

## **Oxymoron Writing Exercise**

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/wednesday-inspiration-4/>

**This week's inspiration is an oxymoron exercise. It's great to play with words, to move them around, stretch (or flip) their meaning and see what happens, to see how people react. Language! Etymology! Playing with words is something you can infuse in any story for any age group.**

**This is a fun, a four-step process that takes about half an hour or less. Here we go.**

### **OXYMORONS**

Oxymorons are word plays involving two or more words that separately have opposing definitions, but when put together have a completely new meaning.

My favorites:

- loose tights
- icy hot
- virtual reality
- jumbo shrimp
- passive aggressive
- awfully pretty
- sweet agony

### **FIRST STEP**

Brainstorm for three minutes any oxymorons you can think of just off the top of your head. Don't worry about spelling or even if they're valid, just get it out of your head and onto the page.

### **SECOND STEP**

Take five minutes to create your own oxymoron. It may have been one you accidentally stumbled upon during the first part of the exercise. You can use that if you want, but use the five minutes to see if you can top it.

**TIP: Think about how you want people to use the words - in what context and to what purpose. Is this an official term, a type of cooking style - what a doctor would say? Think about your oxymoron and what it means. How would people use it in dialogue - would be it casual lingo or more official, business-oriented language?**

### **THIRD STEP**

Write a few sentences using your new oxymoron. Write a scene if you want. (That's what I usually end-up doing.)

### **FOURTH STEP**

Write about the type of world where your oxymoron would exist and how it came about into the language. If it's our world, describe the social or political events that inspired that new oxymoron.

### **TRAGICALLY AWESOME**

This is a great exercise of language, but for a fiction writer it's more, because you can use this same type of thinking when creating your own story's world. One of the most effective ways of captivating your readership and pulling them fully into your story is by creating new terms - new slang, new commonly used words that are somehow recognizable to us but also particular to that new world of the story.

Think about some of your favorite stories of all time, or some of your favorite characters. I'll bet they tend to use certain words or perhaps certain phrases. The game is afoot! Winter is coming. You shiny? Shiny.

I understand if you don't want to share the results of this experiment. You might want it for another project. BUT please do share what you thought of the exercise. Did this work for you? Were you frustrated? Write below and let me know.

---