

ENGLISH 241: CREATIVE WRITING



Ukaisha Al-Amin
The City Colleges of Chicago

Professor Ukaisha Al-Amin's English 241

Introduction to Creative Writing



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

ENG 241: Introduction to Creative Writing By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to ENG 241: Creative Writing.

The following chapters will offer a brief introduction into the field.

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Professor Ukaisha Al-Amin's English 241

Introduction to Creative Writing



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 1: What is Creative Writing? By Ukaisha Al-Amin

What is Creative Writing?

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1.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin:

Introduction to Creative Writing

In this module, we will be looking at three main types of creative writing and exploring their role in society. You will also explore your writing style by developing imaginative power in fiction, poetry, drama as an author, poet, and playwright.

As creative writers, your writing will eventually have a place in society. Whether your writing uplifts, warns, sends a message, scares, surprises, or makes people think, your writing will interact with readers. Here are some big questions we will be asking throughout these learning objects: Why do people tell stories? What purpose do stories have in our society? How does fiction express the fears and hopes of a society in any given decade? What can we learn about ourselves, our place in society, and our writing from reading and writing different types of creative writing?

Creative writing is any type of writing that is not purely fact-based. It covers a plethora of genres and types. There is even a genre called creative non-fiction! Sounds like an oxymoron right?

Here is a list that is by not any means exhaustive.

- Novels, Novellas, Short Stories
- Poems
- Plays/Drama: Written to be performed; its essence is the development of character and situation through speech and action on stage or live audience.
- Comics and Graphic Novels
- Film scripts and Television scripts

Forms of Fiction

Fiction: Any narrative in prose or verse that is wholly or in part a product of the writer's imagination. The essence of fiction is narration.

Stories have always been told by humans as ways to warn, praise, and learn. Sharing a story with someone is not what we would categorize as essential communication, but deepens links between people. From the parent telling their child a story, to a religious leader sharing a story with a congregation, to a traveling story teller sharing a story to a community, these have all been ways that people can see themselves or learn about others without the high stakes of possibly being in that situation. Overall, it's clear day after day, year after year, and generation after generation that there is a need to tell stories.

Genres: A type or category used to classify discourse and literary works; how literary works are grouped together according to form, technique, or, sometimes, subject matter.

The different types of fiction include:

- Literary Fiction
- Magical Realism
- Fantasy
- High-Fantasy
- Speculative Fiction
- Science Fiction
- Steam Punk
- Space Opera
- Dystopia
- Romance
- Comedy
- Parables/Fables
- Myths/ Fairy tales
- Mystery
- Thrillers
- Horror
- Historical

Poetry

There are over 75 different types of poems! For a list of some of the most common, go to Poetry Foundation.

[Poetry Foundation \[www.poetryfoundation.org\]](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)

Whether you are new to creative writing, or want to hone your craft, welcome. We will be diving into specifically poetry, fiction, and plays. Ultimately, you will be able to determine which types of writing you like best and want to continue to pursue. Nowadays, we not just talking about writing creatively, but publishing that work so that the work meets an audience. So in a seemingly oversaturated market, how to make your creative works stand out and give them purpose. Common advice in the creative writing classroom is to not worry about publishing but to focus solidly on the story first and foremost. This is good advice, but to ignore the publishing side and to not be considering yourself as a writer that will need to in front of people talking about your work takes away from the very social aspect of writing. Therefore, be sure to visit the modules on this topic for more information. For now, lets see where your imagination takes you.

? And Then Game Class Activity 1.1.1

In this activity, the class will write a story together. Each person must continue the story no matter where it goes. You should add at least a few sentences, or a moment to the story. Everyone will start by saying “And Then” to continue the story. The last person to go must end the story. If you can’t think of anything in 3 minutes, you are ‘out’. The penalty is reading the story the class makes to someone in the English Department. If more than one person gets ‘out’, the class should restart the story.

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1.2: Read

Elements of Story

These elements are present in all narratives.

Plot and Point of View

Plot: According to Aristotle: the arrangement of events. “A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end [. . .] . A well constructed plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end haphazardly, but conform to these principles.”

Stages of Plot:

- Exposition
- Conflict
- Rising action
- Crisis/Climax
- Falling action
- Resolution/Conclusion

Point of View: Perspective from which the reader sees the events of a story; the angle from which a story is told. The types of POV include:

- First person point of view: one of the characters narrates the story, seeing and knowing only what the individual can observe from his or her limited point of view.
- Third-person omniscient point of view: the writer may write as an “all-seeing” author, knowing not only the behavior but also the private thoughts and feelings of the characters.
- Third-person objective: the writer acts as the impartial observer, offering little or no editorial comment.

Setting

Place and time of the story, often providing more than a mere backdrop for the action of a story or play. Setting can then be the social, political, historical, religious, and physical context of the story.

Characters

The representation of a person in a play, short story, novel, or poem.

- Flat character: character with a one-dimensional personality or who represents a stereotype.
- Round character: character who exhibits a realistically complex combination of traits, including mixed emotions, conflicting motivations, and divided loyalties.
- Protagonist: Lead actor or principal figure in a work of literature.
- Antagonist: Opponent or counterforce that sets up a central conflict in a play or story
- Foil: Character who highlights traits another character does not have

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1.3: Activity

Activity

Use this activity to help working on honing your creative writing skills. So to get started, I would like everyone to submit a piece of flash fiction. Flash fiction is defined as fiction that is less than 2000 words, but for this week's purpose, you will work under the constraints of 750 words. You will notice that the fiction we write for all these activities are technically flash fiction because it will stay under 2000 words. When you receive writing prompts, use them to practice certain skills. You can always go back to that writing later if it caught your attention and expand on it. You can also change the form later.

Writing Prompt

Write a scene in which the main character finds something and has a reaction. This means you will choose your character, choose the object, and choose the reaction.

Further directions:

Once you have written your scene, please upload it to the Brightspace folder.

- Make sure your scene is evenly double-spaced.
- Create a Title for your scene.
- Please use a standard font.
- 750/words
- Check grammar

Assessment Tool Suggestion:

Assessment Tool suggestion

Short Story	Level 4 10 points	Level 3 8 points	Level 2 6 points	Level 1 2 points
Character Development	Main character is round, grows in some way, and is 'real'- has changing emotions, loyalties, and other complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Main character is round, the reader can pinpoint some growth in some way, and the character is 'real'- has changing emotions, loyalties, and other complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Main character is kind of flat, growth is hard to find, and character is somewhat 'stock'- kind of has changing emotions, loyalties, and no real complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Main character is flat, does not grow, and is not 'real'- does not have changing emotions, loyalties, and other complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.
Plot/Action/ Conflict	The plot follows a unique and interesting path, but still has all of the foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Does not include any plot holes.	The plot follows an interesting path, but still has all of the foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Does not include any plot holes.	The plot follows a basic path with foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. May have one plot hole. Resolution does not match story.	The plot is missing some of the foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Has plot holes. Story feels incomplete.
Purposeful/Rhetorical Grammar and Writing Fluency	Grammar, punctuation, and coherence are all nuanced and excellently used to tell the story and reveal the characters.	Grammar, punctuation, and coherence are adequately used to tell the story and reveal the characters.	Grammar, punctuation, and coherence are not used effectively to tell the story and reveal the characters. Writing interferes with readability.	There are several grammar, punctuation, and coherence issues throughout that make it difficult to read the story and reveal the characters.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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Welcome to What is Creative Writing Part 2

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2.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

MYTHS OF CREATIVE WRITING

Most beginning writers or those not in the field think that creative writing has no rules because it is art. Well, this is absolutely not true. There are certain criteria that define certain genres, but most of the rules are created by the artist, so people confuse this as having no rules.

Here is an example:

The criteria for literary fiction is that it be character-driven. Having a character-driven story means that the main character must be a round-character. A round character is one in which the character changes significantly throughout the story. Right away you see there are very specific definitions within this explanation. It can get trickier. The personality of the character is created by you-the writer, but if the character does something that goes against their character that doesn't push the story forward, you have broken the rules that you created.

Pro Tip: In other words, just because it is *made up* doesn't automatically mean you can do whatever. All good writing makes sense.

Another myth is that if it is fiction, it means it is not true and is meaningless. Without being too philosophical, I will explain it in this way. Stories are told by humans and have been this way for a long time. So the real question we should ask ourselves is why do we feel the need to tell stories and hear stories? Fiction at its best is an interpretation of our lives, and it gives us a chance to take a step back, to look at ourselves and our surroundings. Stories have been used as warnings, hopes, and lessons. If I tell a story of the Tortoise and the Hare, it is not that it is just made up, but the lesson that the story tells is a truth that many live by. Stories also have many purposes within society, and we will learn more about how that works; thus, showing how important they can be.

Common Pitfalls

Some pitfalls that you might come across as a beginner writer is first not embracing the process. Creative Writing takes many drafts to get it just right. If you like the way a poem came out during the first draft then that is great, but you should open to revising it if it is not coming across to a reader as you intended. If your readers have more questions than you expected, it is time to revise. Yes, it is true that your art could just be misunderstood, but when given the chance to explain it, in the reader (the purpose for writing poetry for an audience in their place) doesn't get it, it may be time to revise. If you are writing for yourself, then you obviously don't need to worry about any of this, but since this course is not focused on writing just for writing sake, you need to be aware of your reader.

On the opposite side, many writers, not just beginning writers, feel that their piece is never quite finished, so they don't ever take the step to share it more broadly. At some point, you have to stop and consider a piece finished.

One more common pitfall is to tell the story without showing what is happening and really putting the reader into the scene. Narratives demand details. You should always be thinking of way to describe what is happening, who is there, and what they are feeling. As writer, you should practice describing all sorts of things all the time. Think about questions like how does that feel in the body? How could I describe this to someone that has never seen it or has no reference?

Practicing this small exercises in your writer's notebook can help you brainstorm ideas or help you when you feel like you are stuck.

Getting Ideas Down on the Page

There are many ways to start the writing process. I like to start with the characters because even in stories that are heavily plot driven, I want my characters to stand out.

Creating character profiles, observing people, and practicing writing descriptions of people will help you with writing characters. You also want to consider thinking about motivations. What do people usually want? What is stopping them from achieving that goal? What makes people complex?

Another way to get ideas down on the pages is by making a list of places and thinking of things that would specifically happen in that place. This could be anywhere from a kitchen, a school, a street, a bus, a town, a city, or a whole new world.

For poetry, consider practicing mimicking several types of poetry styles. Practicing at least 20 will help you not only start to think about tone, rhythm, and meter, but it will force you search for words that maybe you haven't used. I will help look at new ways to express a certain feeling. For instance, you can choose a topic like biscuits and a feeling like sadness, then try to write a few poems in different styles about that. Poetry is a great way to try new things and really challenge yourself. A great example of an unexpected topic matched with a poetry style is Ghazal for White Hen Pantry by Jamila Woods. Read it here on the poetry foundation website. [poetry foundation ghazal for white hen pantry](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/ghazal-for-white-hen-pantry) [www.poetryfoundation.org]

For playwriting, practice writing down conversations. What do you notice about how people actually talk to each other? How does a story change when it is told specifically through conversation and gestures? In other words, you can't really get in the character's mind except through monologue.

? Journal and Discussion 2.1.1

Reflect on why you are interesting in creative writing. What draws you to write fiction, poems or plays? When you think of story ideas, what type of forms do you see yourself writing? Why?

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2.2: Read

Writing Process Quillbot

Writing Preferences

Each writer has his/her own preferences when drafting a document. Whether a person is writing a story, a poem, a journal entry, a letter, or a creative non-fiction piece, the writing approach is idiosyncratic, meaning that it is distinctive to the person who is writing.

Some are think-write writers. They need to think and think and think some more until they can write their first draft. When they write their first draft, they need a large block of time to get it down on paper. Their first drafts feel like a finished product to the writer because they've done most of their prewriting and revising in the thinking process. However, these writers need to remember that the first draft is just that—a first draft. Revision is necessary. See Figure 1.1 for a list of the advantages and disadvantages of being an extreme think-write writer.

Figure 1.1: Advantages and Disadvantages for Think-write Writers

Advantages and Disadvantages of Think Write Writers

Advantages

- Once they've start writing, they finish the draft easily.
- The first draft can feel like a polished final draft to the writer.
- They usually finish drafts on time or earlier than the deadline.

Disadvantages

- They need time to think; they can't write under command or time pressure.
- Starting the opening paragraph can be difficult because they are still thinking.
- Revising their work is difficult because from their perspective a lot of the revision decisions were made in the thinking process.

Other writers are write-write writers. They write, cut, copy, and reorganize their work as well as throw away and start again—sometimes multiple times. They are constantly prewriting, planning, and revising as they go. They sometimes struggle with finishing a final draft, and they have even been known to delete some of their best work. These writers need to remember to save all drafts, so that the best work is never lost. See Figure 1.2 for a list of advantages and disadvantages of being an extreme write-write writer.

Figure 1.2: Advantages and Disadvantages for the Write-write Writers

advantages and disadvantages

Advantages

- They are willing to try multiple ideas to see what will work best.
- They can easily leave sentence and grammar errors to be edited later in the revision stage.
- They embrace revision as it is part of their drafting process.

Disadvantages

- They have a hard time knowing when a draft is finished, and they sometimes over revise.
- They are often writing under pressure—a deadline.
- They are often referred to as the messy writers, and the revision of their work takes a long time.

Most writers are somewhere between these two extreme types of drafters, and that's the best place to be. If you are an extreme think-write writer, cultivate some of the traits of the write-write writer, and if you are an extreme write-write writer, try some of the traits of the think-write writer. Attempting both styles of writing will help writers avoid writer's block.

The Writing Process

Every piece of writing goes through a process of stages: prewriting (also sometimes called planning), drafting, cooling, revising, and publishing. These steps do not always follow one another in succession. Instead, they are recursive, meaning a step can occur again at any point in the process. For instance, while revising an historically-based short story, a writer may discover he/she needs

to do additional research about the time period that the story is set, which takes the writer back to the prewriting stage. See Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: The Writing Process



Prewriting/Planning

Prewriting writing begins with what draws the writer to write. The writer may be inspired by nature, people, animals, life events, etc.

Some writers keep a writing journal, a record of lists and notes, maybe even drawings or photographs, that initially caught their attention. Writers generally are strong observers who record what they see, hear, taste, touch, and smell because it may become part of a story, a poem, a non-fiction essay, a play, etc. Writers may carry a small notebook with them throughout the day and set it on the nightstand next to their bed at night. Then, it is readily available when an idea—an inspiration—grabs their attention.

Writers make several decisions in the prewriting stage as well. They will answer questions like the following:

- What is the topic?
- Who are the readers?
- What genre (type of writing) works best as the vehicle of communication?
- What point of view (perspective) will this piece be told from?
- What kind of research needs to be completed before drafting begins?

Drafting

Drafting involves writing the first draft of a document. Some writers write their first draft with a pen and a notebook. Other writers write directly on a laptop or computer. The choice depends on the preference of the writer.

A short piece of writing can be drafted in one sitting. The goal is to get everything down on paper before it is lost. If a piece cannot be drafted in one sitting because it is too long, writers generally stop at a place where they know what they will write next. This prevents writer's block, the inability to write the next day.

When drafting, writers are encouraged to not pay attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. Revising while writing causes writers to lose the original flow of the idea. Spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. can be addressed in the final revision.

Cooling

Cooling means setting aside the document, at least 24-48 hours before revising begins for short pieces of work. This allows writers to have a break from the content and a new perspective when entering the revision stage. To do this, writers need to be organized and time managers. The first draft must be done early enough to set it aside for the recommended cooling time.

Authors of books have even longer cooling periods. It may be weeks, months, and sometimes even years, depending on the writer's preference and the deadline for the publication of the book.

Revising

Revising literally means “to see again” not just once but multiple times. Revision has two types of processes:

- To look at the larger problems such as content and organization
- To look at the smaller problems such as sentence structure, word choice, and formatting

Part of revising may include asking others to read drafts and make revision recommendations. Ultimately, it’s always up to the writer whether those revision recommendations will be implemented into the final draft.

Publishing

Publishing involves submitting final manuscripts to editors of print and online journals and magazines, newspapers, or publishing companies.

Although it’s great to see one’s name in print, not all writers write for publication. Some write their stories, poems, letters, diaries, etc. for the next generations – their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. They write to record their personal history.

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What Is Writer’s Block?

Writer’s block is the inability to write because the writer doesn’t know what to write, doesn’t know how to proceed in a piece of writing, or doesn’t have the confidence to write. The condition can last for several minutes to days to weeks, and even months and years for some writers.

Often, the inner critic, a still, small, critical voice that sends negative messages to the brain, keeps writers from writing. Those negative statements may sound something like this:

- I don’t have anything to write about.
- No one will read what I write.
- No one will like what I write.
- I don’t have time to write now.
- I’m not a good writer.
- An editor won’t publish what I write.

How Do Writers Overcome Writer’s Block?

Writers who succeed are the ones who have the drive to push through their writer’s block. Here are some suggestions for overcoming writer’s block:

- Find the root cause of the inner critic’s statement. In other words, why do you believe the negative statement(s)?
- Restate the inner critic’s statement(s) in a positive way. Read and recite them regularly until you believe them to be true.
- Talk with another writer about the problem. Find out what they do to overcome writer’s block.
- Remind yourself that mistakes are okay in the first draft and that revision is where the magic exists in writing.
- Don’t start at the beginning if that’s where you are stuck.
- Draw the piece of writing in pictures instead of words.
- Work on another piece if one piece isn’t working for you. Then, come back to the piece that wasn’t working for you.
- Try writing in a different location: library, cafe, kitchen table, cabin, coffee shop, etc.
- Attend a writer’s conference or retreat.
- Try writing with a different tool: pen, pencil, marker, computer, etc.
- Try writing during a different time of day.
- Put writing and reflective thinking time regularly on your calendar. Don’t allow other events take its place.
- Give yourself permission to write without concern for success.
- Know that many authors who have been successful had their manuscripts rejected multiple times.

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? Identify Your Writing Preferences 2.2.1

Directions

Knowing your writing preferences will help you be more successful in your writing process. To define your idiosyncratic writing preferences, write a journal entry (several paragraphs) that addresses the following questions:

- When do you like to write?
- Where do you like to write?
- What writing tools (paper, pens, pencils, laptop, dictionary, thesaurus, etc.) do you need in order to write a document?
- What genres do you prefer to write? Why?
- How do you write your first draft? Are you a think-write writer or a write-write writer?
- What stages of the writing process do you use? Which are your strengths? And which are your weaknesses?

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2.3: Activity

Practice Writing Creatively

Choose a writing prompt from the list below to practice writing a piece that already has rules.

1. Write an enjambment poem where the speaker expresses their love for pasta.
2. Write a piece of flash fiction that takes place in a neighborhood alley where the main character sees something upsetting, yet the neighbor finds it hilarious. The main character is not satisfied by the end.
3. Write a scene that takes place in a car between a couple. The dilemma: one of them has recently lost their job and the other person wants to tell them about a new job opportunity offer, but they are also lost.

Assessment Tool Suggestion Formative or Summative:

Fiction: The story follows the rules. The story has a beginning, middle, and an end. The story has a conflict.

Poem: Follows convention. The expression is clear.

Play: The play follows the prompt. The characters sound different. The character and stage directions are purposeful.

Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin, MFA

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 3: Fiction Writing Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Fiction Writing Part 1

[3.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

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3.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Realistic Fiction



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The first type of fiction that we will explore is realistic fiction or literary fiction. This is a good way to learn about characters because your characters should remind the readers of people. Real people are messy and complicated. They can be unreliable and stubborn. When you write realistic fiction, the idea is that while the character may not actually exist, someone, somewhere is probably similar to this character. The reader can relate to this character or can see how someone would. The reader may not like this character and that is okay. In real life, we don't always like everyone we meet or hear about. In fact, there are some pretty despicable people out there and some down right criminals. They all help create interesting stories.

One thing to avoid when setting out to write a piece of realistic fiction is to assume the story has to be about you. We are often told to write what we know, which is good advice, but if you are writing a story that is *actually* about you, you aren't writing fiction. This is important as a reader as well. You can't assume that the author and the character are the one and the same. Therefore, while you may draw from your experience, if you feel yourself writing your *exact* life story, you might consider writing creative non-fiction or try changing the character and point of view. Changing the character will help you step outside of yourself and a third-person or third-person omniscient point-of-view can help you think more imaginatively about the characters and the story.

Place or Setting:

Realistic fiction also grounds the story with place. The place or setting should or could exist somewhere. For instance, a character who lives in Chicago may live in a three-story walk up in a certain neighborhood on a certain street. Sure, this exact house may not actually exist, but there are definitely tons of three-story walk ups all over the city. On the other hand, sometimes, a writer might not want to be specific with the place, so the character might live in a small town or suburb 5 miles away from the big city. While vague, the location might not be as important to the overall story, but it still works. There is always a smaller town or suburb outside a big city in real life.

Dialogue:

When writing fiction, dialogue can be between two or more characters or with the characters themselves. It is important to pay attention to when you need to use dialogue or when you need more narration. Think of dialogue as a way to show the reader that the the characters are in a scene. Using dialogue makes what is happening in the story active. It is also allows for the reader to understand the character based on their words and not on the narration. This is extremely important in stories where the narrator might not be reliable or where there is a stark difference between what characters say and do. How you use dialogue effectively will also depend on the point of view the story is being told from. Overall, here are some things to consider.

Dialogue between two or more characters: Is the conversation important? Does it move the story forward? If not, could it be summarized. Do the characters all sound the same? How can you tell who is talking besides looking at the dialogue verb markers such as said, yelled, whispered, laughed, and so on. [It is a good idea to continue to study verbs as you write in order to capture exactly how a character does or says something] Is the conversation one sided? See story within a story methods of writing. Is there any action that is happening while the characters are having a conversation? How do you balance the conversation and action?

Dialogue in the character's head: What is happening around the character when they are talking to themselves? Does this help the reader understand the character more? What does this reveal about the character? Is the conversation necessary?

? Classroom Writing 3.1.1

Using Harold Washington College as a setting, tell a story about two students that attend the school. Your story should be about 700-850 words, be told in the third person point-of-view and the conflict should be resolved before the students leave the building.

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3.2: Read

What Is Fiction?

