

Independent writer artist

Teri Hoskin

The rectilinear case

(from *Cultivating writing: How to learn an unknown environment*)

Bibliographical note:

Teri Hoskin is an artist and writer currently living and working in Sydney.

In a second-hand bookshop I found a box of how-to pocket manuals that were published in the 1960s. The titles ranged from instructions for exhibiting flowers to financial planning to 'How to be an effective public speaker'. They begged transformation into art but remained too much what they were as objects. Instead, I chose a random sentence or two from a few of them. This is a small selection of that initial selection.

IB001_25¹

There are several superb varieties that do not fit conveniently into any of the accepted categories, and yet they are too good to overlook. Because they are slightly 'different' they are best planted en masse or planted as individual specimens.

IB002_7

Yet coins bearing the name of Edward VIII which are extremely rare in Britain are common in parts of Africa, but before you rush off to collect them, be warned that they do not carry the head of Edward VIII – they have a hole in the centre. Africans like to carry their wealth with them and pockets were not common in Africa.

IB003_43

It doesn't matter how you stand provided that the audience is not distracted. A speaker who never moves cannot expect to arouse any great feeling. Neither can the speaker who tends to wander about the stage.

IB004_17

Before choosing a pattern, take your measurements, write them down, and keep them so that you can refer to them. When deciding on size remember that your body twists, moves and bends ...

IB005_19

By now you should be faced with a surface that is clean, smooth, dry, and ready to receive paint ...

IB006_23

If you want people to sign on the dotted line don't spend too much time on scenes of suffering and sorrow.

IB007_63

Do I need to tell you that every fully expressed sentence has a subject and a verb? If I do, you should be reading a much simpler book than this.

IB008_97

Handfuls of earth or dust are as good as anything for putting out the fire. An investigation into a burning rubber smell should always include the fan belt.

IB009_55

To lay the first course the adhesive is mixed according to instructions and applied as four 'bumps' or 'buttons' to the base of the block which are seated on the foundation in correct position.

IB010_45

Combine the beef, bitters, lemon juice, salt and pepper, and mix lightly together.

Using a fork, divide the mixture into six portions. Gently shape and flatten into patties.

IB011_17

Ventilators should be placed in the lower wall below bench height to let in plenty of fresh air, and in the roof to let out the hot air.

IB012_32

It may be necessary to remove buds in certain places where they are in multiples, as only one truss per stem is permitted in such classes. Most experienced exhibitors cut their blooms a day or two before the show.

IB013_15

You should, therefore, explore all cracks and fissures in a rock face and hit all rock faces with your rock hammer; a dull thud will tell you if there is a cavity beneath the skin of the rock.

IB014_44

Most of the early graters are steel with irregular jagged piercings. The later ones have more even machined piercings.

IB015_55

Broken glass melted into a flat dish or ash-tray makes a pleasing yet simple decoration.

IB016_11

Place the first two fingers of the right hand under the areola – the darkened area around the nipple – and place the thumb just above it.

IB017_45

The Worldwide television set which you sent to my home on the 6th December appears to be defective. Since the first day there has been constant distortion of the image, with flickering and 'ghosts'. Your invoice number is 25708, dated 3rd December 1968; the model is No 6FH.

IB018_23

The above treatment is for mild cases of inflammation and any severe cases should receive veterinary advice and attention.

IB019_12

If the hole is small the ball is probably repairable. Make *another* small hole opposite the original one which is the cause of the trouble. Hold the ball with the first hole at the bottom and blow through the second hole ...

IB020_31

The rat-tail is less evident at the end of the 18th century when it was replaced by the 'dew-drop' union.

IB021_29

When you have the size of the rose you want, glue the end pointing down the stem of the flower. If you wish to make a single rose earring, make a slightly larger rose, but if you want to make a cluster, make several smaller ...

IB022_25

There will always be a slight amount of drawing in at the edges (as in the lips of mass graves).

IB023_45

Remove shell and grate into a bowl. Pour 1 1/2 cups of warm water over and allow to stand for 15 minutes, then press through a piece of muslin.

IB024_19

Do not attempt to control the rhythm, but notice how the chest rises and falls naturally.

IB025_17

However, you should be conservative and give it a halfway mark between the figure and its current market price.

IB026_18

No amendment can be accepted to this motion.

IB027_61

There is a large market for work of this nature, but the jokes and drawings, of course, have to be good.

IB028_29

Their 'song' is made by the rapid vibration of two hard, springy plates situated on the abdomen and worked by internal muscles. The action is like that of a tin lid which, when pressed in, springs back producing a sound with each in and out movement.

IB029_65

If the housing estate is linked with new industrial development you'll probably find that many of your neighbours have children of a similar age to your own.

IB030_2

Select your cheese carefully, buy to meet your requirements, and store refrigerated at 38 to 40 degrees F, in plastic wrap, aluminium foil, plastic bags, or plastic containers.

IB031_34

It is impossible to give advice about spending.

IB032_29

Another very satisfactory method is to cut beneath a node making a slanting cut upwards, one-third through the main stem, then to insert a pebble to spread it apart.

IB033_12

The meat and water diet means that for one day a week you have nothing but meat and water! No biscuits. No bread. No milk. No fish. No green vegetables. No lettuce. No cheese. No alcohol *at all!* No cold drinks. No sausages. No polony. No thick gravy.

IB034_11

For the benefit of guests who do not like cauliflower, cut French bread into bite-sized cubes and place around the fondue bowl.

Endnote

1. The letters and numbers are paragraph identifiers from the original text.