

## Creative Writing Technique: Visualization

*By Sarah Playle*

Visualization is one of the best techniques to use when plotting a story. It's like watching a movie in your mind, only the movie is your story. You can see all the scenes and events playing out, from beginning to end.

To start, find a quiet spot and relax. Concentrate on your breathing. Let your mind wander and don't focus on anything. If you start worrying or thinking, just let the thoughts float out of your head. Now, when you're relaxed, imagine yourself walking down a city street. Fill it in with all the details - imagining the sound of cars or of people talking. Feel the cement under your feet and the sun on your body. Walk along this street for a bit until you are fully immersed in your visualization. Now imagine that you come a theater. You buy the ticket and go in. Now you are in the lobby, but there is no one else around. You have the whole theater yourself. Buy yourself some snacks or not. Now go into the theater and take a seat. You are the only one in there so you can sit wherever you want. The curtain goes back and the movie starts - and the movie is *\*your\** novel. Just relax and watch it play out, as if you were viewing a real movie. Don't force anything. Just let your mind fill in the story events on its own. When you feel like you've seen enough, wake up and immediately write down what you saw so you don't forget it. Use this technique whenever you are stuck for where to go with the plot or what to write in a scene.

Another way of using visualization is using it to meet your characters. Relax the same way you did before, but instead of imagining a theater, imagine that you are meeting your main character for coffee or lunch. Go into the restaurant or coffee stop and find your character. Really see him. What does he look like? What she wear? How does he smile, etc. Sit down and talk to your character. Let your mind fill in the questions and answers. Don't force anything. Do this with all of your characters if need be until you really know them.

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