Fiction is make-believe, invented stories. They may be short stories, fables, vignettes, plays, novellas, or novels. Although writers may base a character on people they have met in real life, the characters and the experiences that the character faces in the story are not real.

So, how does a writer write fiction? Characters, setting, plot, conflict, point of view, and theme are six key elements for writing fiction.

Characters

Characters are the people, animals, or aliens in the story. Readers come to know the characters through what they say, what they think, and how they act.

E. M. Forster, an English novelist, identified that characters are either flat or round. Flat characters do not play important roles in the stories. They often have only one or two traits with little description about them. A flat character may even be a stock character, which is a stereotypical figure that is easily recognized by readers, for example, the mad scientist or the evil stepmother.

On the other hand, the round characters play an important role, often the lead roles in stories. They are complex, dimensional, and well-developed. The stories are about them; therefore, pages of writing will be about them. They often change by going through a life-changing experience as the story unfolds.

When discussing stories with other readers and writers or when writing an analysis of a story, fictional characters can be described as static or developing. Static means the character stays the same throughout the story. They do not change. Developing, also called dynamic, means the character changes. The change may impact the character's beliefs, attitudes, or actions. The change may be small or large. This change occurs because the character experiences an epiphany, an insight about life.

If writers write about characters outside their own culture, they need to do research so as not to misrepresent a particular culture. The same is also true of characters, who have illnesses. The writer may need to research the illness and treatment for it in order to be accurate about it.

Setting

Setting is where and when the story takes place. It includes the following:

- The immediate surroundings of the characters such as props in a scene: trees, furniture, food, inside of a house or car, etc.
- The time of day such as morning, afternoon, or night.
- The weather such as cloudy, sunny, windy, snow, or rain, etc.
- The time of year, particularly the seasons: fall, winter, summer, spring.
- The historical period such as what century or decade the story takes place.
- The geographical location including the city, state, country, and possibly even the universe, if the writer is writing science fiction.

Setting can function as a main force that the characters encounter, such as a tornado or flood, or a setting can play a minor role such as setting the mood. Often times, the setting can reveal something about the main character as he/she functions in that place and time period.

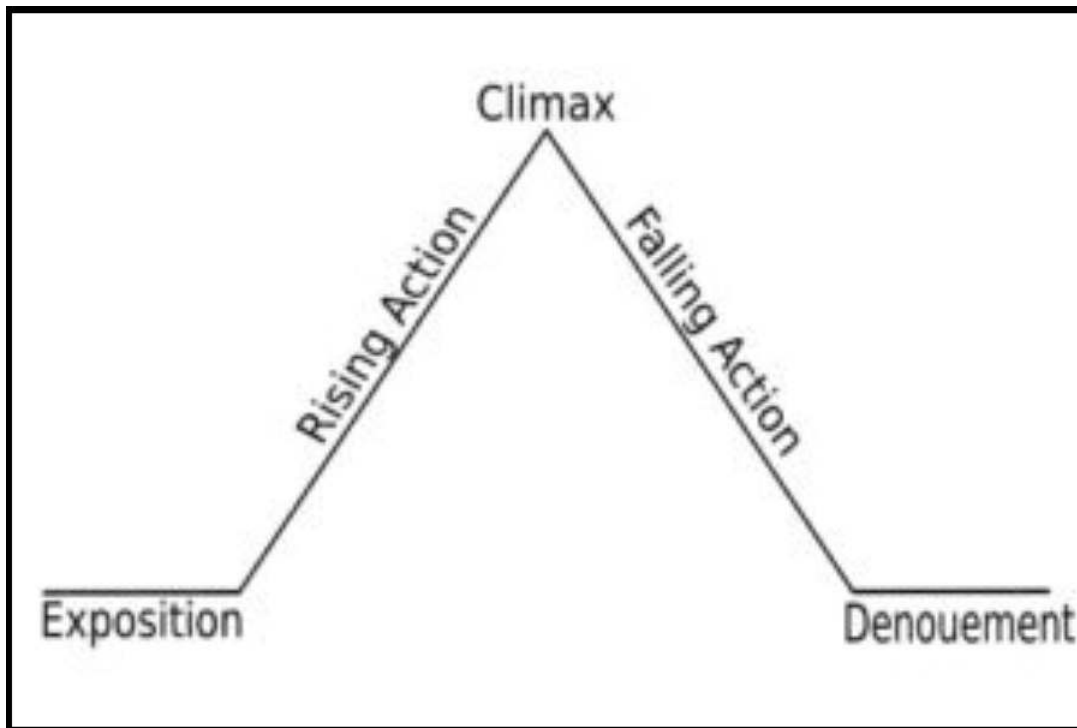
Writers write about places they are familiar with. If they aren't familiar with the place, then they need to research it in order to be accurate about the place.

Plot

Plot is the order of events in the story. The plot usually follows a particular structure called Freytag's Pyramid. Gustav Freytag, a German playwright who lived during the 1800s, identified this structure.

Freytag's Pyramid has five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement, also known as resolution. See Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Freytag's Pyramid



Freytag's Pyramid by Gustav Freytag, a German playwright

Exposition is an introduction to the characters, time, and the problem. At the point where exposition moves into rising action a problem, sometimes called an inciting incident, occurs for the main character to handle or solve. This creates the beginning of the story.

Rising action includes the events that the main character encounters. Each event, developed in separate scenes, makes the problem more complex.

Climax is the turning point in the story. Usually, it is a single event with the greatest intensity and uncertainty. The main character must contend with the problem at this point.

Falling action includes the events that unfold after the climax. This usually creates an emotional response from the reader.

Denouement or resolution provides closure to the story. It ties up loose ends in the story.

Do writers plan out their stories? Some do, especially if they are an extreme think-write writer. Some don't. They have a story idea, begin it, and watch it unfold as they write.

Conflict

Conflict is the struggle between two entities. In story writing the main character, also known as the protagonist, encounters a conflict with the antagonist, which is an adversary. The conflict may be one of six kinds:

- Character vs. character
- Character vs. nature or natural forces
- Character vs. society or culture
- Character vs. machine or technology
- Character vs. God
- Character vs himself or herself

Point of View

Stories are generally told in one of two points of views:

- First-person point of view
- Third-person point of view

First-person point of view means that one of the characters in the story will narrate—give an account—of the story. The narrator may be the protagonist, the main character. Writing in first-person point of view brings the readers closer to the story. They can read it as if they are the character because personal pronouns like I, me, my, we, us, and our are used.

Third-person point of view means that the narrator is not in the story. The third-person narrator is not a character. Third-person point of view can be done two ways:

- Third-person limited
- Third-person omniscient

Third-person limited means that the narrator limits him/herself by being able to be in one character's thoughts. Whereas, third-person omniscient means the narrator has unlimited ability to be in various character's thoughts. Writing in third-person point of view removes readers from the story because of the pronouns he, she, it, him, her, his, hers, they, them, and theirs.

Theme

A theme is not the plot of the story. It is the underlying truth that is being conveyed in the story. Themes can be universal, meaning they are understood by readers no matter what culture or country the readers are in. Common themes include coming of age, circle of life, prejudice, greed, good vs. evil, beating the odds, etc.

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3.3: Activity

Build a Character by Ukaisha Al-Amin

For your first piece of fiction, you will need to decide what you are going to write about. Setting up the story can be difficult, so in this first assignment, you will create a character profile for your main character or characters. This will help you build the foundations of a character driven story. The character profile should include the following elements:

- What is your character's name and what do they look like? This involves the physical description of the character. Describe them from the tips of their toes to ends of their split hair.
- Who is this character? Describe their personality. You can and will continue to build on this as you write, but there should be some sense of who this person is from the beginning.
- What do they like to spend their time doing? Think of the character's hobbies, activities, and what they do in their down time.
- What is the character's occupation and age?
- What is the character's backstory? (You don't need to know everything right away. Some things might come up as you start to create the story. However, it is useful to think of at least one experience that your character has had that left an impression on them.
- What does this character want? (This is very important. Do not leave this question unanswered. As the writer, you need to know the answer to this in order to see what the central conflict of the story is.)
- What or who is stopping the character from getting what they want?
- What type of character will this be?[Round, flat, foil] (This question may be difficult to answer at the beginning; however, once you finish the story, you should ask this question. The answer might affect how you approach rewrites).
- Does this character have any quirks? This can easily be included in the personality question, but sometimes it is useful to think about it separately. For example, a character who likes smoked beet peanut butter sandwiches.
- Some other questions to think about as you write would be about the character's family, friends, religion, and ethnicity.

Formative Assessment:

Based on the answers to the questions, the reader can get a sense that the character is a real person. **Yes No**

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 4: Fiction Writing Part 2-Short Stories, Conflict, and Endings By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Fiction Writing Part 2- Short Stories, Conflict, and Endings

[4.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity](#)

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4.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

Uncovering More About Fiction



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Conflict and Endings

Now that you have thought about a character, it time to write the story. One of the best ways to practice conciseness or getting to the heart of the matter is to practice writing a short story. Here are a few things you need to know to help you in your writing journey.

First and foremost, short stories aren't short novels. If you have read mostly novels up to this point, you'll notice that short stories feel different. What you may be noticing is that most times you are dropped straight into the rising action of the story. The character has already done or experienced somethings, and you are taken into the scene where they have begun to figure something out, acceptance or denial is right around the corner, the antagonist may have already made their first move, if indeed it is story with a human versus human type of conflict. This move is meant to draw the reader in, but it is also meant to help shape the pacing of the story right from the beginning. The short story captures a complete full experience of the character.

Conflict:

When you sit down to write your short story always keep the conflict front and center. It is important the characters in the story be doing something. Conflict doesn't have to be an argument. It simply means there is a tension, an indecision, or an element that might prevent the main character from their goal. This is a very broad explanation, but that is because there are so many different types of stories. A good way to write conflict is by being able to identify it in the stories you read. Every time you identify the different ways in which conflict can appear in a story, you are adding information to your writer's toolbox.

While conflict is essential to any story, but may look different in some short stories. Short stories that take on a more of a pondering nature may seem like there is no conflict at all, but usually, this is the character trying to figure something out. It could be how they feel about themselves, someone else, the state of society or even lunch. A good example of this is Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "The Boundary": published in the January 28th 2018 issue of the New Yorker. In this story the main character questions how the her family lives compared to the visitors that come. On the surface, it may seem like the story is not about anything, but that absolutely not the case.

Endings:

Depending on the conflict and structure of your story, the ending of the story may present itself differently. There are many ways to end a story. As you dive deeper into fiction writing, you will learn all of these ways. For now, here are just a few ways that a story might end:

Feeling: Many endings are defined by the emotions they evoke in the characters and even the readers. For example, you might have heard of happy endings, sad endings or gut-wrenching endings. Obviously, there are a lot of emotions to attach to the end of the story. However, when crafting story, the writer needs to think about more than just the emotion. They need to think about what causes that emotion. This connects back to the conflict. Has it been resolved or unresolved by the end of the story?

Resolved: If the conflict has been resolved, this could leave the main character satisfied. However, there are plenty of endings that get resolved but it doesn't mean there was a 'happy' ending. In some stories it just means that main character doesn't die, or the main character gets some closure, or it could even mean some type of begrudgingly reconciliation.

Unresolved: Under this category, there could be a cliffhanger, which for short stories could be pretty upsetting, but for novels would indicate a second book. An unresolved ending leaves the main character dissatisfied. One way to think of this type of ending is where the main character 'doesn't win'. For instance, the main character's goal through out the whole story is to reunite with a long lost sister, but at the end, the main character finds out the sister absolutely refuses to reconnect. These stories can feel like the character went on a journey for no reason, but sometimes a story leaves the reader thinking, and that is what makes it successful albeit frustrating.

The best way to get a grasp on the short story is to read as many of them by different authors. Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you read these stories from a writer's perspective:

- **Do I know enough about the main character to care about what happens to them?**
- **What is the conflict? Is the conflict strong enough in the story? If not, does the story still work? How did it achieve being published?**
- **What is resolved? Does the ending feel incomplete, and is this on purpose?**
- **What do you think the story was trying to achieve?**

? Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin 4.1.1

Using the questions above, choose a short story from the list and read it. Then answer using the preceding questions. In groups, based on the stories you chose, discuss your answers to the questions.

Short Stories:

"Pita Delicious" By ZZ Packer (Log into City Colleges of Chicago database. Choose the Ebscohost ebook Community College Collection database. Choose All About Skin:Short Fiction by Women of Color by Jina ortiz and Michelle Spencer. Find the story in the table of contents)

"Sirens" by Joshunda Sanders (Log into City Colleges of Chicago database. Choose the Ebscohost ebook Community College Collection database. Choose All About Skin:Short Fiction by Women of Color by Jina ortiz and Michelle Spencer. Find the story in the table of contents)

"Bartleby" By Herman Melville (Log into City Colleges of Chicago database. Choose the Ebscohost ebook Community College Collection database. Choose Bartleby, the Scrivener and Other Piazza Tales by Herman Melville Find the story in the table of contents)

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4.2: Read

To learn about short story writing, read “The Preface” in *All about Skin Short Fiction by Women Writers* in the EBSCO Host Community College ebook collection.

Be sure to sign into the library database with your City Colleges of Chicago credentials.

researchguides.ccc.edu [research guides.ccc.edu] [researchguides.ccc.edu]

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4.3: Activity

Activity:

Write a realistic short story no longer than 2000/words using the character you created in the previous lesson.

Assessment Tool Suggestion:

Rubric

Short Story	Level 4 10 points	Level 3 8 points	Level 2 6 points	Level 1 2 points
-------------	----------------------	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Rubric Contd

Character Development	Main character is round, grows in some way, and is 'real'- has changing emotions, loyalties, and other complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Main character is round, the reader can pinpoint some growth in some way, and the character is 'real'- has changing emotions, loyalties, and other complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Main character is kind of flat, growth is hard to find, and character is somewhat 'stock'- kind of has changing emotions, loyalties, and no real complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Main character is flat, does not grow, and is not 'real'- does not have changing emotions, loyalties, and other complex social, emotional, psychological feelings.	Score of Character Development, / 10
Plot/Action/ Conflict	The plot follows a unique and interesting path, but still has all of the foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Does not include any plot holes.	The plot follows an interesting path, but still has all of the foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Does not include any plot holes.	The plot follows a basic path with foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. May have one plot hole. Resolution does not match story.	The plot is missing some of the foundations-exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Has plot holes. Story feels incomplete.	Score of Plot/Action/ Conflict, / 10
Purposeful/Rhetorical Grammar and Writing Fluency	Grammar, punctuation, and coherence are all nuanced and excellently used to tell the story and reveal the characters.	Grammar, punctuation, and coherence are adequately used to tell the story and reveal the characters.	Grammar, punctuation, and coherence are not used effectively to tell the story and reveal the characters. Writing interferes with readability.	There are several grammar, punctuation, and coherence issues throughout that make it difficult to read the story and reveal the characters.	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 5: Fiction Writing Part 3- Genre Fiction and World Building By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Fiction Writing Part 3: Learning about genre fiction and world building.

[5.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity](#)

[5.2: Read](#)

[5.3: Activity](#)

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5.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

Genres



picture by juri schick

There are stories about many different things. In fiction, different types of stories are split into categories and then into sub categories. These categories are usually referred to as genre fiction. Genre fiction differs from realistic fiction in that the themes, tones, and plot are often times established by a set of rules or expectations. These ‘rules’ are often called tropes, but tropes tend to have a negative connotation, so another way to think about them is as reader expectations. The fun part about creative writing is that genres can be combined, and your writing can be as speculative as you want. The key, like it was mentioned in the previous lesson, is to make sure the rules you create are not broken. Let’s look at some genres and the expectations that they have.

Romance ❤️: Under romance, there are sub categories like romantic dramas, or romantic comedies. The expectation for a romance is that the relationship take center stage of the story and that the love between the two characters creates the conflict in the story. Since there are many sub categories of romance, the expectation is not always that the two characters end up together at the end of the story. For instance, consider the differences in a romantic drama versus a romantic comedy. Therefore, if a person were to read a romance story where the relationship was secondary to the story, they wouldn’t consider it romance.

Mystery 🔍: There are many types of mysteries, but like with romance, there are expectations. You wouldn’t call a story a mystery if there was absolutely nothing to solve. Sometimes, it is the mystery of solving a crime of some sort; think murder mysteries or Sherlock Holmes. Sometimes, the mystery is finding an object that could be stolen but could also be lost to time; think about stories like the Pink Panther, or The Search for Atlantis. Overall, the main characters are trying to solve the mystery whether that be something thrilling and bit scary as they find clues, funny and ridiculous, or full of adventure.

Horror 😱: This genre relies heavily on the relationship to the reader, which of course many stories do since we learned that stories are meant to read; however, horror stories are largely defined by how scared the reader gets when reading the story. The author often keeps this in mind as they write and revise. The other main expectation of the horror genre is that something horrific

has occurred and continues to occur throughout the story. Therefore, if something is technically horrific, and the characters are horrified by what happens, it works whether or not the reader feels scared by these elements. Horror also pairs well with fantasy. Many horror stories are fantastic in nature; they lean on characters that go bump in the night. There are also many horror stories that use the real world as the setting.

Fantasy ✨: This genre is very large and encompasses so many sub genres. The simple expectations for a fantastical story is that there be an element that does not exist of this world or that which can not be seen of this world whether that element was believed to exist in the past or whether it is believed to exist currently. Fantasy is the nature of the unseen. It is important to remember this when reading fantasy across cultures. If we were define fantasy as make believe, it would not fit into many stories around the world. For instance, in the West many consider the stories of the Greek gods to be myths. However, we also know that these stories were very much the reality of the people living in those times. This is the case for many people across world from the continent of Africa to the countries of southern and eastern Asia; stories of fantastical creatures and gods are still very much the reality of many cultures. Overall, if there is no fantastical element, it wouldn't be considered fantasy.

Science-Fiction 🌊: This genre relies on the possibilities of science. It stretches past what we know to be true and uses imagination to bridge the gap between real science and our hopes and fears for what the world might become. It has a tendency to poke exactly at the sore spots in our hearts and open our eyes to possibilities. The expectation for science fiction is that there be an element of the real world that has been expanded or developed in some way or has reached some sort of limit or disaster. It is useful to keep in mind that science involves not just technology, but biology, geology, astronomy, chemistry, physics, etc. This means that not only do science fiction stories deal with space and aliens, there are science fiction stories about the rise of the oceans, earthquakes, biological mutations, experiments, time travel, wacky or impressive inventions and many more. You may see science fiction and fantasy mixed and molded to tell stories. When these lines blur, it can make for a pretty interesting story.

While we haven't explored sub genres too closely in this introductory lesson, it is worth pointing out that dystopian stories are considered science fiction because they deal with the social sciences. Many dystopian stories use the shaping and remaking of society as a backdrop. This can also happen after a natural disaster. They use real life social or historical events or made up ones to help create the rules for the society in the story. This sub-genre is also a great example of how science fiction is defined here. What else can stretch our hopes than a utopia and our fears but a dystopia born of the mistakes and delusions of that utopia?

If you are wondering further about any specific genre, I would highly recommend visiting your local bookstore and browse the sections. See what kinds of stories end up where. And also, as a beginner writer, it is important to read widely with your writer's hat on. Do the activity from the previous lesson on the stories that you read.

BUILDING A WORLD VS SETTING

All fiction requires that you as the writer consider place. However, when thinking about writing genre fiction, especially, fantasy and science fiction, the world you build becomes even more important. When you build a world, you are doing more than just picking a place for your characters to interact in. You are writing the rules of the universe of your story. Once these rules are cemented, they must be adhered to as you write the story.

For instance, you might build a world where the Nazi's won World War II. (This happens in the dystopian show, *The Man in the High Castle* based on the story by science fiction author, Philip K. Dick). In this world, only 10 years after the war, you would have to consider the laws that would change, the decade, how much things would cost and could cost. You would have to consider behavior and social norms.

Another example of world building, would be creating a whole new world. This needs to happen in high fantasy stories. High fantasy stories are not based on our world as we know it. The first thing you might do is draw a rough map of that world, so you have a visual representation of it. Then you would have to consider the people, languages, history, cultural differences or similarities, and climate of the world. In other words, you are starting from scratch. This is very difficult to do and time consuming, but some examples are Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, and Game of Thrones. There may end up being things that are familiar to the reader, which is fine. You, the author, are still a person of your world. You only know what you know. So it is inevitable that your present day knowledge will seep into your story. This is especially important when writing out the dialogue. You might ask yourself, why does this character that is not from present day earth, sound exactly like someone from present day earth all the way down to the profanity?

One final way that authors create worlds is by using our current world as a foundation and creating a hidden world amongst us or creating a story that could happen in that real place. Examples of worlds that are hidden amongst us would be Hogwarts (Harry

Potter), The New York Institute (The Mortal Instruments), The Free Agents (Akata Witch) or *Neverwhere* (Neil Gaiman). In these stories, there are always 'regular' people that have no idea what is happening in the story.

In science fiction, earth becomes the baseline of knowledge so the reader makes comparisons to what is happening on earth, has happened on earth, or how earth used to be. Some examples would be Starfleet base in Star Trek, and The UN in The Expanse Series.

When stories happen in a real place, this is usually the setting. So a story could be placed in Chicago, New York, London, Lagos, etc. Even if the story doesn't happen in a real city, it needs to be clear where: a small town outside of the city, an apple orchard that backs up to the highway, a seaside town, a research center in the middle of the ocean, or on a boat traveling down the Mississippi. The setting of the story could also be during a specific time like during the riots and protests of 2020, during the Chicago fire, or during summer camp of 1975. This opens the door to historical fiction which needs to rely on the historical date and place to be where the characters interact. The more accurate and true to the time and place, the more believable the characters will be.

The Importance of Place

There are stories that are set in no particular place or time, but in order for those stories to be successful, the reader must be drawn away from questioning why there is no specific place by the action of the story. A good rule of thumb is to always put your story in a set place. This anchors the story and helps define the characters. This also brings stories to life. We don't exist nowhere or without time (unless the character is indeed lost to time), so your stories shouldn't either.

? Activity 5.1.1

Read "Rusties" by Nnedi Okorafor and Waniru Kahi

[clarkesworldmagazine.com okorafor kahi](https://clarkesworldmagazine.com/okorafor_kahi) [clarkesworldmagazine.com]

After reading "Rusties" discuss the world of this story. What type of world building is happening in this story? Can you think of other worlds that we haven't discussed? Please share.

