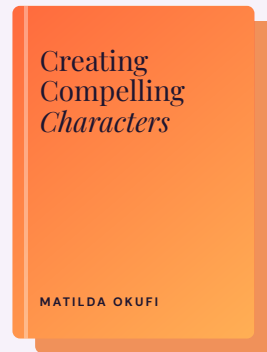
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IDEAS, FRAGMENTS, SPARKS

Notes

IDEAS, FRAGMENTS, SPARKS

Notes

WORKBOOK 05 COMPLETE

How's it going?

You have just completed the fifth in a series of workbooks for the **Write Your First Novel** course.

By now you have committed to your Writer's Identity, created your Story Seed and used it as a foundation for the Protagonist Profile, developed the plot map and designed the world for your story.

Your confidence as a writer should be in full bloom! I am proud of you for using this resource and coming this far.

ONE WORD FOR HOW I FEEL

YOUR PROGRESS



Writer's Identity



Story Seed



Protagonist Profile



Plot Mapping



World-Building

Keep going · Write Your First Novel

Continue the course at thecopyshiftcreatives.com

I wish you the very best on your journey of storytelling.

Love, Matilda x

POET · WRITER · AUTHOR

Matilda Okufi

Founder & Lead Writer, The CopyShift Creatives and The Authority Atelier

I am passionate about storytelling. At work, my mission is to get more people to tell their stories — be it life stories, career journeys or fictional narratives.

This is the motivation behind the books I write, the events I run and the courses I create.

Love, Matilda x



WEBSITE



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