



Georgiawriters

Nicole Homer's Revision as Play

The Companion Guide

Play isn't permanent, but as with improv, you must commit to it. Most of what you write will be a bridge, a ladder, or a door. It will get us to where we need to go, but it's not the destination.

–Nicole Homer

Choose one creative writing piece (poetry or prose) you would like to revise. You'll want to make sure you have your original work open in another tab. Nicole Homer suggests you copy the original work and paste it for each exercise to keep your existing work and any changes you make in each section. NOTE: You'll be "revising" this piece seven times.

These are self-timed exercises. As you write, it's okay to leave off at a spot where you can pick back up at a later time or date and continue to write. The times below are suggested. Take as much or as little time to complete the exercises.

Ready?

Exercise 1: English-to-English Translation (7 minute exercise)¹

Separate your work into lines. Under each line, you will write a "translation." This translation could be figurative to literal, or you might wish to change your audience etc. The goal is to reinterpret your work and shed new light on its possibilities.

Suggestion: move the lines you are translating into columns to make it easier to compare your original language to the translated phrasing.

¹ This exercise used to be done in Google translate. The goal was to change your language from the one that you're using to something unrelated; however, due to advancements, Google Translate has gotten much better. Thus, English to English translation was born.

Exercise 2.1: Who is your Audience? (5 - 6 minute exercise)

This exercise requires you to be open and honest with yourself as a writer. It's important that you clearly and directly identify who is in your audience and whom you're writing to. Take a moment to think about your work, then answer the following questions:

- Who are you writing for?
- Who are you writing to?
 - Can be a person, place, thing, emotion, etc.

On a new page, spend the next 5-6 minutes directly addressing your chosen audience (Ex. "Dear Forgiveness," "Dear Pandemic," "Dear Mom," etc.).

Exercise 2.2: Rewrite as a Series of Questions (4 - 5 minute exercise)

Once you've identified your audience, rewrite your text as a series of questions directed at that audience. Ask questions you may not know the answer to, but *they* might. These should be authentic questions that you want the audience to answer.

Exercise 2.3: Make a Character Sketch (3 minute exercise)

Turn your audience into a character and tell us what you know about them. If your audience is an individual, think about their dispositions, their upbringing, or whatever makes them different. If your audience is imaginative or an abstraction, what are the characteristics of this abstraction?

Exercise 2.4: Answer our Questions to our Audience (4 minute exercise)

Using your character sketch, answer your questions from your audience's perspective. Try to be as detailed as possible.

Exercise 3: Apophasis (3 minute exercise)

Apophasis is about addressing an issue while claiming not to. Tell the audience what you're *not* going to tell them. Alternatively, you could also consider what your audience isn't telling *you*.

For example: "I'm not going to say how you're going to fail me and continue to fail me." OR "I'm not going to tell you to go get the mail, because it's going to be a big deal."

Exercise 4: Favorite Line or Sentence (7 minute exercise)

Find your favorite line in a stanza and count how many words or syllables are in the line. Next, rewrite the lines of the stanza with the same number of syllables or words (no more no less).

If you're writing prose, find your favorite line in a paragraph and count the amount of words used. Your goal is to make sure that no two sentences have the same number of words/syllables. So if your "favorite" sentence has ten, no other sentence in that paragraph can have ten. Aiming to heighten your musicality.

Exercise 5: Rewriting as a List (3 minute exercise)

Turn your prose or poem into a list of exactly ten items. *You* choose what the list is made of: nouns, verbs, objects, etc.

Use this list to see the progression of your work and consider what you want your audience to know by the end of your work. You may use this list to reorder and restructure your work. It may even change the order in which you reveal certain moments of your story.

Exercise 6: Shorten your Lines (6 minute exercise)

Count how many lines you have in your poem or how many sentences you have in a paragraph and cut that number in half. So, if you have 10 lines in a poem, cut it down to 5. If you have 20 sentences, cut it down to 10 sentences.

You can rewrite sentences or lines to make this count possible. The goal is to trim back.

Exercise 7: Total Draft Rewrite (3 minute exercise)

Now that you've completed the first seven exercises, open a new page and minimize the work you've done. Put it away so you cannot look at it.

Imagine you have lost your work entirely and you only have what is in your mind and rewrite your draft from memory alone. While this may be difficult, sometimes you might find that you have written something even better than before. Good luck!