Journal:

Which type of world building are you doing for your story?

Do not delete this text first.

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5.2: Read

Go to the **eBook Community College Collection on the EBSCOhost database on the City Colleges of Chicago library website.**

For a more in-depth understanding about writing short stories of any kind, read Chapter 4 of *Freefall into Fiction: Finding Form* By Barbra Turner-Vesselago "Character, Conflict, and Trouble".

Also the Introduction of *The Science Fiction Handbook* by Nick Hubble; Aris Mousoutzanis helps further define Science Fiction.

researchguides.ccc.edu [researchguides.ccc.edu]

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5.3: Activity

Activity

Option 1: Take the short story you are working on and turn it into a genre focused story. Sometimes revising or rewriting a story in another way helps you learn more about your characters or your story. It is a good way to explore it more. If you don't like the route that it takes, you don't have to use the rewrite.

Option 2: Create a new short story by choosing one of the genres you learned about in this lesson. Pay close attention to how the expectations of the genre impacts how you create the story.

Once your story is complete into a full draft, reflect on how the genre helped or hindered your writing.

Assessment Tool Suggestion: [Formative Assessment - Reflection rubric](#).

Rubric

Criteria	Meets All Requirements	Meets Most Requirements	Missing Some Requirements	Missing Most Requirements
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rubric

Completeness/ Correctness	Student answers the full question correctly using details, instances, and/or adds personal examples and meets the word count of at least a 150 words.	Student mostly answers the full question somewhat correctly using some details, instances, and/or personal examples, and meets the word count of at least 125 words.	Student mostly answers the full question somewhat correctly using some details, instances, and/or adds personal examples, and has a word count of 100 words.	Student does not answer the full question using details, instances, and adds personal examples, and does not meet the word count.	Score of Completeness/ Correctness, /
Focus	Student's answer is focused, clear, and stays on topic throughout the post.	Student's answer is mostly focused, clear, and stays on topic during most of the post.	Student's answer is somewhat unfocused, clear, and stays on topic during most of the post.	Student's answer is not focused, not clear, and does not stay on topic throughout the post.	Score of Focus, /

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 6: Fiction Writing Part 4- Plot, Organization, and Advice from Authors By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Fiction Writing Part 4: Learning about Plot and Organization. You can also find some advice from authors here.

[6.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

[6.2: Watch](#)

[6.3: Activity](#)

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6.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin

Plot and Organization

How your story is organized matters. The plot is what actually happens in the story. For example, the humans leave the house, the cat decides to make a cake, the cake burns, the cat firefighters show up, they put out the fire, the cat apologizes, the cat's friends help him clean up, the humans return none the wiser. If you are finding it difficult to write a succinct plot synopsis of your story, you might consider reverse outlining it. You might ask yourself: What is the action of the story? The order in which you reveal information is important and may not be exactly part of the plot, but usually it is. Figuring out the plot not only includes how you reveal information, but also how you section off the story or whether you choose to have anything beyond paragraph breaks. There are also plot structures that you can use to help organize the story. Here are a few structures that you might use.

Story within a Story: This structure starts with someone telling someone else a story. It is clear to the reader that this is happening. Throughout the story that the person is telling, sometimes the other person interrupts with questions. These interruptions act as section breaks in the story. The end needs to have a resolution in the present time of the story. This helps connect the story being told and the story happening in the forefront. A good example of this is *Definitely, Maybe*. and *The Neverending Story*.

Multiple Narrator: This structure allows the writer to write two stories simultaneously through two or more characters. The characters could be sharing the same spaces but the way in which they interpret what happens is different. The characters could also be in two completely different places and eventually meet up to continue the story together. There is a lot of flexibility with this structure. The writer can use multiple point of views and at times, some writers even use a third point of view for some chapters.

Chronological or Episodic: With this structure, the story starts at one point in time and progresses to the end. This can happen in present tense or in past tense. The story should continuously move forward, flashbacks or explanations of the past are minimal. This story is straight forward and the writer needs to make sure that the characters don't go stale by just going along with the plot.

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6.2: Watch

Neil Gaiman's advice for aspiring writers

From En Garde!: Neil Gaiman and Daniel Handler BAM Howard Gilman Opera House Feb 17, 2015

[youtube Neil Gaiman and Daniel Handler](#) [youtu.be]

"It's so important to read widely." | 8 writers share their advice

Posted on YouTube by Louisiana Museum of Modern Art

"It's so important to read widely." Over the years, the world's most prominent writers have shared their advice to aspiring writers with us. Meet Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ocean Vuong and six other significant writers in this compilation. "You cannot become a general if you're not a corporal, surgeon, or lieutenant before. So go step by step," says the late Umberto Eco in his advice from 2015. Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie emphasises the importance of reading. American writer Lorrie Moore says, "Be free, but don't be casual. Be free, be deep." Ocean Vuong shares the perspective of being a young, queer writer himself: "I wanted to know all the rules because the rules are like the guardrails on the highway. And I think for so many queer folks, after a while, you realise that this road was never made with me in mind." Colm Tóibín, Claire-Louise Bennett, Mario Vargas Llosa and Jonathan Franzen also appear in the video with their thoughts on writing. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was interviewed by Synne Rifbjerg in 2022, Ocean Vuong by Caspar Eric in 2022, Umberto Eco by Tonny Vorm in 2015, Lorrie Moore by Elisabeth Skou Petersen in 2024, Colm Tóibín by Elanor Wachtel in 2024, Claire-Louise Bennet by Caroline Albertine Minor in 2022, Mario Vargas Llosa by Christian Lund in 2019 and Jonathan Franzen by Marc-Christoph Wagner in 2016. Camera: Jakob Solbakken, Simon Wehye, Rasmus Quistgaard and Klaus Elmer Produced and edited by Roxanne Bagheshirin Lærkesen Copyright: Louisiana Channel, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2025

[YouTube Multiple Authors share advice](#) [youtu.be]

Author Rick Riordan on His Writing Process and Advice for Aspiring Authors

posted on YouTube by adlit.org

[YouTube Advice from Rick Riordan](#) [youtu.be]

WOTF Podcast: Nnedi Okorafor from sports to writing to bestselling author

posted on YouTube by Writers and Illustrators of the Future

[YouTube Advice from Nnedi Okorafor](#) [youtu.be]

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6.3: Activity

Choose your favorite author and write a piece that is an homage or parody to their style. You can even do a retelling of your favorite author's work.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 7: Poetry Part 1: Poetry Basics By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Poetry Part 1: Learning the Basics

[7.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

[7.2: Read and Watch](#)

[7.3: Activities-Truth Telling In Poetry](#)

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7.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Poetry

You can find poetry everywhere and a couple of modules is nowhere near enough information to cover all of this. We will be focusing mostly on how to write poetry, and there are some basics that beginner writers should learn. However, if you are interested in becoming a poet, I would recommend taking the full poetry course.

When you write a poem, you can start with an emotion, theme, or issue. Maybe the only thing you know is that you want to write about a certain thing. This is okay.

Another way to approach writing poetry is to start with a form. When you do this, you already know the criteria for the poem, which can make writing more organized and recognizable.

You can even mix things up when writing a long poem.

Basic Parts to a Poem

- Poems are written in verse.
- They can follow a specific scheme, meter, or pattern.
- Parts of a poem are called stanzas.

Reminder: All of this also depends on the type of poem. Prose poems are told in verse while free verse poems may not follow a specific pattern.

Poetry uses a ‘speaker’ instead of a narrator. The ‘speaker’ does not have to be the author. Keep this in mind as you read and write poems.

When you write poetry, it is also important to learn about using literary devices.

Here are the literary devices that you should learn:

Alliteration: The repetition of initial consonant sounds used especially in poetry to emphasize and link words as well as to create pleasing, musical sounds. Example—the fair breeze blew, the white foam flew.

Allusion: A reference to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art to enrich the reading experience by adding meaning.

Characterization: Techniques a writer uses to create and develop a character by what:

- he/she does or says,
- other characters say about him/her, or how they react to him/her
- the author reveals directly or through a narrator.

Dialect: Speech that reflects pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar typical of a geographical region.

Flashback: Interruption of the chronological (time) order to present something that occurred before the beginning of the story.

Figurative Language: Language that has meaning beyond the literal meaning; also known as “figures of speech.”

- Simile: comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was as cold as ice.”
- Metaphor: comparison of two things essentially different but with some commonalities; does not use “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was ice.”
- Hyperbole: a purposeful exaggeration for emphasis or humor.
- Personification: human qualities attributed to an animal, object, or idea, e.g. “The wind exhaled.”

Free Verse: Poetry that does not conform to a regular meter or rhyme scheme. Poets who write in free verse try to reproduce the natural rhythms of spoken language.

Foreshadowing: Important hints that an author drops to prepare the reader for what is to come, and help the reader anticipate the outcome.

Imagery: Words or phrases that appeal to the reader's senses.

Humor: The quality of a literary or informative work that makes the character and/or situations seem funny, amusing, or ludicrous.

Irony: A technique that involves surprising, interesting, or amusing contradictions or contrasts. Verbal irony occurs when words are used to suggest the opposite of their usual meaning. An irony of situation is when an event occurs that directly contradicts expectations.

Onomatopoeia: The use of words that imitate sounds. Examples would be *hiss*, *buzz*, *swish*, and *crunch*.

Point of View: Perspective from which the story is told

- First-person: narrator is a character in the story; uses "I," "we," etc.
- Third-person: narrator outside the story; uses "he," "she," "they"
- Third-person limited: narrator tells only what one character perceives
- Third-person omniscient: narrator can see into the minds of all characters.

Satire: Writing that comments humorously on human flaws, ideas, social customs, or institutions in order to change them.

Style: The distinctive way that a writer uses language including such factors as word choice, sentence length, arrangement, and complexity, and the use of figurative language and imagery.

Suspense: A feeling of excitement, curiosity, or expectation about what will happen.

Symbol: Person, place, or thing that represents something beyond itself, most often something concrete or tangible that represents an abstract idea.

The great thing about poetry is that there are so many options to express your ideas.

? Classroom Activity 7.1.1

Let's start with a type of poem that most people are familiar with, the acrostic poem. An acrostic poem is where the first letter in each line spells out a word, writes a phrase or a sentence. Usually the first letters create their own word. This type of poem can be witty, funny, or full of other emotions.

Using your name, write an acrostic poem about a friend or family member.

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7.2: Read and Watch

Poetry Makes People Nervous By Sarah Kay

Sarah Kay speaks to us about the nature of poetry and how it can impact lives, opening new doors. [YouTube Poetry makes People Nervous](#) [youtube.com]



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Understanding Levels in Poetry

Introduction to Poetry

Poetry may be a lost art because somewhere and somehow between middle school and high school, some students find poetry difficult to understand. They don't want to read it. They don't want to listen to it, and they certainly don't want to write it.

However, understanding poetry doesn't have to be difficult or feared. Like a toy model or lego set, poetry is put together piece by piece—word by word. Each level builds on the foundation before it—line by line and stanza by stanza.

Typographical Level of a Poem

The typographical level of a poem is how it is typed on the page. Generally, a poem is typed in lines and stanzas like song lyrics. However, a well-known writer, E. E. Cummings, was known for pushing the boundaries for how a poem should be typed. Read his poem "Buffalo Bill's":

Buffalo Bill's

Author: E. E. Cummings

©1920

Buffalo Bill's
defunct
 who used to
 ride a watersmooth-silver
 stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
 Jesus

he was a handsome man
 and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death

Notice the typography. Some words are run together. Some lines are indented. Most of the words are in lowercase letters; only the proper nouns are capitalized. Finally, there's no punctuation. Readers need to ask the question, "How do all these decisions, made by Cummings, impact the meaning of the poem?"

Sound Level of a Poem

The sound level is the musicality of the language when the poem is read aloud. It may include rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, assonance, consonance, caesura, or other techniques. Read aloud this stanza (excerpt) from Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Bells":

The Bells

Author: Edgar Allan Poe

©1849

I.

Hear the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Notice the use of rhyme: bells, foretells, wells and tinkle, oversprinkle, twinkle. Notice the repetition of words in some lines. Tinkle, time, and bells have repeating words three times each. Notice the alliteration—words that sound the same at the beginning. Notice the assonance—words that have the same vowel sounds. Notice the consonance—words that have the same consonant sounds.

Imagery Level of a Poem

Poets create snapshots of life through word pictures. That imagery can be a description using the five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Like fiction, it will focus on specific nouns and action verbs. Imagery can also be achieved through figures of speech: similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, etc. In the early 20th Century, William Carlos Williams was part of the Imagism Movement. Read his poem "The Red Wheelbarrow":

The Red Wheelbarrow

Author: William Carlos Williams

©1923

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

Notice the isolation of a single image—the red wheelbarrow. Notice the use of specific nouns—wheelbarrow, rain, chickens. Notice the strong action verb—glazed. Notice how the poem is a snapshot of a particular moment in life.

Idea Level of a Poem

The idea level is the poem's theme—the central idea that the poet is conveying in the poem. A theme can be overemphasized by writers. The poet has to allow the imagery and words to unfold the theme like a person opening a gift. If they directly state the theme, the poetic elements are lost.

Like fiction, a poem's theme can be a universal theme such as childhood, nature, aging, death, etc. For example, here's Emily Dickinson's poem first published as "The Chariot," also known as "Because I Could Not Stop for Death":

The Chariot

Author: Emily Dickinson

©1890

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Combining Levels

In poetry, the writer blends all the levels—typography, sound, imagery, and ideas—when writing a poem. Readers need to ask, "How do all the parts work together?" in order to understand the poem.

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Figures of Speech in Poetry

Definition

The meaning of language can be literal or figurative. Literal language states exactly what something is. On the other hand, figurative language creates meaning by comparing one thing to another thing. Poets use figures of speech in their poems. Several types of figures of speech exist for them to choose from. Five common ones are simile, metaphor, personification, hypberbole, and understatement.

Simile

A simile compares one thing to another by using the words like or as. Read Shakespeare's poem "Sonnet 130."

Sonnet 130

Author: William Shakespeare

© 1598

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare,
as any she belied with false compare.

In this sonnet, Shakespeare's simile in the first line is a contrast where one thing is not like or as something else. He wrote, "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun."

Metaphor

A metaphor compares one to another by saying one thing is another. Read Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers."

Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

Author: Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul

And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all

And sweetest in the Gale is heard
And sore must be the storm —
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm —

I've heard it in the chilliest land —
And on the strangest Sea —
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb — of Me.

Notice that Emily Dickinson compared hope to a bird—the thing with feathers. Because there are bird images throughout the poem, it is called an extended metaphor poem.

Personification

A personification involves giving a non-human, inanimate object the qualities of a person. Robert Frost did that in his poem “Storm Fear.”

Storm Fear

Author: Robert Frost

©1913

When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
'Come out! Come out!—
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length,—
How drifts are piled,
Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.

Look specifically at the strong action verbs to find the human traits that are attributed to the wind and storm.

Hyperbole

A hyperbole is an exaggeration of the truth in order to create an effect. Sometimes that's done in a single statement. Other times it can happen with repetition like in Robert Frost's famous poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” Read the poem aloud. Notice the effect of the last two lines. The reader feels the tiredness of the weary traveler.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Author: Robert Frost

©1923

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Understatement

Understatement is the exact opposite of a hyperbole. The writer deliberately chooses to downplay the significance or seriousness of a situation or an event. This is evident in Mary Howitt's Poem "The Spider and the Fly."

The Spider and the Fly

Author: Mary Howitt

©1853

Will you walk into my parlour, said a Spider to a Fly;
'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy.
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things to shew when you get there.
Oh, no, no! said the little Fly; to ask me is in vain:
For who goes up that winding stair shall ne'er come down again.

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, Dear friend, what can I do
To prove the warm affection I have ever felt for you?
I have within my parlour great store of all that's nice:
I'm sure you're very welcome; will you please to take a slice!
Oh, no, no! said the little Fly; kind sir, that cannot be;
For I know what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see.

Sweet creature, said the Spider, you're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gaudy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour-shelf;
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself.
Oh, thank you, gentle sir, she said, for what you're pleased to say;
And wishing you good morning now, I'll call another day.

The Spider turn'd him round again, and went into his den,
For well he knew that silly Fly would soon come back again.
And then he wore a tiny web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready for to dine upon the Fly;
And went out to his door again, and merrily did sing,
Come hither, pretty little Fly, with the gold and silver wing.

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily flattering words, came slowly fluttering by.
With humming wings she hung aloft, then nearer and nearer drew.
Thinking only of her crested head and gold and purple hue:
Thinking only of her brilliant wings, poor silly thing! at last,
Up jump'd the cruel Spider, and firmly held her fast!

He dragg'd her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour; but she ne'er came down again.
And now, my pretty maidens, who may this story hear,
To silly, idle, flattering words, I pray you ne'er give ear;
Unto an evil counsellor close heart, and ear, and eye,
And learn a lesson from this tale of the Spider and the Fly.

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Fog

Author: Carl Sandburg

© 1916

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

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7.3: Activities-Truth Telling In Poetry

Truth Telling in Poetry By Illinois Humanities

Essential Questions:

1. How does a poet develop theme through a series of details?
2. How can young people develop a theme in their own poetry?

This lesson uses Gwendolyn Brooks' poem "Boy Breaking Glass" and a student poem to help students write their own poetry. Through conversation about layers of detail, students will determine the truth that the poets intended to convey. Then, they will write their own poems, with a focus on truth-telling.

Gwendolyn Brooks is the first Black Poet Laureate of Illinois and the first Black Pulitzer Prize winner. She was deeply invested in her neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago and used that social, cultural, and political context to create poetry that resonated within her community and beyond it. Her work inspires students to pay close attention to their own communities, cultures, interests, and needs and to use their own experiences to develop themes in poetry writing.

Watch the YouTube video of Boy Breaking Glass posted Illinois Humanities

Boy Breaking Glass
To Marc Crawford from whom the commission
Gwendolyn Brooks

Whose broken window is a cry of art
 (success, that winks aware
 as elegance, as a treasonable faith)
 is raw: is sonic: is old-eyed première.
 Our beautiful flaw and terrible ornament.
 Our barbarous and metal little man.

"I shall create! If not a note, a hole.
 If not an overture, a desecration."

Full of pepper and light
 and Salt and night and cargoes.

"Don't go down the plank
 if you see there's no extension.
 Each to his grief, each to

his loneliness and fidgety revenge.
 Nobody knew where I was and now I am no longer there."

The only sanity is a cup of tea.
 The music is in minors.

Each one other
 is having different weather.

"It was you, it was you who threw away my name!
 And this is everything I have for me."

Who has not Congress, lobster, love, luau,
 the Regency Room, the Statue of Liberty,
 runs. A sloppy amalgamation.
 A mistake.
 A cliff.
 A hymn, a snare, and an exceeding sun.

Credit: Brooks, Gwendolyn. "Boy Breaking Glass." *Blacks*, Third World Press, 1987.

[YouTube Boy Breaking Glass](#) [youtube.com]

Ask students: "What do you think the poet means by the line 'Whose broken window is a cry of art'?" Confirm that the boy breaking a window sees his action as art or a way or speaking out.

Draw students' attention to the three quotations in the poem where the boy is speaking directly.

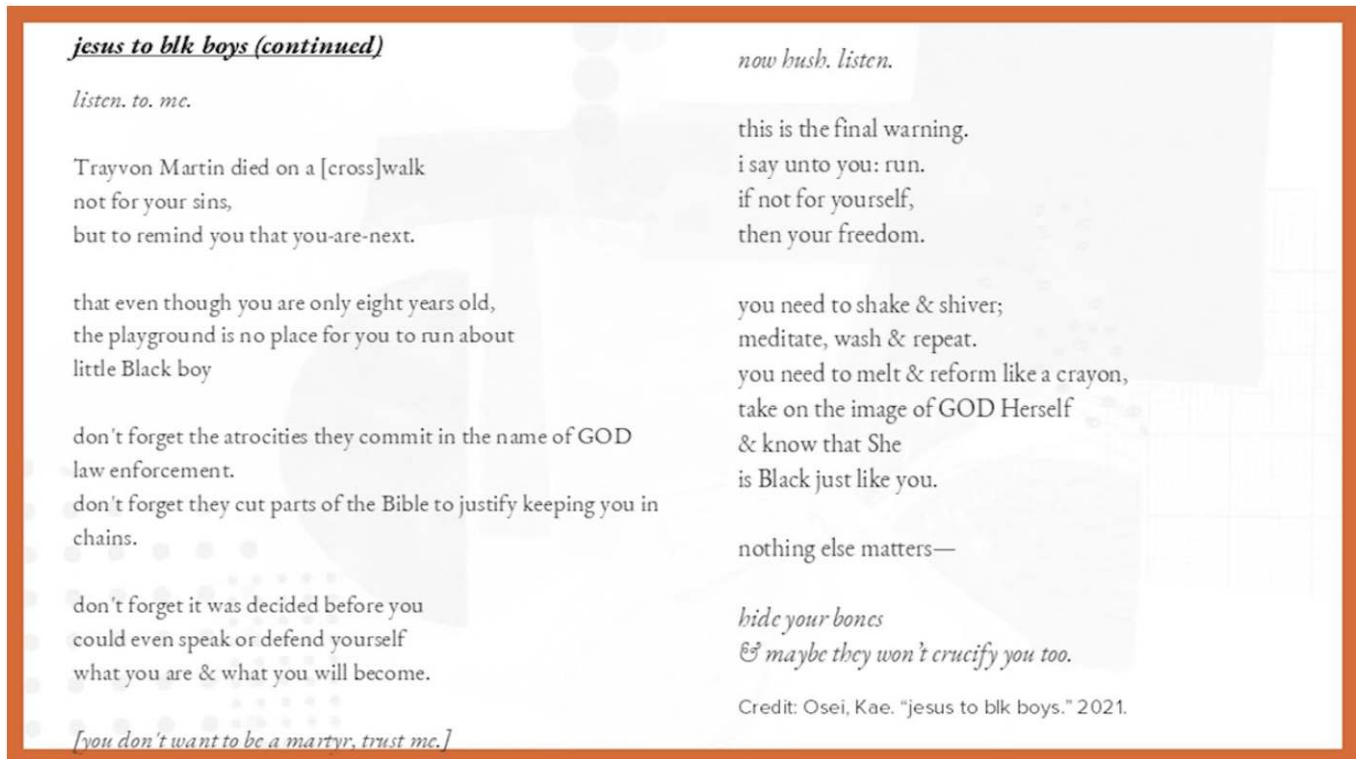
Invite students to turn and talk with a partner about what this boy might be experiencing by rereading those quotations. Ask them to share out.

