



Novel Writing Fundamentals with Emily Maguire

Introduction video transcript

Hi, I'm Emily Maguire and I am your tutor. I'm the author of six novels and three nonfiction books. I wrote my first novel almost 20 years ago now, so I have been doing this for some time.

When I wrote that first novel I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. I had not taken any classes. I had not done any courses. I didn't know any novelists. I learned so much about writing a novel just from writing that first novel. Every novel I've written since has been like a whole new masterclass in how to do this.

And that's what I love about it. I feel like I will never be finished learning and working out how to use various techniques and tricks and tips, and just to keep using my craft to make books that I feel excited about.

But just as every book I've written has taught me heaps about writing a novel, so has every book I've read. And I read a lot. The point is – we're never done learning. And so whatever stage you're at, whatever you feel about your own baseline knowledge about the various craft and techniques in novel writing, you're good to start.

You don't have to wait to have perfect knowledge to start, because you will never have perfect knowledge. None of us will. That's what's so fun about this.

So I really encourage you to go into this course with the idea that you are going to start writing a novel straight away. Use the exercises as prompts to get started. And try, if you don't already have this, try and get a writing habit going from a really early stage too.

So as you work through the modules in the course and kind of start to really solidify your knowledge and your theory for some of this stuff, make sure that alongside that you are actually putting the time in and putting the words on the page all the way along. It's a bit of an annoying thing to say I know, but I have to because it's true, and that is that the best way to write something is to write something.

By that I mean you just have to start, you just have to start getting words on the page. And very often what will happen is that momentum will kick in. As you start writing, as you build the habit, as each writing session starts to get underway, it will become easier.

And you will become more confident because you're practising it, because you're doing it.



Every great writer will tell you that their best writing actually happens as revision – as rewriting. Likely that will be true for you too. First drafts can be, well, a bit messy. But that *great* writing that happens in revision and rewriting, that can't happen if you don't have words on the page.

So once again, learning all about technique and craft is really important and can really help you get there faster and perhaps with less frustration, but you need to be putting those words on the page the whole time. So that you have something to craft.

That's the way I do it. That's the way every writer I know does it. We learn about craft, we think about craft, we study craft, we analyse craft. But we wouldn't have anything written if we didn't sit down with imperfect knowledge and just start writing.

I'm glad you're here. Best of luck.