

How to write a novel...

Check your impulse

Author's earnings per year =
£5k average

Source: Society of Authors

So why are you here – why isn't
your novel already written?

Getting started

‘That afternoon there was rain,
just as she’d said there would
be...’

Why do we abandon our
beginnings?

The haves and the have *nots*

“The novel went through many drafts and there were large sections I cut completely. I find the initial writing (as opposed to the subsequent rewriting) hard and the results often feel lumpen.

A novel is such a mess for a long time and that’s what you have to be prepared to deal with – to face this mess every day.”

“How I write” Emily Perkins

Time Out Interview

1% inspiration 99% perspiration

Some key components of a
successful first draft

‘Strong’ characters and good
characterisation

Finding the plot

‘Immensely diverting ... a pacy
read, constructed with a crisp
control of tension and narrative
drive’

Observer

Structure

*Writing what you know vs
research*

- either way, proceed with
caution

Whose story is it anyway?

Narrative point of view

Showing vs telling
“dramatise, dramatise,
dramatise”
Henry James

Effective dialogue, description,
setting...

Knowing your reader...and by
extension your market

Constructive feedback

A craft like any other

Further reading

- How novels work by John Mullan
- Creative Writing: a workbook with readings (ed. Linda Anderson,)
- The Creative Writing Coursebook: Forty Authors Share Advice and Exercises for Fiction and Poetry by Julia Bell, Andrew Motion
- A Creative Writing Handbook: developing dramatic technique, individual style and voice
- From pitch to publication by Carole Blake