Confirm students' interpretations including the boy feeling that the only opportunity he's offered is the opportunity to break something. He feels like he is walking a plank, that nobody knows or cares where he is. People are throwing away his name, which is the only thing he feels he owns.

Ask: "Reflecting on all of these details, what do you think is the theme of this poem?" Confirm students' ideas, including the theme: when faced with erasure, people may use destruction in the same way they use art – to make themselves known.

Play the reading of the student poem "jesus to blk boys."

An Illinois Humanities staff member reads the poem "jesus to blk boys" by Kae Osei as part of the poetry lesson plans offered to teachers through our Gwendolyn Brooks Youth Poetry Awards. [YouTube Jesus to blk boys \[youtu.be\]](https://youtu.be/)



jesus to blk boys (continued)

listen. to. me.

Trayvon Martin died on a [cross]walk
not for your sins,
but to remind you that you-are-next.

that even though you are only eight years old,
the playground is no place for you to run about
little Black boy

don't forget the atrocities they commit in the name of GOD
law enforcement.
don't forget they cut parts of the Bible to justify keeping you in
chains.

don't forget it was decided before you
could even speak or defend yourself
what you are & what you will become.

[you don't want to be a martyr, trust me.]

now hush. listen.

this is the final warning.
i say unto you: run.
if not for yourself,
then your freedom.

you need to shake & shiver;
meditate, wash & repeat.
you need to melt & reform like a crayon,
take on the image of GOD Herself
& know that She
is Black just like you.

nothing else matters—

hide your bones
& maybe they won't crucify you too.

Credit: Osei, Kae. "jesus to blk boys." 2021.

Invite students to notice and share out as many different things as they can about this poem. They may share details about form (line breaks, punctuation, font choices), word choice (imperative verbs, unusual hyphenations), and allusions (to Christianity, pop culture, chattel slavery).

Ask: "How do these layers of details build on one another to create the theme?"

Ask: "What is similar about the truth-telling in this poem and the first poem, Boy Breaking Glass? What is different?"

Tell students that building poetry using clear themes and strong details can help them deepen the truth-telling in their poems.

Attributions: Illinois Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that activates the humanities through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that spark conversation, foster reflection, build community, and strengthen civic engagement for everyone in Illinois. [Illinois humanities.org](https://www.illinois-humanities.org)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 8 Poetry Part 2- Finding Your Voice By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Poetry Part 2: Finding your voice.

[8.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity](#)

[8.2: Read](#)

[8.3: Activity](#)

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8.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

Since you've learned a little bit about poetry, let's learn by reading some more poetry and writing about it.

[Gwendolyn Brooks and the Poem kitchenette building](#)

Click on the link below to listen to the poem being read at poetry foundation website.

[poetry foundation kitchenette building \[www.poetryfoundation.org\]](#)

kitchenette building

BY [GWENDOLYN BROOKS](#)



[kitchenette building](#)

BY [GWENDOLYN BROOKS](#)

We are things of dry hours and the involuntary plan,
Grayed in, and gray. "Dream" makes a giddy sound, not strong
Like "rent," "feeding a wife," "satisfying a man."
But could a dream send up through onion fumes
Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes
And yesterday's garbage ripening in the hall,
Flutter, or sing an aria down these rooms
Even if we were willing to let it in,
Had time to warm it, keep it very clean,
Anticipate a message, let it begin?
We wonder. But not well! not for a minute!
Since Number Five is out of the bathroom now,
We think of lukewarm water, hope to get in it.

[poetry foundation kitchenette building \[www.poetryfoundation.org\]](#)

Copyright Credit: Gwendolyn Brooks, "kitchenette building" from Selected Poems, published by Harper & Row. Copyright © 1963 by Gwendolyn Brooks. Reprinted by consent of Brooks Permissions.

Source: Selected Poems (Harper & Row, 1963) Poetryfoundation.org

Activity 1:

Journal:

What are some experiences that you would like to express through poetry?

1. Think about where you, or your friends and family, live. Who are your neighbors and what do you have in common with them? Try to write a poem that uses, like "kitchenette building," the plural "we" to talk about a set of shared circumstances.

2. Brooks wrote at a time when African Americans were denied equal rights; for many of her generation, it seemed unlikely that

they would achieve their dreams and ambitions. What dreams do you have for your future? What hardships may make achieving those dreams difficult? Write a poem that confronts the difficulties your dream may face—try to be as explicit as Brooks is, naming the “onion fumes,” “yesterday’s garbage” and cramped living conditions that keep her dream from singing its “aria.”

poetryfoundation.org

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8.2: Read

Voice in Poetry

Definition of Voice

Just like fiction has a narrator, poetry has a speaker—someone who is the voice of the poem. Often times, the speaker is the poet. Other times, the speaker can take on the voice of a persona—the voice of someone else including animals and inanimate objects.

Points of View

Just like fiction, the poem is written in a specific point of view:

- First-person (I, me, my, we, us, our)
- Second-person (you, your)
- Third-person (he, she, it, him, her, his, hers, its, they, them, theirs).

Remember choosing a point of view determines how close the reader is involved in the poem. Third-person point of view will create more distance. The reader will be an observer. Whereas, first-person point of view will draw the reader into the poem. Second-person point of view is occasionally used in poetry. The speaker is speaking directly to his/her readers. Using second-person point of view, however, has to be done carefully as it is a more advanced skill and can be done poorly by an inexperienced writer.

Elements of Voice

Several elements create the speaker's voice: tone, diction, syntax, and audience.

Tone refers to the poet's attitude or position toward the subject. It may be positive, neutral, or negative. Some poets write political poems to make their ideas heard through literature. For example, John McCrae wrote "In Flanders Field" during World War I:

In Flanders Fields

Author: John McCrae

©1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Diction involves the word choices made by the poet. For example, word choice may include slang or dialect. Syntax works with diction; it includes the order or pattern in which the poet places the words in lines.

Finally, the audience, of course, are the intended readers the poet imagines when writing the poems and who they hope will read the poems.

More Than One Voice

A poem may have more than one voice. It's possible to have two or more speakers. For example, Robert Frost in his poem "Home Burial" uses dialogue between two characters—a husband and a wife—as well as a narrator speaker:

Home Burial

Author: Robert Frost

©1914

HE saw her from the bottom of the stairs
Before she saw him. She was starting down,
Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.
She took a doubtful step and then undid it
To raise herself and look again. He spoke
Advancing toward her: "What is it you see
From up there always—for I want to know."
She turned and sank upon her skirts at that,
And her face changed from terrified to dull.
He said to gain time: "What is it you see,"
Mounting until she cowered under him.
"I will find out now—you must tell me, dear."
She, in her place, refused him any help
With the least stiffening of her neck and silence.
She let him look, sure that he wouldn't see,
Blind creature; and a while he didn't see.
But at last he murmured, "Oh," and again, "Oh."
"What is it—what?" she said.
"Just that I see."
"You don't," she challenged. "Tell me what it is."
"The wonder is I didn't see at once.
I never noticed it from here before.
I must be wonted to it—that's the reason.
The little graveyard where my people are!
So small the window frames the whole of it.
Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?
There are three stones of slate and one of marble,
Broad-shouldered little slabs there in the sunlight
On the sidehill. We haven't to mind those.
But I understand: it is not the stones,
But the child's mound——"
"Don't, don't, don't, don't," she cried.
She withdrew shrinking from beneath his arm
That rested on the banister, and slid downstairs;
And turned on him with such a daunting look,
He said twice over before he knew himself:
"Can't a man speak of his own child he's lost?"
"Not you! Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!
I must get out of here. I must get air.
I don't know rightly whether any man can."
"Amy! Don't go to someone else this time.
Listen to me. I won't come down the stairs."
He sat and fixed his chin between his fists.
"There's something I should like to ask you, dear."
"You don't know how to ask it."

“Help me, then.”
Her fingers moved the latch for all reply.
“My words are nearly always an offence.
I don’t know how to speak of anything
So as to please you. But I might be taught
I should suppose. I can’t say I see how.
A man must partly give up being a man
With women-folk. We could have some arrangement
By which I’d bind myself to keep hands off
Anything special you’re a-mind to name.
Though I don’t like such things ’twixt those that love.
Two that don’t love can’t live together without them.
But two that do can’t live together with them.”
She moved the latch a little. “Don’t—don’t go.
Don’t carry it to someone else this time.
Tell me about it if it’s something human.
Let me into your grief. I’m not so much
Unlike other folks as your standing there
Apart would make me out. Give me my chance.
I do think, though, you overdo it a little.
What was it brought you up to think it the thing
To take your mother-loss of a first child
So inconsolably—in the face of love.
You’d think his memory might be satisfied——”
“There you go sneering now!”
“I’m not, I’m not!
You make me angry. I’ll come down to you.
God, what a woman! And it’s come to this,
A man can’t speak of his own child that’s dead.”
“You can’t because you don’t know how.
If you had any feelings, you that dug
With your own hand—how could you?—his little grave;
I saw you from that very window there,
Making the gravel leap and leap in air,
Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly
And roll back down the mound beside the hole.
I thought, Who is that man? I didn’t know you.
And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs
To look again, and still your spade kept lifting.
Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice
Out in the kitchen, and I don’t know why,
But I went near to see with my own eyes.
You could sit there with the stains on your shoes
Of the fresh earth from your own baby’s grave
And talk about your everyday concerns.
You had stood the spade up against the wall
Outside there in the entry, for I saw it.”
“I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever laughed.
I’m cursed. God, if I don’t believe I’m cursed.”

"I can repeat the very words you were saying.
'Three foggy mornings and one rainy day
Will rot the best birch fence a man can build.'
Think of it, talk like that at such a time!
What had how long it takes a birch to rot
To do with what was in the darkened parlour.
You couldn't care! The nearest friends can go
With anyone to death, comes so far short
They might as well not try to go at all.
No, from the time when one is sick to death,
One is alone, and he dies more alone.
Friends make pretence of following to the grave,
But before one is in it, their minds are turned
And making the best of their way back to life
And living people, and things they understand.
But the world's evil. I won't have grief so
If I can change it. Oh, I won't, I won't!"

"There, you have said it all and you feel better.
You won't go now. You're crying. Close the door.
The heart's gone out of it: why keep it up.
Amy! There's someone coming down the road!"

"You—oh, you think the talk is all. I must go—
Somewhere out of this house. How can I make you——"

"If—you—do!" She was opening the door wider.
Where do you mean to go? First tell me that.
I'll follow and bring you back by force. I will!—"

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The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Author: Langston Hughes

© 1920

I've known rivers
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

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8.3: Activity

Voice Poem

Directions

Write a first-person poem where you are the speaker writing about some aspect of who you are. This means, you will use first-person pronouns: I, me, my, myself. Here's a list of poem suggestions:

- Connect yourself to some aspect of nature like Langston Hughes did in "Negro Speaks of Rivers."
- Write about a traumatic event that happened in your life like Robert Frost did in "Home Burial."
- Compare yourself to an inanimate object like a computer, a refrigerator, a violin.
- Describe a rite of passage in your life.

You get the idea, right? Brainstorm a list of your own ideas, a variation of one of the above, or use one of the above ideas.

Show Don't Tell

Remember to use specific nouns and strong action verbs. Remember to use your senses, sight, taste, touch, sound, smell. Of course, poets use less words than fiction writers, too.

Line Breaks

Follow the traditional line breaks and format that most free-verse poets use. Make line breaks where there is punctuation, an end of a phrase, or the end of a sentence.

[Suggested Assessment Tool](#)

rubric

	Score	Comments
Poetic Voice • Consistently in first-person point of view.		
Imagery • Vivid images • Uses senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, smell • Shows does not tell		

	Score	Comments
Word Choice • Specific nouns • Action verbs • Does not use unnecessary words: very, really, always, gotten.		
Line Breaks • Occurs at the end of the statement • Occurs at the end of a phrase • Occurs where there is punctuation		
Punctuation • Correctly follows conventional rules • Punctuation enhances the images and thoughts		

	Score	Comments
Format • Single-spaced • One white space between stanzas • Left-justified rather than centered • Title included • Name heading • 1" margins		

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 9: Poetry Part 3 Rhythm, Sound, and Performance

Welcome to Poetry Part 3

[9.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity](#)

[9.2: Read and Watch](#)

[9.3: Activity](#)

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9.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

Performing your Poetry by Ukaisha Al-Amin

There are many forms of creative writing as we've discussed. Most creative writing is meant to be read. The relationship between the story or piece is created when the reader interacts with it. This is where interpretations happen. The reader or audience is extremely important. In performance poetry, the poet is trying to also connect directly to the audience. Because of this, the poet needs to project their voice, use gestures, and intentional pauses. When I was a judge short story for National ACT-SO Competition local chapter in Chicago, I go to see students performances in the poetry category and students focused on timing, expression, lived experiences. It was so great to see students speak their truth.

Performance poetry can also be "exciting and emotional often dealing with important social or personal topics," (Oak National Academy). Both forms of poetry have creative expressions of ideas, use of poetic devices, emotional powerful, and open to interpretation.

Some things to Note

Keywords

- **Convention** - the established techniques, forms, and styles that poets commonly use to convey meaning and emotion
- **Conventional** - describes something that is usual, traditional or widely accepted in a particular context
- **Preconceptions** - ideas or opinions formed in advance about something, often based on assumptions rather than facts
- **Colloquial** - informal language or expressions that are commonly used in everyday conversation rather than in formal writing or speech

Common misconception

Slam poetry doesn't have any rules or conventions, so anything goes. It's just speaking to an audience.

While slam poetry encourages creativity and self-expression, it does follow certain conventions, like using sound techniques, imagery and themes. These conventions help poets effectively communicate their messages and engage the audience.

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Activity

This is my voice – Shayne Koyczan

This is my voice
there are many like it
but this one is mine
and it's a fine line
when you're trying to define
the finer points of politics
politics being a latin word
poli meaning many
tics meaning blood sucking bastards
but too many live in countries
where it's bullets instead of ballots
where gavels fall like mallets
when held in the hands of those
whose judgments can be bought
as easily as
children can be taught to covet
and the only ones willing to speak up
are forced to live so far beneath the radar
that the underground is considered above it

this is for the ho chi minhs
and the michael collins
for the marquis de sades
and the muted gods

this is my voice
there are many like it
but this one is mine
and this time it's for the sons and daughters
who watch mothers and fathers drown in shallow waters
while panning for the american dream
in the polluted creek called the mainstream
this is for the homeless people sleeping on steam vents
making makeshift tents out of cardboard and old trash
trying to catch 40 winks in between the crash of car wrecks
risking their necks by surviving another day
so that they can starve
so that famine can carve their body into a corpse
before their heart stops beating
so that men in a board room meeting
can make it harder for them to get welfare or healthcare
it's no wonder some of them pawn off their own wheelchair
and every time I walk by I can't help but feel at fault,
that maybe I didn't search myself hard enough

for the control alt s
so I could save the world.
I've got to cash in my reality cheques
so I can drop the world some spare fantasies
because the most valuable thing I've ever learned
is to believe people when they say please

so don't tell me there are no heroes
this is for them
the women and the men
for helen keller who against all odds found a voice
for the choice veronica guerin made
for martin luther king who stayed just long enough
to share his dream with us
this is for that day on a bus with sister rosa parks
this for the joan of arcs who believe even in the face of sparks
becoming flame this is for the game louis riel refused to play
for the day the dalai lama finally goes home
for dr. jeffrey wigand who alone stared down big tobacco
for nelson mandela who continues to go the extra mile
for the trial that finally found a man guilty of shooting medgar evers dead
this is for everything malcolm x said
remembered by
athletes who left the olympics double-fisted
for arthur miller blacklisted for calling a witch hunt what it was
for galileo locked up because he said the earth revolves around the sun
for anyone who was told to be quiet but instead had their say
and imagine if we could still hear john lennon play
this is for the someone who stood up today and said no

for edward r. murrow who shut down McCarthy
this is for salman rushdie
mahatma Gandhi
you
me
this city
this country
we will always have a choice
when you stand up to be counted
tell the world this is my voice
there are many like it but this one is mine

? Exercise: This is my voice 9.1.1

This is My Voice

Predict

How do you think the poet wants us to feel after reading this poem?

Connect

The poet mentions a lot of people in this poem. Have you heard of any of them? What do you know?

Question

Why do you think that there is no punctuation in this poem? What did the poet intend?

Monitor

There are many names in this poem that you might not have heard of or have difficulty reading. How can you deal with that when reading?

Visualize

How do you imagine the poet would read this poem? Have a go at reading a few lines in the voice that you think he would use.

Summarize

Explain in one sentence, what you think this poem is all about?

not delete this text first.

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9.2: Read and Watch

Musicality of Poems

Poems have a musicality to them. They are meant to be read aloud to hear the sound, the rhythm, and sometimes the rhyme. How do poets create sound and rhythm in their poems? Through several literary devices.

Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of the same vowel sound in words near each other.

Consonance

Consonance is the repetition of the same consonant sounds in words near each other

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same consonant sounds at the beginning of words near each other.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia means a word resembles the meaning sound it represents.

Rhyme

Rhyme requires two or more words that repeat the same sounds.. They are often spelled in a similar way, but they don't have to be spelled in similar ways. Rhyme can occur at the end of a line, called end rhyme, or it can occur in the middle of the line, called internal rhyme.

Rhythm

Rhythm, of course, is the beat—the stressed syllables in a poem. Poets have a variety of possibilities for building that rhythm and ending lines.

Meter

Meter is the countable beat that a poet or reader can count. The rhythm will have equal intervals. Count the beat in William Blake's poem "The Lamb."

The Lamb

Author: William Blake

©1789

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life & bid thee feed
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, & he is mild;
He became a little child.

I a child, & thou a lamb,
We are callèd by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

Also, look for alliteration, assonance, consonance, and end-rhyme.

Caesuras

Caesuras are a break, pause, or interruption in the line.

End-Stopped Line

An end-stopped line occurs like natural speech; it ends at the end of a line.

Enjambment

Enjambment, the opposite of the end-stopped line, does not pause at the end of a line. It continues on without a pause into the next line. For example, poets may break between the subject and a verb, an article and a noun, or between a helping verb and an action verb. In the poem “Endymion,” John Keats uses enjambment. Read this excerpt—the first five lines:

Endymion

Author: John Keats

©1817

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

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Video: Tell Me about Yourself – Stories Through Poetry

Author: Alex Dang

“Using my own personal experiences as examples, I will be exploring self-identity through the medium of performance poetry, A.K.A. slam poetry. Everybody has a story to tell and the vehicle of performance poetry allows catharsis, evaluation, and processing of your own life. Performance poetry combines the aspects of hearing a live band with the intimacy of reading an intensely personal memoir. Because poetry is an art form in which the writer often talks about their own narrative and their own life, it becomes the ideal way to explore cultural, racial, political, and social identities. The beauty of poetry is that everyone’s voice is as important and valid as the people next to you.”

YouTube Tell me about yourself [youtu.be]

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9.3: Activity

Before you write your poem, read and complete the activity below.

Voice observation

Slam poets typically use four major voice techniques that you are going to watch for in performances and include in your own:

1. Slow down and use a deeper tone – this is used when you want your audience to really pay attention to what you are saying. It demonstrates that a point is very important.
2. Speed up and get louder – this is used when you want your audience to really understand the emotions that you are feeling.
3. Short pauses – these are used to let the audience think about a point that you have just made. Don't rush!
4. Long pauses – these are often used after a very important point, or to signal a change in direction or mood in your poem.

Using active voice

Sentences are written in either an active or a passive voice. Here are two examples:

Active – I read the novel in one day.

Passive – The novel was read by me in one day.

Active – The kangaroo carried the baby in her pouch.

Passive – The baby was carried by the kangaroo in her pouch.

1. What differences can you see? What makes one active and one passive?
2. Turn these passive sentences into active ones:

The car was driven by my Dad.

The game was stopped by the Principal.

The yummy cupcakes were cooked by my brother.

Almost all slam poetry is written in active voice. To go with that, the poets tend to use precise, active verbs. They don't just say I walked down the street. They ambled, or galloped or strode down the street. Slam poets don't eat, they devour or ravage or scoff their food.

Look at the verbs below and come up with five more interesting, active verbs that give more meaning to the word.

Verb Chart

Said	Run	Smile

Slam poetry criteria

Write a performance poem of your own choosing using the following criteria adopted from NSW Department of Education.

- Poems must be between 2 and 3 minutes in length.
- Don't just read your poem. Know it! By heart if possible.
- Your poem can rhyme or not rhyme.
- Stay on track, stay on topic.
- Use long and short pauses.
- Use eye contact with your audience.
- Think about how you want your audience to feel after your poem.

- Use hand gestures and facial expressions.
- Include some places with a low, slow voice.
- Include some places with a fast, loud voice.
- Stand in the middle of the classroom.
- Include some juxtaposition in your poem.
- Include at least one metaphor and one simile in your poem.
- Have fun and speak your truth!!

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 10: Poetry Part 4- Sharing and Critiquing Poetry

Welcome to Poetry Part 4: Learning about sharing and critiquing poetry.

