

Things to Do

Edited by
Sara O'Reilly

timeout.com/thingstodo
@timeoutlondon

How to write a novel and get it published in five easy steps

Tuesday April 23 is World Book Night. Novelist **Louise Doughty** has some pragmatic advice for those who yearn to celebrate it as writers as well as readers

1 Have a terrible life or, at least, a terrible childhood. Happy people don't write novels. Happy people have families and proper jobs. There has never been a compelling novel about someone who grows up in a secure home, falls in love, marries, has children and dies surrounded by family and friends.

2 Brace yourself to spend most of your life in a room on your own. Think of yourself as a badger. You hide in a hole for years and when you emerge, in order to forage for food and snuffle around a bit, people call you vermin. That's what it's like. How much do you really like your own company? Just how cosy is your dressing gown?

3 Write. Write a lot. The novel will not materialise on the page just because you want it to. To paraphrase the Beckett quote about failing: write, tear up what you write, write it again, write it better. Say that phrase every day as if you invented it.



The lone penman Think of yourself as a badger. You hide in a hole for years and when you emerge, people call you vermin!

4 Do not even think of approaching the publishing industry until you have written several complete novels that you have realised are drivel and then finally a halfway decent one that you have rewritten until you are blue in the face. At this point, sleeping with someone famous (or, failing that, someone who works at a publishing house) would be a very good idea.

5 Hand your baby over to an agent, any reputable agent who will have you. Never express doubt to that agent. Agents catch

doubt like other people catch colds: as far as they are concerned, it's more contagious than a norovirus. When said agent gets you a paltry deal with a tiny publisher who will leak rather than publish your book, punch the air. You've made it. Understand you will never eat again – but do enjoy the gritted teeth of those who tell you they always knew you had it in you. It's one of the best bits.

Louise Doughty's seventh novel, 'Apple Tree Yard', will be published by Faber and Faber in June.

WORLD BOOK NIGHT EVENTS



Cool Cats' Café

Creative writing academy Literary Kitchen celebrates its second birthday. Browse the Book Give and Take table, and hear stories by Anna Mazzola, Regina Freedman and Rebecca Skipwith.

149 Southampton Way, SE5 7EW.
www.literarykitchen.co.uk. Denmark Hill Overground. Free. 7-10pm.



Southbank Centre

A starry line-up of literary talents, including Sebastian Barry, Tracy Chevalier, Victoria Hislop, Rose Tremain and JoJo Moyes, read extracts from their work at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Belvedere Rd, SE1 8XX.
www.southbankcentre.co.uk.
Waterloo. £10. 7.30pm.



Lewisham Library

Guests including Blake Morrison, Sarah Mussi, Nii Ayikwei Parkes and Lydia Syson talk about writing they admire at this recently revamped library. MC Sandra Agard hosts.

Booking is essential.
199-201 Lewisham High St, SE13 6LG. www.lewisham.gov.uk.
Lewisham DLR. Free. 8-9.30pm.



Brunel Museum

World Book Night is an all-dayer here, with copies of EH Gombrich's 'A Little History of the World' up for grabs and the launch of the Bookcrossing bookswap scheme.

Railway Avenue, SE16 4LF.
www.brunel-museum.org.uk.
Rotherhithe Overground.
£3, £1.50 concs. 10am-9pm.