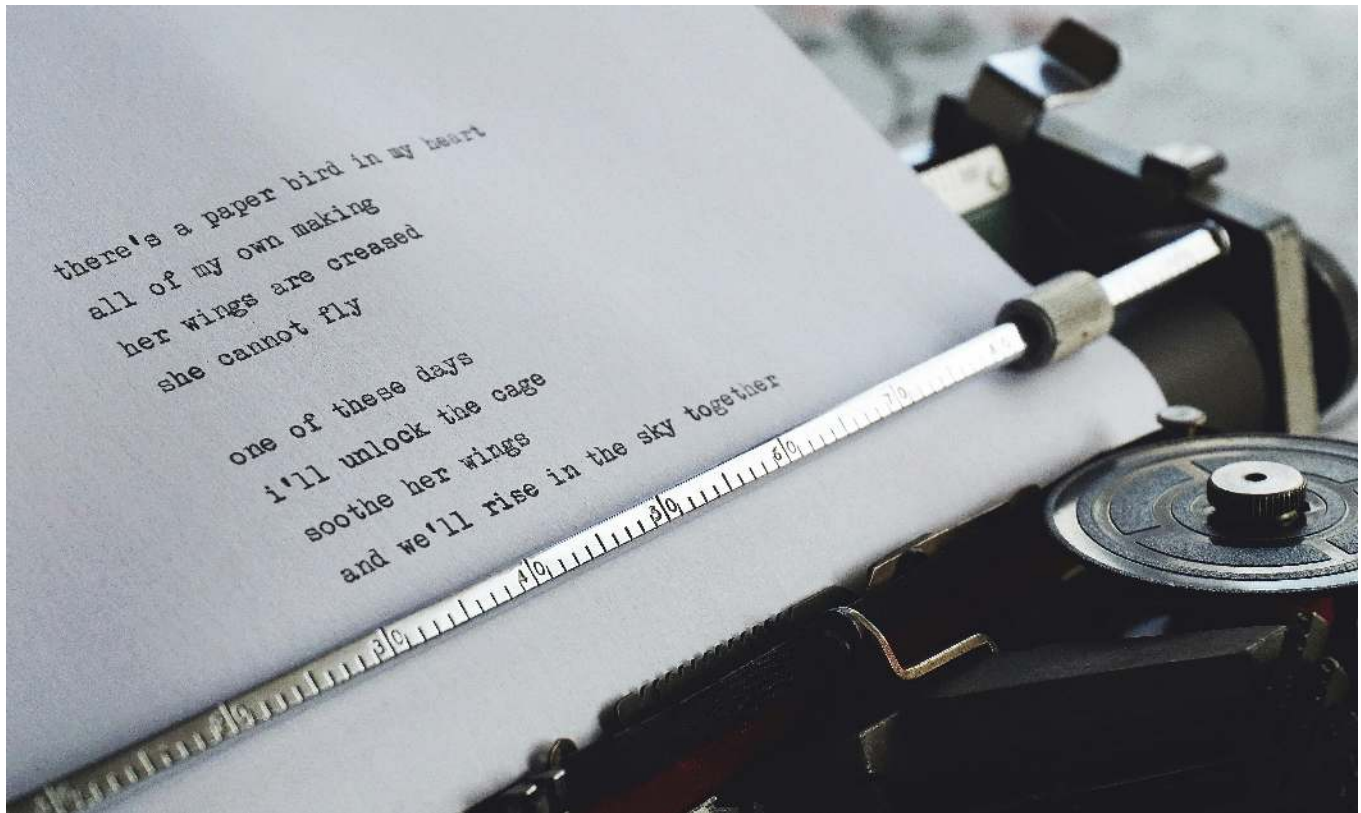
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10.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin



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Poetry Workshop

The purpose of the workshop is to get a chance to see how your writing is coming across to the reader.

When you set out to read another person's work, you may not have background knowledge about the author or the poem. Since not all poems are obvious about the type or form right away, it is important to make sure that you study up on poetry glossary as often as you can. The glossary on the poetry foundation website is the most comprehensive and interactive one that I would recommend. However, it is still important to make sure that when you give feedback, that you are asking questions, not just giving comments or suggestions. These questions may have simple answers for the author, but they may also help the author think about their poem in another way.

The workshop is also used as a way to discuss your plans for the piece and ask any questions that you have. Traditionally, if it is your turn for your creative piece to be workshopped, the class reads your piece then comments and asks questions about it. During this time, you just take notes. Once the class is finished, you can then address any of the questions or offer any explanations. Oftentimes, I have felt that this way leaves the writer a bit vulnerable. Therefore, we will be conducting our workshops a bit differently.

Our Method

First: You will read your piece to the class. Then everyone will have an additional five minutes to read it to themselves and think about questions that they may have.

Next: You will explain your ideas and plans for the piece. This includes anything that you are thinking of editing or revising.

Finally: Each classmate will ask at least two questions about the piece and then offer any suggestions or comments. All feedback should be as constructive as possible. As the writer, you will take note of the feedback, but as the creative artist, you do not have to use any of it in your final draft. That is up to you and you alone.

We should all thank each other for any feedback received and be respectful.

During workshop, we will be discussing the ways in which you chose to write your poems and you will be receiving questions from your classmates. Your workshop notes should include the following:

- **Section 1**

- What you wanted to achieve with the piece of writing
- All the questions that your classmates asked and answers to the questions. If you don't know the answer at this stage of the draft, that is fine, just make sure to take note of it.
- What you plan to do as you revise the poem.
- Are there any questions you have for me?

- **Section 2**

- Comments and questions you had about poems you read during workshop. This is just to ensure participation from everyone.
- Workshop notes are normally a page long.

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10.2: Read

Form in Poetry

Patterns in Poetry

Some poems come in specific patterns—a specific form, such as sonnets, villanelles, and concrete poems. These forms have specific rules that the poet must follow.

Sonnets

The sonnet is written in iambic pentameter. What's that? It's a specific rhythm. Each line has ten syllables with five pairs of iambs. Iambs are an unstressed syllable paired with a stressed syllable, so it will have the beat like this:

daDA / daDA / daDA / daDA / daDA

The Shakespearean sonnet has fourteen lines with a specific rhyme pattern. Each pair of words that rhymes alternate a line for the first 12 lines. For example, Line 1 and Line 3 end in a rhyme, and Line 2 and Line 4 end in a rhyme. The last two lines have their own rhyme. The rhyme scheme looks like this:

a
b
a
b
c
d
c
d
e
f
e
f
g
g

Read William Shakespeare's sonnet "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer Day?" Look at the specific traits of the form: the iambic pentameter rhythm and the rhyme scheme.

Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer Day

Author: William Shakespeare

©1598

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Other types of sonnets include the Petrarchan, a fourteen-line sonnet with the rhyme scheme of abba, abba, cde, cde.

Blank Verse

Blank verse is a poem that does not rhyme, but it has five stressed beats per line.

Villanelle

The villanelle contains five stanzas with three lines each, which is called tercets. The sixth stanza has four lines, which is called a quatrain. The total number of lines needed for a villanelle is 19 lines.

The villanelle also has two repeating lines. The first line in the first stanza repeats in the sixth, twelfth, and eighteenth lines. The third line in the first stanza repeats in the ninth, fifteenth, and nineteenth lines.

The villanelle follows this rhyme scheme: aba, aba, aba, aba, aba, abaa.

Check out this form in Dylan Thomas' poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night."

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

Author: Dylan Thomas

©1951

Poetry form

Do not go gentle into that good night,	Refrain 1 (A ¹)
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;	Line 2 (b)
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	Refrain 2 (A ²)
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,	Line 4 (a)
Because their words had forked no lightning they	Line 5 (b)
Do not go gentle into that good night.	Refrain 1 (A ¹)
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright	Line 7 (a)
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,	Line 8 (b)
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	Refrain 2 (A ²)
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,	Line 10 (a)
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,	Line 11 (b)
Do not go gentle into that good night.	Refrain 1 (A ¹)
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight	Line 13 (a)
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,	Line 14 (b)
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	Refrain 2 (A ²)
And you, my father, there on the sad height,	Line 16 (a)
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.	Line 17 (b)
Do not go gentle into that good night.	Refrain 1 (A ¹)
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.	Refrain 2 (A ²)

Concrete Poetry

Concrete poetry, also called visual poetry, takes on the shape of the topic being written about. The lines and words are typed specifically to create a design and enhance the meaning. For example, read and study the format of George Herbert's poem "Easter Wings."

Easter Wings

Author: George Herbert

©1633

Easter Wings

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victory;
For, if I imp³ my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Free Verse

Free verse poetry has no form, meaning it has no stressed beats per line. This is the most common type of poetry that is written today.

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List Poems

The list poem is exactly what it states. It's a list. Generally, the writer creates images by using lists of specific nouns that are interconnected to one another. For example, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote "Picture Books in Winter." Notice the nouns listing what is in the book.

Picture Books in Winter
Author: Robert Louis Stevenson
©1896

Summer fading, winter comes—
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon;
Still we find the flowing brooks
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,
Wait upon the children's eye,
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are,
Seas and cities, near and far,
And the flying fairies' looks,
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,
Reading picture story-books?

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10.3: Activity

Peer Review Instructions for Poetry

Peer reviews should help your classmates revise and draft their writing assignments, working toward a polished final draft. Think of your classmates as people that you want to help, not criticize or judge.

To make sure each person receives peer reviews, read and comment on classmates' drafts according to the assigned groups. If your group members do not submit their drafts on time, then you may select other students' drafts to fulfill your requirements of the assignment.

For each peer review, identify the following things:

- Words
 - If this were your poem, what words would you revise, delete, or add?
 - For a "C" write three sentences. For a "B" write four sentences. For an "A" write five sentences about word revisions
 - Do not write: "I don't see any word revision recommendations."
- Line Breaks
 - If this were your draft, what line breaks would you revise?
 - For a "C" write three sentences. For a "B" write four sentences. For an "A" write five sentences about organizational revisions.
 - Do not write: "I don't see any line break revision recommendations."
- Punctuation
 - If this were your draft, what punctuation would you change, add, or delete?
 - For a "C" write three sentences. For a "B" write four sentences. For an "A" write five sentences about grammar or sentence structure.
 - Do not write: "I don't see any punctuation revisions."
- Format
 - If this were your draft, what would you revise regarding the format of the poem?
 - For a "C" ask one question. For a "B" write two questions. For an "A" write three questions.
 - Do not write: "I don't have any questions."
- Praise
 - Describe one part of the piece that you can praise specifically.
 - For a "C" write three sentences. For a "B" write four sentences. For an "A" write five sentences.

Additional Directions

- Download, print, and use the Peer Review Form. Type your peer review responses on the form. Use one form for each peer review you complete, a total of four peer reviews per writing assignments.
- Use bold headers: Content, Organization, Grammar, Questions, Praise.
- Do not bold the text you write underneath the headers.

Receiving Feedback

When you receive feedback from your classmates and/or instructor, please take this constructive criticism in the spirit in which it is offered: to help you become a better writer.

Keep in mind, however, some feedback from your classmates may or may not be accurate. When you are in doubt about the feedback that you received from a classmate or another individual, send an email to the instructor to double check the accuracy of the statement(s).

Peer Review Evaluation Comments

Words

You used the word run three times. Are there other synonyms you can use instead? Also, delete the words very and really. They are unnecessary and they distract from the words that follow them. The words that follow them create a stronger image without very

and really.

Line Breaks

You have one line that is much longer than the others in the poem. Consider putting a line break in before the word and, which will make it two lines. You also have one line that has only one word. I'm not sure if that works. You might ask the instructor about that.

Punctuation

You incorrectly used a semi-colon. A semi-colon should separate two, short sentences that are related in content to one another. Also, follow the rules of how commas are used. You seem to randomly add commas after every line. Some should be periods. Some don't need punctuation at all. Read your poem aloud. That might help you determine where you need punctuation pauses and/or line breaks.

Format

Consider breaking this poem into two stanzas. There's a natural break in it. The first half is about what you like about winter. The second half is about the what you don't like. I also recommend that you write a final statement that is a separate stanza as well. Maybe it could be something about how you reconcile what you like and what you don't like about winters.

Praise

I like the title "Ode to Winter." I also like your similes, especially that winter is like an amusement park: skiing, sledding, snowshoeing. It also has strong alliteration with the "s" sound. I like the simile that winter is like a roaring lion, a wicked wind. Again, you used alliteration with the "w" sound.

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Formative Assessment: Student offers constructive criticism to classmates: Yes or No

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 11: Playwriting Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Playwriting Part 1

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11.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

PLAYS

Just like all other forms of creative writing, this genre has different types. Plays are often defined by their length. This is important because they are performed live and the timing is everything. There are 10-minute plays, One act plays and full length plays. Usually if a play is longer than one act, it is considered full length. There are also musicals, one person shows, and interactive plays. Plays are written for the stage. So while they can be read, this is one form of writing that relies on another medium to complete it.

Plays, just like fiction we learned about in previous chapters has many different types and styles. People write plays for all sorts of reasons, but the biggest difference between plays and prose is that it is meant to be performed. This aspect alone will help you decide what you want to write.

What to write? Many playwrights like other writers like to share the experiences they've had or learned about closely. This is definitely the case for the famous playwright, August Wilson.

In an interview for the Paris Review in 2017 he said the following to the question about what drew him to theater.

“WILSON

I think it was the ability of the theater to communicate ideas and extol virtues that drew me to it. And also I was, and remain, fascinated by the idea of an audience as a community of people who gather willingly to bear witness. A novelist writes a novel and people read it. But reading is a solitary act. While it may elicit a varied and personal response, the communal nature of the audience is like having five hundred people read your novel and respond to it at the same time. I find that thrilling.

INTERVIEWER

When did you first become involved?

WILSON

In 1968, during the Black Power movement, when black Americans were, as one sociologist put it, “seeking ways to alter their relationship to the society and the shared expectations of themselves as a community of people.” As a twenty-three year old poet concerned about the world and struggling to find a place in it, I felt it a duty and an honor to participate in that search. With my good friend Rob Penny, I founded the Black Horizons Theater in Pittsburgh with the idea of using the theater to politicize the community or, as we said in those days, to raise the consciousness of the people.

INTERVIEWER

Does that mean you were looking for plays that dealt with those issues? What kind of plays did you produce?

WILSON

We did everything we could get our hands on. Scripts were rather scarce in 1968. We did a lot of Amiri Baraka's plays, the agitprop stuff he was writing. It was at a time when black student organizations were active on the campuses so we were invited to the colleges around Pittsburgh and Ohio, and even as far away as Jackson, Mississippi.”

With this in mind, you might want to journal about moments in your life or the lives of people you know where a conflict got resolved.

Elements:

CHARACTER, DIALOGUE, PLOT, AND STORY

When the curtain goes up in the theater, this is when the suspension of disbelief should start for the audience. Suspension of disbelief is the extent to which the audience will believe what is happening on the stage in front of them. This element of creative writing is extremely important in plays because they are performed lived. The slightest thing can take the audience out of the moment. While we are studying the writing of the play, imagining what your play will look like live is important to keep in front of you. Your vision for your play is often the framework that you will use as you write the play. True, as a playwright, you might not direct your own play, but oftentimes, the director will work closely with the playwright in decisions on the page to stage process.

Character

You should develop your character for your play the same way you developed the character for your short story. In other words, there are going to be more plans and details about your character that you know than what is revealed. This means that as the writer, you should know everything about your character so that you can make the character come to life. On the stage, this happens mostly through dialogue and gestures for the writer. The rest of the emotion and the complexity is portrayed by the actor/actress and from the director's interpretation of the play. While this may seem that you don't have control, a lot can come through in the dialogue that readers will be able to see.

Dialogue

Dialogue is the main part of a script. What your character says and how they say it is very important. This means, more so than in poetry, each word should be chosen carefully. The dialogue is also directly linked to the setting and the personality of the character. You should keep this in mind as you write. The dialogue for each character should be distinct and when the dialogue is similar it should be intentional. For instance, if you have two best friends that grew up together, they may have similar dialogue, but if they have completely different personalities, this needs to be portrayed in the way they speak and as well as their gestures. This is one of the reasons why people that don't watch a lot of plays feel that actors in plays 'over due' it, but when you are on a small stage and are trying to reach an audience member at the back of a large theater -it matters. Likewise, characters that are too similar and don't stand out from each other are hard to cast and seemingly may have no purpose. August Wilson, was known to observe the people around him to help him capture authentic speech. This method helps with the research of dialogue. Since plays are meant to be performed, it might also be useful to become an observer of the situations around you. For instance, think about the conversations you've heard at a bus stop or in the store. If you wrote these out as lines in a script, what would it look like?

Plot

What happens in the play is revealed in scenes. The plot is the action of the play. This needs to happen through the character, the person on the stage that the audience is watching. In a play, you have no where to hide. You can't hide behind chunks of paragraphs that seemingly move the story forward. During each and every moment of the play, the characters need to act and make decisions out loud.

Story

This is overall what the play is about. It is different than the plot, but it does come from the plot. You can think of story as being similar to themes.

? Classroom Activity 11.1.1

Going to see a play is an experience. In a short journal entry, write about the last the play you went to see or the most memorable. How was it different from watching a movie? If you have never seen a play, find one on YouTube. This won't be the same as seeing it live, but it will give you an idea about what the a stage play looks like. How is it different from watching a movie?

Next, think about a few stories that you know well. Which story do you think would be good for the stage? Why?

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11.2: Read

36 Assumptions about Writing Plays

A noted PLAYWRIGHT nails down three dozen CREATIVE PRINCIPLES by José Rivera

Art is the conversation between lovers.

Art offers an opening for the heart.

True art makes the divine silence in the soul

Break into applause.

Art is, at last, the knowledge of

Where we are standing—

Where we are standing

in this Wonderland

When we rip off all our clothes...

—Hafiz

OVER THE YEARS I'VE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO TEACH WRITING IN a number of schools, from second grade to graduate school. I usually just wing it. But lately I've decided to think about the assumptions I was working under and to write them down. The following is an unscientific, gut-level survey of the assumptions I have about writing plays, in no particular order of importance.

1. Good playwriting is a collaboration between your many selves. The more multiple your personalities, the further, wider, deeper you might be able to go.
2. Theatre is closer to poetry and music than it is to the novel.
3. There's no time limit to writing plays. Think of playwriting as a life-long apprenticeship. Imagine you may have your best ideas on your death-bed.
4. You write because you want to show something. For instance, you write "to show that the world is shit." "To show how fleeting love and happiness are." "To show the inner workings of your ego." "To show that democracy is in danger." "To show how interconnected we are." Each "to show" is active and must be personal, deeply held, true to you.
5. We write plays in order to organize despair and chaos. To live vicariously. To play God. To project an idealized version of the world. To destroy things we hate in the world and in ourselves. To remember and to forget. To lie to ourselves. To play. To dance with language. To beautify the landscape. To fight loneliness. To inspire others. To imitate our heroes. To bring back the past and raise the dead. To achieve transcendence over ourselves. To fight the powers that be. To sound alarms. To provoke conversation. To engage in the conversation started by great writers in the past. To further evolve the art form. To lose ourselves in our fictive worlds. To make money.
6. Each line of dialogue is like a piece of DNA: potentially containing the entire play and its thesis; potentially telling us the beginning, middle and end of the play.
7. If you're not prepared to risk your entire reputation every time you write, then it's not worth your audience's time.
8. Embrace your writer's block. It's nature's way of preserving trees and your reputation. Listen to it and try to understand its source. Often writer's block happens because somewhere in your work you've lied to yourself and your subconscious won't let you go any further until you've gone back, erased the lie, stated the truth and started over.
9. Language is a form of entertainment. Beautiful language can be like beautiful music. It can amuse, inspire, mystify, enlighten.
10. Rhythm is key. Use as many sounds and cadences as possible. Think of dialogue as a form of percussive music. You can vary the speed of language, the beats per line, volume, density. You can use silences, fragments, elongated sentences, interruptions, overlapping conversation, physical activity, monologues, nonsense, non-sequiturs, foreign languages.

11. Vary your tone as much as possible. Juxtapose high seriousness with raunchy language with lyrical beauty with violence with dark comedy with awe with eroticism.
12. Action doesn't have to be overt. It can be the steady deepening of the dramatic situation...or your characters' steady emotional movements from one emotional/psychological condition to another—ignorance to enlightenment, weakness to strength, illness to wholeness.
13. Invest something truly personal in each of your characters, even if it's something of your worst self.
14. If Realism is as artificial as any other genre, strive to create your own realism. If theatre is a handicraft in which you make one-of-a-kind pieces, then you're in complete control of your fictive universe. What are its physical laws? What's gravity like? What does time do? What are the rules of cause and effect? How do your characters behave in this altered universe?
15. You write from your organs. Write from your eyes, your heart, your liver, your ass—write from your brain last of all.
16. You should write from all your senses: be prepared to design on the page, so it tells you exactly what you see, feel, hear, touch and taste in this world: never leave design to chance—that includes the design of the cast.
17. Find your tribe. Educate your collaborators. Stick to your people and be faithful to them for as long as possible. Seek esthetic and emotional compatibility with those you work with. Understand your director's worldview, because it will color his or her approach to your work.
18. Strive to be your own genre. Great plays represent the genres created around the author's voice. A Chekhov genre. A Caryl Churchill genre.
19. Strive to create roles that actors you respect would kill to perform.
20. Form follows function. Strive to reflect the content of the play in the form of the play.
21. Use the literalization of metaphor to discuss the inner emotional state of your characters.
22. Don't be afraid to attempt the great themes: death, war, sexuality, identity, fate, God, existence, politics, love.
23. Theatre is the explanation of life to the living. We try to tease apart the conflicting noises of living and make some kind of pattern and order. It's not so much an explanation of life as it is a recipe for understanding, a blueprint for navigation, a confidante with some answers—enough to guide you and encourage you, but not to dictate to you.
24. You can push emotional extremes. Don't be a puritan. Be sexy. Be violent. Be irrational. Be sloppy. Be frightening. Be loud. Be stupid. Be colorful.
25. Ideas can be deeply embedded in the interactions and reactions of your character. They can be in the music and poetry of your form. You have thoughts and you generate ideas constantly. A play ought to embody that thought, and that thought can serve as a unifying energy in your play.
26. A play must be organized. This is another word for structure. You organize a meal, your closet, your time—why not your play?
27. Strive to be mysterious, not confusing.
28. Think of information in a play like an I.V. drip—dispensing just enough to keep the body alive, but not too much too soon.
29. Think of writing as a constant battle against the natural inertia of daily language.
30. Write in layers. Have as many things happening in a play in any one moment as possible.
31. Faulkner said the greatest drama is the heart in conflict with itself.
32. Keep your chops up with constant questioning of your own work. React against your work. Be hyper-critical and do in the next work what you aimed for but failed to do in the last work.
33. Only listen to those people who have a vested interest in your future.
34. Character is the embodiment of obsession. A character must be stupendously hungry. There is no rest for those characters until they've satisfied their needs.
35. In all your plays, be sure to write at least one impossible thing. And don't let your director talk you out of it.
36. A writer cannot live without an authentic voice—the place where you are the most honest, most lyrical, most complete, most creative and new. That's what you're striving to find. But the authentic voice doesn't know how to write, any more than gasoline

knows how to drive. But driving is impossible without fuel, and writing is impossible without the heat and strength of your authentic voice. Learning to write well is the stuff of workshops. Learning good habits and practicing hard. But finding your authentic voice as a writer is your business, your journey-a private, lonely, inexact, painful, slow and frustrating voyage. Teachers and mentors can only bring you closer to that voice. With luck and time you'll get there on your own. -AT

This article appears as an afterword in References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot and Other Plays, to be published by TCG Books in spring 2003.

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11.3: Activity

Activity:

Before writing a full play, it is important to learn the impact of a scene. For this activity, you will write a scene about a main character that is experiencing some form of discrimination, bullying, or hostile environment. The scene should emphasize a turning point in which the main character makes a decision.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 12 Playwriting Part 2: Setting The Stage By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Playwriting Part 2: Setting the stage.

1. Understand, analyze, and apply the main elements of poetry, fiction, and drama to their own creative writing.
2. Blend various creative techniques and strategies into their own writing.
3. Analyze and evaluate their own writing and that of others for strengths and weaknesses.
4. Edit and revise compositions.
5. Perform readings of their work and works of others.

[12.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

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12.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin

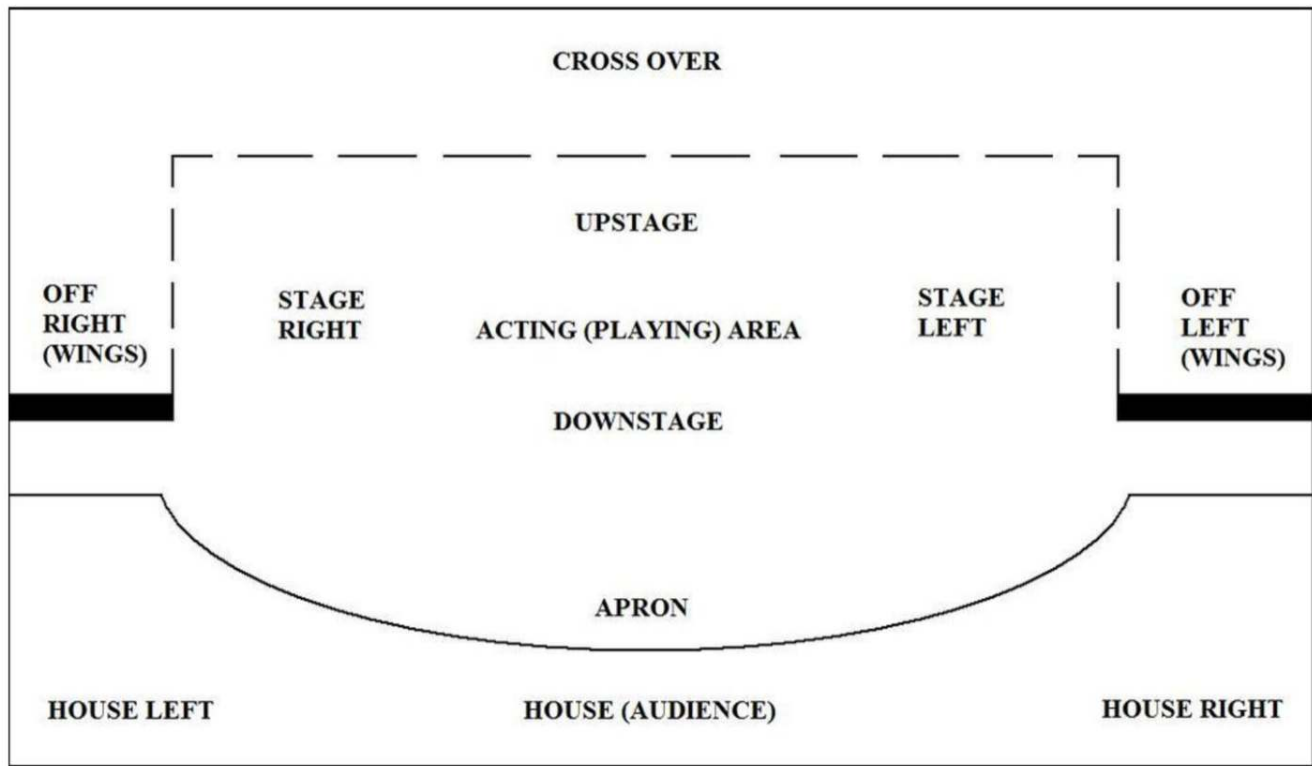
Setting the Stage



pic by pexels: Monica Silvetre

For a story to be engaging there needs to be some kind of conflict, but how that conflict is performed depends heavily on the setting of the play. Where are the characters? In what ways does the setting on the stage help or hinder the choices that the characters/actors have to move? How detailed or minimum in the set? What props are essential to the story? As the playwright, you are the initiator of these ideas. How closely the director sticks to them will depend on various things, but usually if the setting is purposeful, adds depth to the play and thus helps the audience understand the story better, the director is likely to keep the descriptions you use in the original script. Setting can be the physical space on the stage, but also the time period and town. This impacts the costume design and even the dialect, accent, or dialogue of the characters and how the actors portray them.

For instance, if there is a play that takes place on a CTA platform, it may be integral to emphasize the map of the train. If one character lives on the south west side and another on the north west side, this not only means they are probably waiting for two different trains, but it may also signify socio economic status. You might also ask yourself what is so important about having the characters in this setting instead of in their homes.



picture of standard theater set up

No matter what you choose that is best for your play, you should always keep in mind that plays are performed in front of a live audience. Where objects are placed is important to be sure that audience's view is not blocked. This means that most sets are created with the 4th wall open. This means nothing should be blocking the downstage area. See the diagram above for an example.

Another example would be the play *Two Trains Running* by August Wilson. This play is set in a diner in 1968 in the Hill District of Philadelphia. This setting impacts the characters greatly. The diner has to be set up in a way that shows the characters at work, the customers sitting down, and the pay phone that is used often throughout the play. As stated earlier, the down stage area is left open.

Below is a picture of Frankie Bradshaw's set design for *Two Trains Running*.



[frankiebradshawdesign two trains running \[www.frankiebradshawdesign.com\]](http://www.frankiebradshawdesign.com)

? Classroom Activity 12.1.1

Break into 4 or 5 groups. Using the classroom furniture and front of the classroom as downstage area, come up with a quick set design for a play that takes place in some one's dining room. Where should you place the furniture? It might be helpful to also come up with a quick scenario for the characters in that place. Discuss your groups choices with the class. For extra practice, try writing a description of the Two Trains Running set. This will help you prepare for the homework.

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12.2: Read

Place and situation

Clare Bayley

The question of where to set a play or a scene is more than just a decision about location. Sam Smiley expresses it like this: ‘If the writer envisions a scenic metaphor that visually represents the overall dramatic image, then the setting will tend to suggest, intensify and sometimes compel the action.’

Within your chosen milieu, you need to decide whether the action will play out in one defined location, or in a number of different settings. If you want to use a unified space, the key is to choose somewhere that will offer the greatest dramatic possibilities.

TOP TIP

The first place you think of isn’t always the best. Sometimes you have to disregard the most obvious setting, and think instead about the most dramatically interesting place to place your characters.

REALITY VS THEATRE

In reality much of the drama of our lives plays out in sitting rooms and offices; many of our life-changing conversations happen over a kitchen or restaurant table. But how interesting is this for an audience to watch? Could these conversations be heightened by putting them in a more challenging environment?

Some playwrights consider that putting your characters in a place is less important than placing them in a situation with dramatic potential. In other words, that the setting is entirely subordinate to and determined by the action of the scene.

It’s always useful to consider how the space acts upon the character. Do they feel nervous or relaxed, nostalgic, claustrophobic or confident in that place? The more ‘stuff’ that is going on for them, the more active and dramatic your scene will be. Even better if the location suggests activities the character has to perform. How can that develop? Does their sense of competence wax or wane, does the task in hand become more or less easy for them? If the dialogue is happening while one character is trying to

conceal their lover behind a screen (as in Sheridan’s *The School for Scandal*), or to do some DIY with an electric drill (as in Ayckbourn’s *Just Between Ourselves*), the potential for the playwright is infinitely richer than if they were simply sharing a cup of tea.

Unity of place

As Alan Ayckbourn cannily says, ‘Unity of place is always very satisfying and economical, not just financially but dramatically.’

His plays frequently take place in a liminal space, which unites what could have been several different sets. So his comedy *Season’s Greetings*, for instance, is set in the hall of Neville and Belinda’s suburban home, with a view into both the sitting room and the dining room. The story kicks off during a Christmas Eve party being held in the house. During the party, the characters must go through the hall to get to either of the other rooms, while – satisfyingly – they can also catch sight of people in those rooms (and be seen by them).⁹

In the nineteenth century the unity of place became popular in naturalistic theatre, and Ibsen was a master of the technique. *Hedda Gabler* is entirely set in Hedda’s drawing room, which has a smaller room off it. Hedda’s force of character and her magnetism are such that characters are inevitably drawn to visit her; her problem is that she’s trapped in her life and her marriage, and, despite herself, rarely leaves. Despite her destructive power over others, she has failed to escape from her own literal and figurative confinement in this house. When she finally leaves the room, it marks her departure from this life.

To set your play in one room requires considerable technical discipline. You have to get characters on and off stage and develop the action without any of it seeming contrived. You have to suggest the past history and the wider world of the play while never stepping outside. However, whether the space is a prison cell, a drawing room or an underground bunker, when successfully achieved this technique is highly satisfying for the audience, giving them a heightened focus on the drama.

Linked but unified settings

There are times when a single setting is too restrictive for the story being told, though there is still a unity about the places chosen. Rona Munro’s 2002 play *Iron* takes place fifty years into Fay’s life sentence

for murdering her husband. At the beginning of the play, her 25-year-old daughter Josie has come to visit her for the first time since she was sent down. You might expect all the scenes to take place in the prison visiting room; but in order to afford us glimpses of the characters alone, or talking to prison officers, there are also scenes in a waiting room, an interview room and Fay's cell. Expanding the settings in this way prevents them becoming restrictive, while still keeping the characters – and the audience – firmly within the prison system.

Setting which determines action

In some cases the setting can determine the action of the play. The advantages of setting a play in a place intended for a specific activity are manifold; a gym, for example, or a betting-shop, or the rehearsal room for a play. You can exploit these expectations for stage business; but more importantly, you can use the activities to comment on the thematics and symbolism of the play. Roy Williams' *Sucker Punch* takes place entirely in a gym where the characters Troy and Leon are learning to box. This setting includes a ring (which in breakout monologues stands in for the rings where Leon's fights take place), as well as lockers, punchbags, the trainer Charlie's offstage office, the permanently blocked and flooding toilets. It's a public place, so that characters can come and go, and turn up unexpectedly. The activities they engage in (sparring, romancing, arguing) reflect the action of the whole play and the setting becomes a metaphor – it's a place where disadvantaged black kids can go and try and make something of their lives; where they may find love, but will also encounter racism and learn that corruption is rife – even the ambiguous father figure Charlie is involved in match-fixing.

Multiple settings

For epics, history plays – all kinds of dramas unfolding across time and space – playwrights from Shakespeare to Brecht have needed the freedom to roam. *King Lear* takes place in court, on the blasted heath, in a hovel, outside castles, in dungeons, on clifftops. The settings are conjured through the verse, most wonderfully in Act Four, scene Six, where Edgar, in disguise, leads his blind father Gloucester to a hill which he claims is the top of the cliffs at Dover. Edgar knows that Gloucester will try to throw himself off the cliffs, and to save him he deceives him:

Come on, sir, here's the place. Stand still: how fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low.

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air

Show scarce so gross as beetles...

The ensuing scene – where Gloucester jumps on flat ground, believing he is on top of the cliff, and lands in a faint, so not realizing his mistake – is both arresting and poignant. Moreover it mirrors the story of *Lear*, and shows another great fall from grace of a self-deceiving parent. Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* tells the story of a group of convicts arriving in seventeenth-century Australia. Their enlightened Governor in Chief encourages them to produce a play, in an attempt to create a civilizing effect and 'change the nature of our little society'. Because Wertenbaker's play is about the staging of a play, there are certain activities which immediately suggest themselves for scenes, such as an audition, line learning, rehearsals and the performance itself. In these scenes the situation or activity is sufficient to give context to the scene, and the playwright leaves the choice of location to the director/designer. But in other scenes, where the action is more abstract or emotional, the setting is specified, and the action is conceived to reinforce its meaning.

There's a scene between Harry, the part-time hangman, and his convict-mistress Duckling, set in a rowing boat. Duckling was condemned to hang in Newgate prison until Harry took a fancy to her and managed to get her sentence commuted to deportation. She sees this as merely exchanging one prison for another, however. Harry's love is unrequited; the more he tries to win her round, the more she feels stifled by him:

'I wake up in the middle of the night and you're watching me ... JUST STOP WATCHING ME', she exclaims.

Harry intends this rowing expedition to be a romantic treat for Duckling; she sees it as just another situation she can't easily escape from. She longs to be free of him; he longs for love; in a moment of truce and compromise they agree she can take part in the play. He ruins it all with the last line of the scene:

'I'll come and watch the rehearsals', he says. And they row off together in their unhappy little boat.

References: Sam Smiley, *Playwriting: The Structure of Action* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 259.

Alan Ayckbourn, *The Crafty Art of Playmaking* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 29. Ayckbourn also recounts how he was commissioned to write a play (*Bedroom Farce*) for the newly completed Lyttelton stage: 'I could not for the life of me think how to fill that big wide stage. So I divided it into three and wrote a play set in three different bedrooms.'

In the National Theatre's lavish production in 2010, the set showed the whole three-story house, which Michael Billington in his review considered actually reduced the comic impact of the play (*The Guardian*, 9 December 2010).

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12.3: Activity

Set the stage!

Write a one-page double spaced description of the setting for your play. For this exercise, you should be as detailed as possible in order to practice writing descriptions. Please consider where the exits will be and how the setting could interfere or help the actors on the stage. You may include tips for costume design if you like.

Assessment Tool:

Great-Student includes a full description including colors, materials, and spacing.

Adequate-Student includes enough description for a minimal set.

Needs Work-Student has some difficulty describing the set.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 13 Playwriting Part 3- Experience is Nothing to Play around with By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Playwriting Part 3: Learning about different lengths of plays and using your experience to write plays.

1. Understand, analyze, and apply the main elements of poetry, fiction, and drama to their own creative writing.
2. Blend various creative techniques and strategies into their own writing.
3. Analyze and evaluate their own writing and that of others for strengths and weaknesses.
4. Edit and revise compositions.
5. Perform readings of their work and works of others.

[13.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

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13.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Writing Plays

How long does it take you to get to the point? How long does it take for characters to resolve their issues? These are important questions that will need to be answered as you write your play and as you think about what type of play you are writing. Usually, if you set out to write a certain type of play, this will be in the back of your mind the whole time you write. This is neither good or bad. It really will depend on your writing process and the writing situation.

The 10-minute Play

The 10 minute play is an exercise in constraint. It allows the writer to get straight to the heart of the matter. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The characters must be doing more than standing around. It needs to convey the full plot. This is great, right? It can be! But the tricky part about the 10-minute play is that it needs enough context for the audience to understand and follow what is happening. You as the writer will always have more information about your characters than the audience, so it is important to keep in mind what needs to be said versus what would be nice if it were said. The 10 minute play can feel a lot like a singular scene in a longer play, but the scene in a longer play sets up the expectations for the following scene. The audience knows the play is not over at the end of a scene, unless it is the last scene of the play. Leaving the ending too open or beginning too vague can confuse the audience or leave them dissatisfied. This is the plight of all short form writing, but of course it is very possible to achieve a short play that works.

Think about comedy sketches for example. While the art of writing comedy is its own textbook, thinking about how a story is told in just 5 minutes along with a punchline is pretty incredible. The 10-minute play is also a good piece to have in your portfolio because it shows how well you deal with conflict and resolution in a play. It is a great way to give a snap shot of your writing. Finally, this type of play comes in handy during readings, open mics, and festivals. When programming calls to pack several performances into a short period of time, having a 10-minute play on hand could help you be a part of the programming. For loquacious writers, this task can be very difficult, and you might realize that this isn't your cup of tea. However, as you continue to study playwriting, it is a good skill to practice. If anything, it will help you create stronger more powerful scenes.

The One Act Play

This is the play that you will be writing at the end of this course. One Act plays usually have the runtime of 10-45 minutes with no intermission. It consists of 3 to 4 scenes and is usually set in one singular place. For people who aren't familiar with plays, one way to think about it would be a stand alone episode of a television show. These shorter episodes have full stories in them. Another way to think about the one act play could be a short film. In this day and age, it is difficult to think about a movie that is shorter than 1:30:00, but short films or Shorts is another way to help you imagine the scope of an One Act Play.

Full Length Plays

These are the plays you are already most familiar with. When you visit the theater, a full-length play may have a runtime about 2 hours with a 15-minute intermission. Each act of the play has several scenes that move the story forward. Oftentimes, a new act is a leap in time or place for the play. For instance, Act one in a play may be about the characters preparing for an election and all the decisions and tensions that come along with it. Act two might be after the election and results have already had an impact on the characters. In this scenario, you'll notice that the election in and of itself is left out of the play. Writing full length play takes time and consideration, but it is a great way to truly explore the character's experiences and immerse the audience in their world.

Run-Time:

The playwriting script is formatted specifically in a way that helps the director and actors understand how long the play is. The format which includes the font type, font size, and spacing equals about two minutes per page. Monologues tend to run longer, so keep that in mind as you add them to your play.

Watch the YouTube video below about how to format a playwriting script. By RTHS Ian Finley

[YouTube How to format a playwriting script\(opens in new window\) \[youtu.be\]](#)

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13.2: Read and Watch

Theater Conversations with August Wilson on Youtube

Kennedy Center Digital Educational Learning Center YouTube



[YouTube Conversations with August Wilson \[youtube.com\]](#)

"When asked to describe the work of legendary playwright August Wilson, actor James Earl Jones said, "...when he writes he leaves some blood on the page. You can't get that stuff out of yourself without hurt. It's not therapy; it's more like revelation." August Wilson was one of America's most significant and successful playwrights. He undertook an ambitious playwriting project: to chronicle the central issues African Americans have faced by writing one play for each decade of the 20th century. Wilson's work accurately portrays the black experience in America-addressing themes of struggle (violence, economic injustices, unemployment, poverty and neglect, racism, civil rights, unlawful imprisonment, the legacy of slavery) as well as themes of triumph (the strength of family ties and loyalties, the uniqueness of black culture and the fight to preserve and value it)." -Kennedy Center Digital Learning

In this intimate conversation, August Wilson discusses his life, his influences, and his approach to working with others to bring his work to the stage (recorded in 2001 at C. D. Hylton High School in Woodbridge, VA).

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13.3: Activity

Writing Prompt

Write a One -Act play that emphasizes a moment in the life of the character where they made an important decision about their circumstances. What are the circumstances that has made the character's life difficult? Who or what is hindering them or keeping them trapped? By the end of the play, the character must have made a definitive decision and it should be clear whether their choice makes them unhappy or happy.

Here is a sample of a public rubric by MrRyanW that could be used to assess the play.

Playwriting					
Students who meet all of this criteria are proficient in playwriting skills.					
	Poor Effort 1 pts	Below Average 2 pts	Average 3 pts	Above Average 4 pts	Excellent Effort 5 pts
Clarity Student's work is well structured, and follows the same storyline through the beginning middle and end.	Ideas were unfocused or disorganized, missing crucial elements of plot.	Some organization, a plot is starting to take shape but is underdeveloped.	Clear beginning, middle, and end with minimal dramatic action.	Good organization of the plot and dramatic action throughout the writing.	The organization of this writing furthers the dramatic action and the plot is clear and focused.
Completion Student's work is an appropriate length for the given assignment: two character/20 lines for each character.	Required length is not met.	Required length is barely met and is lacking substance.	Required length is met but needs to be edited.	Required length is met or exceeded.	Required length is met or exceeded efficiently and concisely.
Formatting/Editing Student's work is formatted according to the industry standard, and is edited of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.	Assignment is not formatted properly.	Formatting rules were barely followed, there are several omissions.	Some formatting rules are followed, others were not.	Most formatting is correct.	All formatting is correct.
Character Development Student's work focuses on clearly defined characters with distinct voices and objectives.	Characters are not developed and do not have any relationships or objectives.	Character choices are inconsistent or do not always follow the plot.	Characters are clearly defined, but lack individual character voices or choices.	Clear choices are made for the characters and they have individual voices but lack depth.	Characters have clear objectives, character voices, and relationships.
Stage Direction Student's work is properly formatted, provides the platform for the scene and is efficient as possible.	There are no stage directions.	Stage directions are either too short or too long.	Stage direction is used somewhat effectively, lacks formatting and efficiency.	Stage direction is used effectively with minimal formatting or efficiency errors.	Stage direction is used effectively and is properly formatted throughout.

[rcampus rubrics \[www.rcampus.com\]](http://www.rcampus.com)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO 14 Creative Writing Workshop: The Social Aspect of Writing By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Welcome to Workshop: Learning about the social aspect of writing.

[14.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

[14.2: Read](#)

[14.3: Activity](#)

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14.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Workshop



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Work-shopping and reading your story out loud to others is not only necessary but it is apart of the writing process. You should revise before work-shopping and then continue the revision process after the workshop in order to incorporate any of the feedback you received.

There are a lot of ways to workshop a piece of writing. The biggest question that you want to ask yourself is, “what do you want to get out of the workshop?” What type of feedback do you think would be helpful to you. Having an idea as the author about what you want out of your piece will help the workshop stay focused.

Here is what you and the reviewers should do. The method below requires a week in advance to prepare.

The week before your work is to be work-shopped, bring copies of your work to class to share with classmates and the instructor. If the class is using a learning management system of some sort, you may be asked to upload or post your piece for the class to see.

On the day of your workshop, you should bring a set of questions with you that have the type of feedback you are looking for. These will come in handy at the end of the review if the class doesn’t address the parts that you were mainly concerned about.

As a reviewer, you should read the piece through first, then read it through again critically. Take note of questions and comments that you have. Asking questions of the author helps them process the feedback through a critical lens. For instance, instead of saying, you should shorten the conversation between character a and b or you should cut the line of the poem, you should phrase it as a question. How important to the story is the end of the conversation between characters A and B? Could the conversation be shortened to avoid one word answers? What does the conversation between characters A and B reveal about them? Does the last line of the poem take away from the metaphor in the previous line? Does it break the pattern of the poem in a non meaningful way?

Be sure to focus comments on specific parts of the piece. Just saying you like it or dislike it could be a truth that you want to convey, but you as the reviewer just liking or disliking it doesn’t help the writer. Instead, you can use comments that for example say, “I like how the description of the story included a spill on the floor in the back aisle that the character didn’t notice but was part the narration.” “I didn’t like how the main character mentions their mother working at the bank and then in the scenes as the bank, the mother who is supposedly an important part of the story is absent.”

Rules of the Workshop

Every classroom runs their workshop differently, but in order for the workshop to be productive, everyone should adhere to the rules. For instance in a silent workshop, the author is not allowed to comment on their work while it is being workshopped. Their job is to sit and take notes. Once the workshop is complete, the author is then open to comment or ask questions. In this type of workshop, it can difficult for the author to not want to add clarity to what they wrote by explaining it on the spot. However, this type of workshop is effective because it gives the author the real taste for how their writing is coming across to the reader. In real

situations, the author is rarely ever in the room when the reader encounters their work for the first time, so it is important to keep that mind. The reactions from the reviewers are real reactions that other readers could have when they read the piece.

Another type of workshop is where the writer leads the conversation. In this workshop, the writer is asked to read their work out loud to the group and then start by asking their questions. The group answers the questions then the writer asks another. At the end, the group then asks their own questions and makes their own comments. As you can see, either way, as the author or the reviewer, you should come to workshop ready to participate and dig into the story being covered. Not being ready lets down the group, but also may point to a deadline issue. Writer's must meet deadlines. It is a part of the publishing process, and it does not wait for anyone.

? Classroom Activity 14.1.1

Here are some ways to peer review poetry and other pieces of creative writing. Use any piece that you have written this semester and in groups of 3 or 4 conduct a peer review workshop. The class may also do this together in a circle as one big group.

1. WWW and TAG

The acronyms involved with feedback – at least according to the educators of Twitter – are WWW and TAG. Here's what they stand for, so feel free to use these strategies in your creative writing courses OR when giving feedback to ANYONE.

WWW and TAG

WWW	TAG	Examples
WOW.	T – Tell the classmate something that WOW'd you about their draft.	Your introduction is very controversial; this will shock readers. I think that's a good thing!
What If...	A – Ask a question about the content in the draft.	Why did you leave out the history of how you met this weird person? That may be valuable information for your readers.
I Wonder...	G – Give a suggestion to your classmate about their draft.	I would add in more details about the situation that lead you to deciding that adoption was the route you were going to take.

Questions:

Are you open to the kinds of feedback you'll get using that table above with the WWW/TAG pieces? What do you typically want feedback on when it comes to projects? Why?

WWW or Tag appears in Write or Left by Sybil Priebe CC-BY-NC-SA.

- What do you feel comfortable giving feedback to classmates on? Why?

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14.2: Read

Revising & Editing Process



Revision and editing are both important parts of the writing process, yet many students skip revision and don't spend enough time editing. It's important to remember that these steps are separate and that each step takes time. The following pages will help you develop strong revision and editing strategies for your writing process.

Revision

The revision process is an essential aspect of writing and one that you should build in time for before submitting your written work. Revision means to “re-see” the piece of writing.

It isn't just proofreading your paper or correcting grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. Revision is stepping back and looking at your paper as a whole and seeing if you are effectively saying what you intend to say. It is giving your paper a thorough look to see how you can make it stronger. Your goal should always be to write clearly, concisely, and in an engaging way.

One way to go about re-seeing your writing is to do it in three stages. Many people skip the first stage, but looking at the big picture is crucial in making sure you have a well-developed essay that expresses your ideas.

Revising Stage 1: Seeing the Big Picture

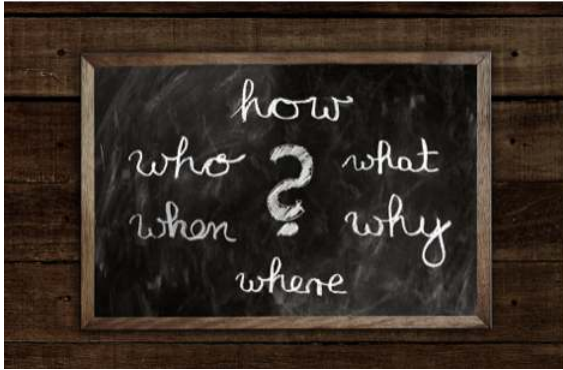


When you first begin your revision process, you should focus on the big picture or issues at the essay level that might need to be addressed. The following questions will guide you:

- Do you have a clear thesis? Do you know what idea or perspective you want your reader to understand upon reading your essay?
- Is your essay well organized?

- Is each paragraph a building block in your essay: does each explain or support your thesis?
- Does it need a different shape? Do parts need to be moved?
- Do you fully explain and illustrate the main ideas of your paper?
- Does your introduction grab the reader's interest?
- Does your conclusion leave the reader understanding your point of view?
- Are you saying in your essay what you want to say?
- What is the strength of your paper? What is its weakness?

Revising Stage 2: Mid-View



The second stage of the revision process requires that you look at your content closely and at the paragraph level. It's now time to examine each paragraph, on its own, to see where you might need to revise. The following questions will guide you through the mid-view revision stage:

- Does each paragraph contain solid, specific information, vivid description, or examples that illustrate the point you are making in the paragraph?
- Are there are other facts, quotations, examples, or descriptions to add that can more clearly illustrate or provide evidence for the points you are making?
- Are there sentences, words, descriptions or information that you can delete because they don't add to the points you are making or may confuse the reader?
- Are the paragraphs in the right order?
- Are your paragraphs overly long? Does each paragraph explore one main idea?
- Do you use clear transitions so the reader can follow your thinking?
- Are any paragraphs or parts of paragraphs redundant and need to be deleted?

Revising Stage 3: Editing Up Close



Once you have completed your revision and feel confident in your content, it's time to begin the editing stage of your revision and editing process. The following questions will guide you through your editing:

- Are there any grammar errors, i.e. have you been consistent in your use of tense, do your pronouns agree?

- Have you accurately and effectively used punctuation?
- Do you rely on strong verbs and nouns and maintain a good balance with adjectives and adverbs, using them to enhance descriptions but ensuring clear sentences?
- Are your words as accurate as possible?
- Do you define any technical or unusual terms you use?
- Are there extra words or clichés in your sentences that you can delete?
- Do you vary your sentence structure?
- Have you accurately presented facts; have you copied quotations precisely?
- If you're writing an academic essay, have you tried to be objective in your evidence and tone?
- If writing a personal essay, is the narrative voice lively and interesting?
- Have you spellchecked your paper?
- If you used sources, have you consistently documented all of the sources' ideas and information using a standard documentation style?

Revising & Editing Tips



Revision Tips

One great way to help you with revision is to try something called the post-draft outline. Here's how it works: Outline your paper, jotting down your thesis statement and the topic sentences in each of your paragraphs. See if this skeleton of your paper reveals a clear, logical flow of ideas and organization. If not, you know you need to make some changes. Having this visual representation of what you have actually written in your essay is a great help when you are trying to revise effectively.

Editing Tips

It's important to remember that a good editing process takes time. You can't edit well in one big editing pass. You should be prepared to spend the time it will take to edit in several passes and use strategies that will you slow yourself down and edit thoroughly.

Read your paper aloud.

Reading aloud gives you the opportunity to both see and hear what you have written—and it slows your eyes down so you're more likely to catch errors and see what you have actually written, not what you think you wrote. It's also helpful to have someone else read your paper aloud so you can listen to how well it flows.

Read your paper backwards.

Start with the last sentence. Read it first. Then, read the second-to-the-last sentence. Continue this process for your whole essay. This strategy really slows you down and helps you see each sentence on its own, which is key to effective editing.

Review the Grammar Essentials Area

Review the [Grammar Essentials](#) area for known struggles you have with grammar, punctuation, and other errors. Then, with that information fresh in your mind, edit your paper just looking for those known issues. For example, if you know you have struggles with commas, review the information on commas in the Excelsior OWL, and, then, immediately edit your essay with special attention to commas. With the rules fresh in your mind, you're more likely to catch any errors.

A Tip for Both Revising and Editing

Finally, a good tip for both revision and editing is to use the resources available to you for feedback and help. If you're on a campus with a writing center, take advantage of it. If your online college offers an online writing tutorial service, submit your essay to that service for feedback. And, take advantage of in-class peer reviews. Your peers understand the writing assignment you're working on and can provide helpful reader feedback.

Seek help when you need it, and ask questions of your professor. A good revision and editing process involves using all of the resources available to you.

Activity: Peer Review by Excelsior Owl CC-BY

Even though you are reviewing and workshopping a piece of creative writing, using this method as one way to help get peer review started could be useful

C A R E S Peer Review Feedback Form

Perhaps the most helpful tool in developing logical, readable drafts is a peer review session. Peer Review is effective for both the writer and the reviewer. Depending on the writing assignment, adult readers will review class content, as well as strengthen vital writing and close reading skills. Writers will recognize that good writing communicates effectively with diverse readers.

To remember while viewing:

Note: The least helpful comment to receive from a peer reviewer is "It looks good to me."

- First attend to Higher Order Concerns: thesis, audience, purpose, organization, development (support)
- Then attend to Lower Order Concerns: sentence structure, punctuation, word choice, spelling
- Make comments in spirit of helpfulness. Take comments in spirit of helpfulness.

Writer: _____ Reviewer: _____

C

Congratulate

What does the writer do well in this assignment? (List one or more aspects.) Also, please write the writer's main claim or focus (thesis) according to what you have read. (It may not be the last sentence of the first paragraph -the traditional place for the thesis.)

A

Ask clarifying questions

What part(s) of the essay were a bit confusing? Why?

What specific suggestions (3 or fewer) do you have for revising the unclear parts of this writing? *

R

Request more

What would you like to know more about the topic that can enhance the essay and that supports the thesis?

E

Evaluate its value

What specific detail(s) do not work with the essay (e.g. doesn't support the thesis) or can be moved within the essay?

S

Summarize

Overall, what new information have you learned or how are you thinking differently after this reading

C A R E S Peer Review Feedback Form

* You may use the list below for ideas.

(Please identify the paragraph for your suggestion)

- Thesis needs to better identify the main point of the essay
- Topic sentence(s) needs to identify the main point of this paragraph
- Paragraph(s) needs one overall idea (needs more specific evidence, needs more writer's commentary)
- Words: repeating words, repeating ideas, repeating sentence structure
- Using vague language, using slang, transition words needed
- Proofreading: punctuation, spelling, grammar
- Sources (if used) need to be clearly identified
- Proper in-text / reference format needed

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14.3: Activity

Creative Writing Peer Review Activity

by Ukaisha Al-Amin

In this activity, you are going to become a voice actor for your piece. In pairs or groups, take turns doing the Reading and Writing section for everyone in the group. When everyone is done, share your ideas by giving useful feedback. If the story has multiple characters, you can decide to share the character voices. For plays, everyone should choose a part. For poetry, the author will be the speaker unless it would be helpful to hear the poem read by someone else.

Part 1: Reading

While the piece is being read everyone will have a job:

The Author's Job

- Listen for places that you felt could have been worded differently.
- Think about whether the characters sound the way you want. Are the dialogue descriptions enough to create the character's voice? Do they say uncharacteristic things?
- Think about the descriptions you used. Are there too many? Not Enough?
- Does the story have a beginning a middle and an end? Is the ending resolved or unresolved?
- For Poetry- is the poem conveying the ideas that you wanted? Do the line breaks make sense for what you are writing. Is the poem in a particular style? Have you achieved it?
- Remember that revision means to rethink your project. Ask the readers questions you may have after hearing it read out loud. Be sure to take notes on the discussion of your own draft.

The Readers Job

- Read as clearly as possible.
- Read the draft AS IS. This will help the author hear any mistakes. If you are author, don't add words that are not there.
- Are there places where you had to read twice because of the writing?
- What questions, suggestions do you have for the author now that you are done reading?

Writing

After the draft has been read, take some time to write down the things you noticed.

Comments: Write down one sentence that represents the piece the best.

Questions: Write down at least two questions you have about the piece.

Suggestions: Write down at least two suggestions.

Part 2-Revision

Look back at your notes. Highlight the feedback that is most valuable to you. Double check any suggestions that you were given. Be sure to ask the person who gave the suggestion for any clarifications if you are confused.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

LO15: Publishing and Creating a Platform

Welcome to Publishing and Creating a Platform

[15.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin](#)

[15.3: Activity](#)

[15.2: Read and Watch](#)

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15.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Publishing and Creating a Platform

Manuscripts:

Before you can publish, you need to make sure your manuscript is where you want it. This is where beta readers come in handy. Have a friend or other writers from your class or writing club read your work. Ask them for specific feedback. Work with an editor or writing association to get feedback. You can also workshop your manuscript one more time at summer workshops throughout the city.

Sometimes, you might want to have more than one version of the same work just in case the place where you want to publish has certain parameters. For instance, if you have a story that you have revised a few times and one of the revisions is closer to flash fiction and the other revision is a fuller short story, consider polishing both of off and keeping them. They may come in handy. Many smaller literary magazines only publish flash fiction. Of course, there will always be places that might not fit your work and that is okay. Keep looking. There are lots of ways to get published.

Once you are satisfied with your final draft, you will need to figure out what type of query letter or synopsis you might need to write for your work. Sometimes, you won't need either of these.

Query Letter:

A query letter is a letter of interest that you send along with your work. Think of it as a way to introduce your work.

Synopsis:

This is a summary of the story. A full synopsis includes the ending of the story.

Where to look: You start by looking up literary magazines at colleges and universities. These presses take student work. Look to see if it is open to all students or just those at the corresponding schools. Look to see if your own school as a literary magazine. Harold Washington College's Literary Magazine is the Garland Court Review.

You can also look at textbook publishers. These publishers are always looking for student writing to publish in their books and often open up submissions more than once a year.

You can sign up for a submission manager that may have some of the magazines that are accepting submissions; however, the submission manager's goal is to help you keep track of where you have submitted and where your work has been accepted.

Self-Publishing:

There are many avenues for self-publishing and there are many steps. If you are interested in self publishing, you can start by looking at some of the big name bookstores that have publishing houses. They each provide different information to help you get started.

? Classroom Activity 15.1.1

Look at the Garland Court Review website and see what the parameters for publishing in different categories are.

[hwcartandarchitecture garland court review \[hwcartandarchitecture.org\]](http://hwcartandarchitecture.org)

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Platforms:

Even as a beginner writer, learning some of the ways authors publish will help you later if you continue to pursue writing.

The publishing world is ever shifting, but one thing that has stayed the same is that when you want people to read your book, they want to know about you. This means having a designated bio, portfolio, and page where they can learn more. Your platform also includes where you have been published before. Think of it as a writer's resume. Sometimes, some of this information will go into your bio, but some of the other work you that you do that is writing related can also go on your page. Getting your foot in the door

may seem daunting, but the one way to start is to look for open mics and reading series around the city. When you attend an open mic, you not only get to know the hosts, but you can meet other authors. If the series that you are reading at is ongoing, you can ask or may be asked to join the next one. This means your name will be on the flyer and it becomes part of your platform. Other ways to expand your platform is by working on literary magazines, attending conventions and joining in activities there, as well as reviewing other author's work. All of these are ways that you can build your platform.

Bio:

Writing a bio can also stretch your creative wings. Bios written by the author often show a bit of the author's personality in them. Sometimes when you go to a reading, they will ask you for a short bio to read to introduce you. Sometimes, you might need a longer bio to post on a page where you have done some work or on your own page. Taking time to write out a few Bios and have them ready is a great way to prepare for all sorts of submissions.

? Classroom Activity 15.1.1

Write a bio for yourself using the theme of your short story as a guide. Write your bio in 3rd person.

Consider writing a couple of different Bios. Depending on where you submit work or what literary event you are attending, different bios could come in handy.

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15.3: Activity

Assignments

Reflection:

How easy or difficult was it to write a bio that was interesting? Do you think you could write two more bios? Why or why not?

Definition: Portfolio

For a class assignment, collect your best work from each type of writing that you did in the previous modules. Create a portfolio.

The writing portfolio will consist of a cover letter, 1 poem, the final draft of your short story, and the final draft of your play.

The Portfolio will be evaluated using the following methods.

Cover Letter: This document is important because it helps the instructor and reader understand the goals for your writing. You should discuss each piece of writing, why you chose to write what you did, and what steps you took to revise your writing.

Poem: The poem should make sense for what they are. This should be explained in the cover letter. I will be looking for some type of theme or convention.

Short Story: The story should feel complete, have conflict and use description as well as figurative language. It should be clear of grammatical and mechanical errors.

Play: The play should be written to be performed using the playwriting format. The characters should be distinct. The play should tell a story and have conflict. The dialogue should be as authentic to the character as possible.

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15.2: Read and Watch

How to Organize a Poetry Manuscript Presented by C. Russell Price

Presented by The Chicago Poetry Center

CPC presented three free online learning opportunities designed to open professional doors for poets as a 50 anniversary community offering.



YouTube How to organize a poetry manuscript [www.youtube.com]

[How to Submit Poems to Literary Journals Presented by Lisa Low](#)



[YouTube How to Submit Poems to literary journals](#) [youtube.com]

Submitting to Literary Magazines

Overview

This section of the OWL seeks to demystify the process of submitting creative work to literary magazines. We'll review topics such as how to figure out what to submit in the first place, how to find good potential homes for your work, and how to maximize your chances for acceptance. We've also included examples of writing relevant to the submission process such as a cover letter and a biography as well as an acceptance and rejection letter to provide a look into what correspondence with literary magazines looks like.

Introduction

You've done it! Whether it was a lightning bolt of inspiration or weeks (months? years?) of writing and revising, you've crafted a piece of creative writing you're proud of. Maybe it's a sestina; maybe it's a lyric essay. Whatever it is, you want to get it published. Reasons for publication are numerous: wanting to see what others think of your work, seeking a way to bulk up your CV, or hoping for a chance to get some hard-earned cash, just to name a few. Regardless of if you've submitted 100 times before or this is your first time, this resource will help you navigate the submission process.

We'll start by thinking through what you can submit in the first place. Next, we'll move into thinking about where to submit, considering strategies for finding places to submit in the first place as well as how to discern whether or not a particular publication is a good fit for your work. After, we'll think through the logistics of how to submit and talk through an example cover letter and biography (written materials you'll almost certainly be asked to include in your submission). Finally, we'll discuss what happens after you submit and review a few example rejection letters as well as an example acceptance letter.

WHAT DO I SUBMIT?

There are three main considerations when discerning what to submit: 1) whether or not a piece has already been published, 2) the genre of a piece, and 3) the length of a piece.

First, if a piece has already been published, including on a personal blog, a website, and/or on social media, your piece is almost always *not* eligible for re-publication. The same goes for work that has already been self-published. Lit mags (also referred to

throughout this document as literary magazines, literary journals, and journals) want to be the *first* to feature your work in question and not just “another place” that offers your work a home.

Second, different lit mags accept different genres. For example, if you only write short stories, you won’t be able to publish in [Rattle](#), which only publishes poetry. If you write in multiple different genres, you might find that you are able to submit your fiction to one magazine, and your essays to another.

Third, lit mags often have length restrictions, which can vary widely. You might be able to submit poems only if they are 50 lines or less; or, you might be able to submit any type of prose so long as it is 6,000 words or less. If you tend to write particularly long pieces but want to submit to a lit mag that has length restrictions, try finding an excerpt of a larger work to submit or condensing your work for the sake of submitting it.

WHERE DO I SUBMIT?

After deciding to submit what work to submit, one question often looms: *Where do I submit?* Finding lit mags is just a Google search away. Chances are, you’ve heard of some flagship publications: [The New Yorker](#), [Paris Review](#), [Ploughshares](#).... Just as there are myriads of different types of writing in the world, so too are there myriads of different kinds of lit mags. Some have been around for decades; some were founded earlier this year. Some only publish online; some only publish hard copy. Some are themed (nature poems only, zombie fiction only, Wyoming-themed work, etc.). Some operate through universities; others are independent. Some require payment to have your work read (usually a smallish fee, say, \$3) whereas others allow you to submit for free. Some pay their contributors, though most don’t, or do only minimally. Some ask you to submit your work through [Submittable](#) (an online submissions-management platform) whereas a select few ask for hard copy submissions mailed to their office. (For more on this front, “How do I submit?” is a good place to start.) Seeking the right home for your work can be intimidating, but it’s not an impossible task. Below are four strategies to help you find places to submit to in the first place.

1. This list from Driftwood Press: a good starting point!

If you don’t know where to start, Driftwood Press keeps a massive “Where Else to Submit” list, linked above, that includes links to hundreds of different magazines and presses, what genres they accept, when their submission deadlines are, whether or not there is a submission fee, and whether or not they offer compensation for publication.

The enormity of the list can be overwhelming, but you can always select a few lit mags on this list at random and begin scanning their websites to see what their publication is all about as you consider whether your work might find a good home there.

2. What writers do you like? Where did they publish?

Do you have a favorite author? Favorite poet? Take a look at a book of theirs and see where they’ve published. This is especially relevant for books of poetry, essays, short stories, or other work often published as a collection. Just like musical artists often release a few singles before their album, it is commonplace for a writer to have portions of their work published in lit mags before putting out a book-length collection.

In other words, if you like Writer X’s work, maybe you’ll like where she publishes, too! If you are reading contemporary work, it’s helpful simply to read the “Acknowledgements” pages and slowly get familiar with the names of different lit mags.

3. Look local.

If you are a Purdue student, maybe you’ve grown particularly fond of the cornfields in Indiana, and publishing work through a local journal is particularly appealing to you. If so, maybe you’d be especially drawn to the [Sycamore Review](#), [The Indianapolis Review](#), or any number of other journals based out of Indiana. To find local lit mags or publishers, a good start would be to visit a bookstore or library in your area and browse their shelves to see what lit mags they’re carrying.

4. Consider submission windows.

A vast majority of literary magazines do *not* accept submissions year-round; rather, they may have a “submission window” where they accept work. Some magazines only accept work one month of the year, whereas others may have two different three-month submission periods during the calendar year. Some magazines might have a month-long submission window (June 15-July 15, for example) that will automatically close once they reach a certain number of submissions. If, for instance, you only have time to commit to submitting your creative writing in the summer months, you’ll want to find magazines that accept submissions in the summertime. As you begin the process of finding lit mags you like and want to publish in, it might help to make a document to organize when you can submit to which magazine.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY WORK IS A GOOD FIT?

Below are three considerations to help you gauge if your work seems like it could be a good fit for the journal you've found.

1. Read the most recent issue.

This is arguably the most time-consuming (and perhaps frustratingly obvious) tip, but it has to go first. Just like the best way to figure out if you like a restaurant is to try its food, the best way to figure out if you want to submit to a lit mag is to give it a read. If paying the \$10 or \$15 dollars necessary to order the lit mag (or pay for online access to it) isn't possible or doesn't appeal, fear not! There is often online content for your perusal. Most, though not all, lit mags have online features, so while you may not be able to read the most recent issue in its entirety, you can still read work that the magazine's editors deemed fit for publication. Even if a lit mag doesn't publish any of their work online (or a paywall prevents you from accessing it), lit mags that offer contests will often publish contest winners.

2. Read the "About Us."

Beyond growing familiar with work the lit mag publishes, check out the "About Us" page. This will often include the mission statement / vision for the journal, which can also be helpful in discerning if there might be aesthetic similarities and/or shared interests between you and the folks who run the journal. Further, it can be great to look into who runs the lit mag. If you're sending in a short story, who is the fiction editor? Look that person up—maybe even read a short story published by the editor. Does this person seem like they might be interested in the kind of work you create?

3. If you are in touch with other writers, use them as resources!

Not everyone is in the position of having other writers nearby, but if you are in touch with other writers and/or know of writers who have publishing experience, feel free to ask them if they have any experience with the journal you have in mind. Maybe they won't, but maybe they will—or know someone who does. (Consider this a broader encouragement, too, to seek out community as you seek readers for your work.)

WILL MY WORK BE ACCEPTED?

It's important to make a few concessions, here.

Concession Number One: There are many more writers than there are literary magazines, journals, and publishers.

Concession Number Two: Except for the most widely renowned writers (think, those who have entire bookcases devoted to them at big-name bookstores), creative writing is not a lucrative field, and likely will not become one.

These two concessions combine for **Concession Number Three:** Readers and editors for literary magazines are swimming in submissions. It's not unreasonable for a magazine to receive 700 short story submissions and only be able to publish five of them, or to receive 200 poetry submissions and only be able to publish eight.

Space within magazines, especially print ones, is at a premium; the time of the person reading your submission is at a premium, too. It is actually a great sign of encouragement when, in response to your submission, you receive what's known as a personalized rejection rather than a form rejection. That is, you might receive a note informing you that, while the journal cannot publish your work at this time, they enjoyed reading it and would love to hear more from you in the future. (Read more below on I submitted: Now what?)

So, will your work be accepted? Statistically speaking, it's unlikely. But, it's also unlikely for an NFL team to win a Super Bowl, or a scientist to win a Nobel Prize, or a student to get admitted into Harvard, but these things happen every single year. If publishing is something important to you, don't let the odds stop you from trying.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAXIMIZE MY CHANCES OF BEING PUBLISHED?

While publication percentages may not be particularly confidence-inspiring, there are things you can do to increase the chance your work will get picked up.

1. Submit your best work.

This is perhaps obvious, but it bears noting. As discussed above, readers for lit mags are often inundated with submissions. Submit your best work first to help yourself stand out. If you're unsure which is "best," ask a trusted reader for their opinion. Further, if you are submitting a packet (two different flash fiction pieces, or five poems) rather than an individual work, start with the strongest.

2. Read the submission guidelines!

For better or worse, lit mag readers and editors are almost always looking for ways to easily shrink their stack of 1,000 submissions, to, say, 100. And then to 10. There is no easier way to get your submission denied than by neglecting to follow *every* submission guideline. This means that you should not submit four poems when the magazine only accepts three, submit a PDF when the magazine asks for a Word doc, or submit your fiction to the nonfiction category. Similarly, do not send in a 2,500-word essay when the journal asks for a 2,400-word maximum.

Follow all submission guidelines exactly, *not* because it is so important to, say, have your bio in third-person as opposed to first-person, but because following these guidelines will allow the reader to immediately dive into the important material—your work—without getting bogged down by any logistical hiccups. Further, adhering to the submission guidelines shows that you yourself are a careful reader and that you respect the journal by following said guidelines in the first place.

3. Make sure your work is a good fit in the first place!

Revisit “How do I know if my work is a good fit?” above.

4. Consider simultaneous submissions.

Most journals accept simultaneous submissions, which is, as the term suggests, submitting your work story to multiple different journals simultaneously. Most journals will clarify in their guidelines whether or not they accept simultaneous submissions (a vast majority do, *so long as you let Journal B know that your piece is no longer available as soon as Journal A accepts it.*) If there’s a short story you really want in the world, consider sending it to a handful, maybe even two handfuls, of places.

CONTESTS VS. GENERAL SUBMISSIONS

Another consideration for submissions is whether you’d prefer to submit to magazine’s general submissions, their contests, or a mix of both. Contests, offered by some—not all—journals, are generally more competitive and more expensive to enter (fees usually range between \$20-\$30). But, winning them almost always comes with clout as well as prize money, ranging from modest sums (\$100) to larger ones (\$1,000+). Sometimes, contest winners are selected by a guest judge (generally a respected and perhaps well-known writer), and other times they are chosen by the editors of the magazine themselves.

One thing to note is that even if you don’t win the contest, it can be possible to still be picked up for publication by the journal as a finalist or simply as someone who caught the attention of the judges. Whether or not finalists and/or semifinalists are published alongside the contest winner (or winners) is up to the magazine’s discretion.

How Do I Submit?

On the websites of most journals, there will most likely be a tab that says “Submit” or “Submissions.” Occasionally, this tab is slightly buried somewhere on the webpage. (Look in the “About Us” or “Contact Us” sections of the site if you have trouble finding it.)

In terms of actually submitting, a vast majority of journals only accept—or greatly prefer—online submissions. Generally, this is done via a platform called [Submittable](#) that allows you (as the submitter) to manage and track your submissions, just as it allows the journal editors to track and view their submissions. Sometimes, submitting is done via an in-house submission portal, and, in the rarest of circumstances, a magazine will only accept mailed, hard copy submissions. Regardless, the lit mag will (or *should*) have their submissions process clearly demarcated on their website in terms of 1) how to submit, 2) what time(s) of year they accept submissions, and 3) what they are looking for in terms of submissions (genre, page length, etc.).

As noted previously, following these submission guidelines exactly is in your best interest. *Beyond* preparing your piece of writing for submission and figuring out the journal’s guidelines so you can follow them, there are two other pieces to the submission puzzle you’ll need: a strong cover letter and a solid, succinct bio.

COVER LETTER + EXAMPLE

The cover letter is your chance to *briefly* let the journal know 1) what you are submitting as well as 2) why you are submitting to that magazine in particular. The best-case scenario for a cover letter is that you’ve presented yourself in a professional manner as an eager, capable writer with a strong reason for submitting to the journal. What follows is an example cover letter:

Dear Audrey Li and the entire *Coffee Journal* team,

Please consider my following poems, “Exciting Poem 1,” “Clever Poem 2,” and “Memorable Poem 3” for inclusion within an upcoming edition of *Coffee Journal*. I especially admired Ash Lever’s “Brilliantly Titled Poem” in your latest edition and would be honored for my work to be considered for publication in an upcoming edition of your journal.

This is a simultaneous submission, and I will let you know immediately if any of these poems are accepted elsewhere.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider my work.

Best,

A. Writer

--

It’s helpful to make a few quick notes on this example cover letter and what this writer does well. She...

- Addresses, by name, the relevant genre editor to whom she has addressed the cover letter.
- Includes the name of the work she is submitting, as well as the professional, polite request to consider her work in an upcoming edition of the journal.
- Mentions something she specifically admires about the journal in question, revealing herself as someone who has “done her homework”—that is, she is showing that she really does have (at least some) vested interest in this magazine.
- Notes that her submission is simultaneous; that is, she is submitting these poems to other magazines as well. As previously noted, this is fine to do if the magazine accepts simultaneous submissions *so long as she lets Coffee Journal know that one (or more) of her poems is no longer available as soon as she learned another journal has accepted them*.
- Concludes the note by thanking the editor(s). Remember, these cover letters are being read by readers who are often underpaid or unpaid and who have, more often than not, dozens and dozens of pieces to read. Kindness in a cover letter is important here just as it is elsewhere.

For more, *The Adroit Journal* has [a great piece](#) further explaining the ins and outs of cover letter writing with an annotated example.

BIOGRAPHY + EXAMPLE

The biography is your chance to *briefly* give a glimpse of who your writer-self is. Common information to include is where you are from, where you went to or are going to school, what you do for work, and where you have been previously published (if applicable). Writing in third person is the best way to go.

Generally, these are expected to be professional. That said, if the journal you are applying to is particularly quirky, or you have no desire to confine yourself to the constraints of a traditional cover letter, feel free to be quirky. The best-case scenario for a biography is that, similarly to the cover letter, you’ve presented yourself as a professional and given the magazine a small glimpse of who you are.

For those of you asking, “What do I put for publications if I haven’t published anywhere yet?” the answer is simple: nothing. Don’t let your lack of publishing be a catch-22 stopping you from trying to publish in the first place. And take heart: Many magazines exist specifically with the mission to promote new and emerging writers.

What follows is an example biography:

A. Writer is a poet from Indiana. She received her MFA in poetry from A Super Excellent University, and her poems have appeared in *This Cool Journal* and are forthcoming from *Another Cool Journal*. She lives in West Lafayette where she teaches high school English.

I Submitted! Now What?

Congratulations! Even if your work is not selected by the particular lit mag you submitted to, you are putting your work out in the world. At this point, you wait. Response times vary widely, from several weeks to up to a year (or more). Many magazines have submission guidelines indicating about how long you should expect to wait to hear back. Some will also ask that they *not* be contacted with an inquiry about your submission until a certain amount of time has passed.

During the waiting process, don’t let your writing life be put on hold! A common saying in the journalistic field applies here: “Work is never finished, it just meets deadline.” Feel free to continue shaping the writing projects you submitted, or leave them until you hear back from journals and allow yourself to start writing in new directions.

REJECTION LETTERS: TWO TYPES + EXAMPLES

Generally speaking, there are two different types of rejection letters a lit mag can give, and—perhaps surprisingly—one of these is actually good news. The first type is a form rejection letter. This is a generic rejection, meaning this letter is copy and pasted to each person who receives it (with the exception of changing the submitter’s name and the title of their submitted work). A form rejection might look like this:

Dear A. Writer,

Thank you for submitting “Exciting Poem 1,” “Clever Poem 2,” and “Memorable Poem 3” to *Coffee Journal*. Unfortunately, we decided your work was not a fit for us at this time.

Sincerely,

The Editors

--

A personalized rejection, on the other hand, while still a rejection, often includes some kind of encouragement. Two different examples, followed by an explanation of why a personalized rejection is good news, follows:

Dear A. Writer,

Thank you for submitting “Exciting Poem 1,” “Clever Poem 2,” and “Memorable Poem 3” to *Coffee Journal*. While we are not able to find a place for it at this time, we found your work exciting and greatly enjoyed reading it. We would look forward to reading more of your writing in the future.

Sincerely,

The Editors

--

Dear A. Writer,

Thank you for submitting to *Coffee Journal*. Though we have decided against publishing your work at this time, we found “Clever Poem 2” particularly moving. Please keep up in mind for future work.

Sincerely,

The Editors

--

On the outset, the form rejection letter and the personalized rejection letters don’t have much of a difference. But take heart: That extra line in the personalized rejection letters is a big deal. Anything such as an invitation to resubmit, a specific, encouraging note about your work, and / or commentary about your specific pieces or writing are signs your rejection was personalized rather than a form rejection. This means that out of the large amount of work that journal received, while your work wasn’t part of the teeny percentage chosen for publication, it stood out to the editors. It’s not a bad idea to consider submitting again a future reading period for that lit mag; if you do so, consider adding a note in your cover letter that you’ve been encouraged to resubmit.

DEALING WITH REJECTION

In an [interview with Michigan Quarterly Review](#), poet Hannah Ensor spoke well on creative writing awards (and, perhaps by extension, publication): “I think that it means a lot when you do win, but it means almost nothing when you don’t.”

In a world where editors and readers for lit mags are swimming in submissions, a rejection is not so much a condemnation of your work as a “out of the 100 pieces we received, this is not one of the five we are able to accept.” This isn’t to say that rejection doesn’t sting; no one likes getting turned down. For better or worse, rejection is simply part of the process.

Further, being rejected from a particular journal is *not* necessarily a suggestion that your work isn’t a good fit for the journal; much is up to chance in terms of who first reads your work. Many lit mags, especially larger ones, have teams of readers that will curate a small portion of submissions for more serious consideration by the section or genre editor(s). Your submission to *Coffee Journal* this year may be read by a completely different set of eyes than last year.

Finally, consider the following positive spins on rejection:

1. Rejection is an invitation to keep writing.

On the one hand, it's an opportunity to return to your work: What might be revised? How might you make your work come more fully into its own? On the other hand, it can be an opportunity to dive into something new, with all the knowledge and experience you've now gained from writing what you've already written. (If having writing that never gets published is a depressing thought, consider this encouragement by accomplished writer Anne Lamott in [an essay of hers](#) embracing the messiness of first drafts: "Just get it all down on paper, because there may be something great in those six crazy pages that you would never have gotten to by more rational, grown-up means. There may be something in the very last line of the very last paragraph on page six that you just love, that is so beautiful or wild that you now know what you're supposed to be writing about, more or less, or in what direction you might go – but there was no way to get to this without first getting through the first five and a half pages.")

2. Rejection is an opportunity to revisit why you write in the first place.

Why did you write that story, that poem, that essay in the first place? Rejection can provide a tangible time to revisit your "Why?" as a writer. If you're writing for the money and you've gotten numerous rejections from paid awards, perhaps writing is not the most prudent path forward. If you're writing because you feel you have something to say, because you love language, because it's a way for you to discover what you're thinking and how you feel about the world, well...rejection can't touch those motivations. Remind yourself why you got into writing in the first place and keep at it.

ACCEPTANCE LETTERS: YOU'RE IN! WHAT'S NEXT?

The purpose of acceptance letters is simple. You're in! Like a job offer, an acceptance letter from a lit mag means you have an *offer* for publication—they want you if you want them. After your work is accepted, there are a few things that will happen:

- You will need to read and sign a contract detailing:
- What the lit mag needs from you (such as an updated bio) between that moment and publication.
- What happens with the rights of your creative work ([this page](#) by Poets & Writers details copyright information in more depth).
- What compensation you will be provided with (if applicable).
- You may correspond with an editor from the journal to perform final edits and/or revisions of your creative piece(s).
- You may need to submit an updated author information, such as a bio, and/or a finalized version of your creative piece(s).
- You need, if applicable, to immediately withdraw the work that is being published from any other lit mags you submitted it to. This is generally done by contacting the magazines through Submittable or by emailing the editors—lit mags' Submissions page will generally clarify how they'd like to be notified if you need to withdraw part or all of your submission.

EXAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear A. Writer,

Thank you for sending us "Exciting Title Number 1" and "Memorable Title Number 3." We greatly enjoyed both of them and would like to publish them in *Coffee Journal's* next edition.

As per our submission guidelines, we offer three free copies of the edition in which your work appears. Please [click here](#) to confirm acceptance.

Thank you for sending your work! We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Audrey Li

Coffee Journal Poetry Editor

Just a few things to note, here:

1. Getting an acceptance does not necessarily mean the journal is accepting *every* piece of work you sent; it simply means they are accepting one (or more) of your pieces.
2. Generally, acceptance letters are more personalized; the magazine has chosen your work and is eager to make a good impression on you just as you've made a good impression on them. In this vein, acceptance letters are *generally* sent from the particular editor who chose your work or oversees your genre, whereas a rejection letter is often from the unnamed "Editors".

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Submitting work can be any number of things: exciting, gut-wrenching, confusing, tedious. Regardless of your personal attachment to—or detachment from—the submission process, it's an important process to understand as a creative writer. Even though the odds may be that a rejection is much more likely than an acceptance, you never know unless you try.

Imagine if the writer of your own favorite book never took the chance to submit it for publication in the first place. Thank goodness they did take that chance so their writing could change you and others—in however big or small a way. This chance, submitting work for publication, is one that you can take, too.

Best of luck, and happy submitting!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Submission Etiquette: *The Cincinnati Review* has [a short, helpful article](#) on submission reminders.

Writing Cover Letters: *The Adroit Journal* has [a great piece](#) explaining the ins and outs of cover letter writing.

Submission Opportunities: [Driftwood Press: Where Else to Submit](#)

[The Invisible Art of Literary Editing](#): an in-depth look into the inner workings of literary magazines.

[Submittable](#): a common platform lit mags will request submissions through.

[Copyright Information](#): This page by Poets & Writers explains relevant copyright information for writers.

Check out the Purdue OWL's additional resources on [creative writing](#).

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15.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

Q

query letter

15.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

R

reader expectations

5.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

reading

10.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin

realistic fiction

3.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

reflection

15.3: Activity

reflection rubric

5.3: Activity

rejection

15.2: Read and Watch

revising

2.2: Read

LO 3: Fiction Writing Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin

LO 5: Fiction Writing Part 3- Genre Fiction and World Building By Ukaisha Al-Amin

10.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin

LO 13 Playwriting Part 3- Experience is Nothing to Play around with By Ukaisha Al-Amin

14.2: Read

revision

2.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

LO 10: Poetry Part 4- Sharing and Critiquing Poetry

LO 14 Creative Writing Workshop: The Social Aspect of Writing By Ukaisha Al-Amin

revisions

10.3: Activity

15.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

rhyme

9.2: Read and Watch

rhyme scheme

10.2: Read

rhythm

LO 9: Poetry Part 3 Rhythm, Sound, and Performance

9.2: Read and Watch

rite of passage

8.3: Activity

romance

5.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

round character

3.3: Activity

S

scene writing

1.3: Activity

LO 11: Playwriting Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin

11.3: Activity

science fiction

5.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

script analysis

LO 13 Playwriting Part 3- Experience is Nothing to Play around with By Ukaisha Al-Amin

set design

12.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin

setting

3.2: Read

LO 12 Playwriting Part 2: Setting The Stage By Ukaisha Al-Amin

12.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin

12.2: Read

short stories

LO 4: Fiction Writing Part 2-Short Stories, Conflict, and Endings By Ukaisha Al-Amin

4.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

4.2: Read

short story

- 4.3: Activity
- 5.3: Activity
- 15.3: Activity

simile

- 7.2: Read and Watch
- 9.3: Activity

situation

- 12.2: Read

slam poetry

- 9.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity
- 9.3: Activity

social issues

- 9.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

sonnet

- 10.2: Read

speaker

- 8.2: Read

spoken word

- 9.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

stage

LO 12 Playwriting Part 2: Setting The Stage By Ukaisha Al-Amin

12.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin

stanzas

7.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
10.3: Activity

story

11.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

story structure

3.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
LO 6: Fiction Writing Part 4- Plot, Organization, and Advice from Authors By Ukaisha Al-Amin

storytelling

1.3: Activity
2.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity
3.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
3.2: Read
LO 4: Fiction Writing Part 2-Short Stories, Conflict, and Endings By Ukaisha Al-Amin
4.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity
5.3: Activity
11.2: Read
11.3: Activity
13.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

strong verbs

- 8.3: Activity

student poems

- 7.3: Activities-Truth Telling In Poetry

submission process

- 15.2: Read and Watch

symbolism

7.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

synopsis

15.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

syntax

- 8.2: Read

T

teaching poetry

- 7.2: Read and Watch

techniques

- LO 10: Poetry Part 4- Sharing and Critiquing Poetry

Theater

11.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
11.3: Activity
12.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity by Ukaisha Al-Amin
13.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
13.2: Read and Watch

theatre

- 11.2: Read
- 12.2: Read

theme

3.2: Read
7.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
7.3: Activities-Truth Telling In Poetry

tone

- 8.2: Read

traumatic event

- 8.3: Activity

truth

- 7.3: Activities-Truth Telling In Poetry

U

understanding poetry

- 7.2: Read and Watch

unity

- 12.2: Read

V

villanelle

- 10.2: Read

voice

- 8.2: Read

voice poem

- 8.3: Activity

voice techniques

- 9.3: Activity

W

workshop

LO 10: Poetry Part 4- Sharing and Critiquing Poetry
10.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin
LO 14 Creative Writing Workshop: The Social Aspect of Writing By Ukaisha Al-Amin
14.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin

world building

LO 5: Fiction Writing Part 3- Genre Fiction and World Building By Ukaisha Al-Amin

writer's block

- 2.2: Read

writers

- 15.2: Read and Watch

writing

LO 4: Fiction Writing Part 2-Short Stories, Conflict, and Endings By Ukaisha Al-Amin
7.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
7.3: Activities-Truth Telling In Poetry
LO 10: Poetry Part 4- Sharing and Critiquing Poetry
10.1: Classroom Lecture by Ukaisha Al-Amin
11.3: Activity
13.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity By Ukaisha Al-Amin
15.3: Activity

Writing advice

LO 6: Fiction Writing Part 4- Plot, Organization, and Advice from Authors By Ukaisha Al-Amin

writing analysis

- LO 3: Fiction Writing Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin

writing assessment

- 2.3: Activity

writing assignments

- 10.3: Activity

writing exercises

- 2.3: Activity

writing pitfalls

- 2.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity

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LO 2: What is Creative Writing Part 2: Starting The Writing By Ukaisha Al-Amin
2.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity
2.2: Read

writing prompt

- 1.3: Activity

writing prompts

- 2.3: Activity
- 6.3: Activity

writing revision

- 5.3: Activity

writing strategies

- LO 11: Playwriting Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin

writing techniques

2.2: Read
LO 5: Fiction Writing Part 3- Genre Fiction and World Building By Ukaisha Al-Amin
10.2: Read
LO 11: Playwriting Part 1 By Ukaisha Al-Amin
LO 13 Playwriting Part 3- Experience is Nothing to Play around with By Ukaisha Al-Amin

writing tips

- 4.1: Classroom Lecture and Activity
- 11.2: Read

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