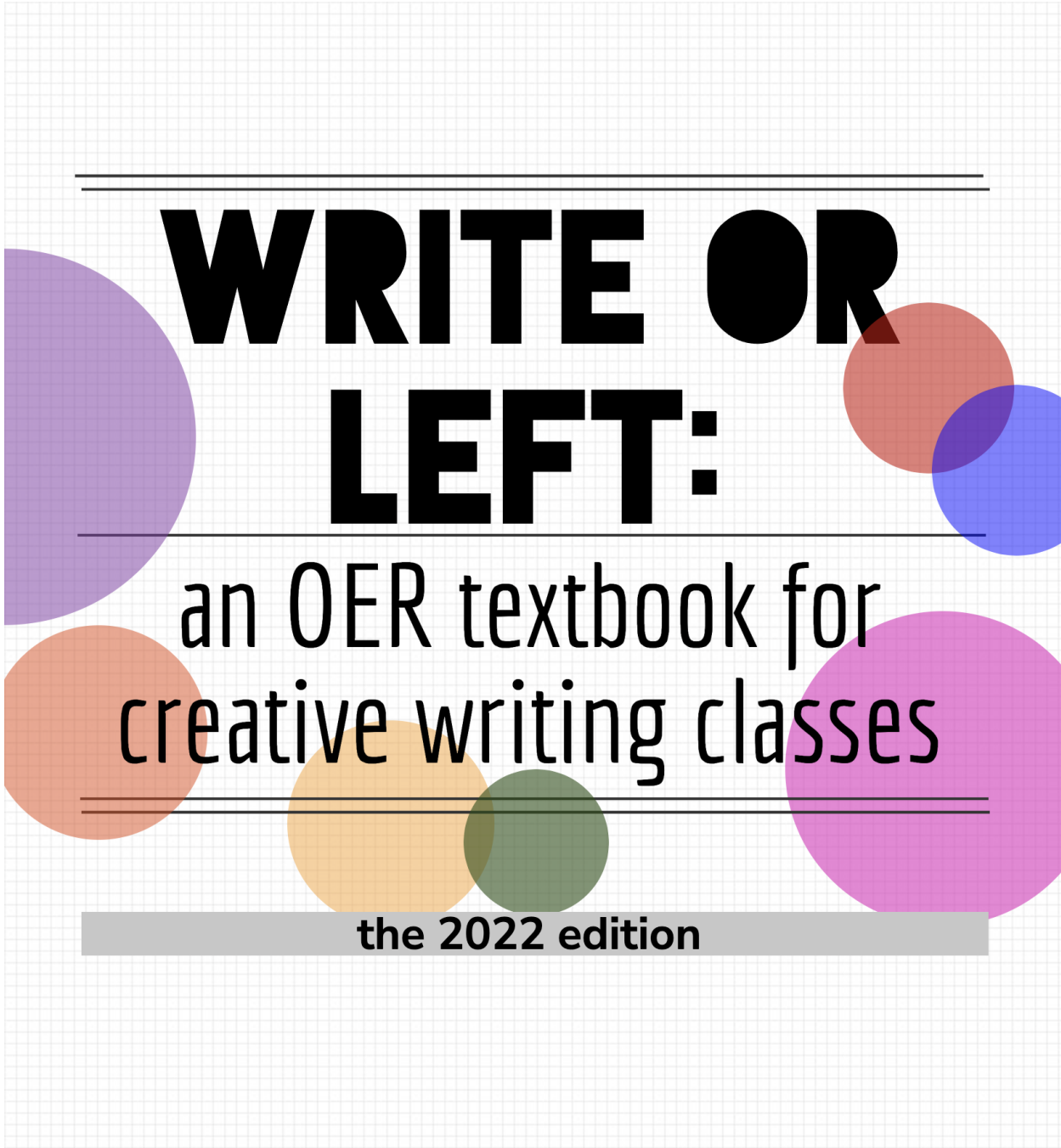




WRITE OR LEFT:

an OER textbook for
creative writing classes

the 2022 edition

WRITE OR LEFT

This is an OER textbook for introductory creative writing classes with condensed chapters and expanded genres.

*Compiled and written by Sybil Priebe, an Associate Professor
at the North Dakota State College of Science.*

+

*The FIRST VERSION was created in DECEMBER 2016.
The SECOND VERSION was created SUMMER 2019; it deleted pieces that weren't in
harmony with the CC license(s) and added new pieces and accessibility.
This THIRD VERSION – the 2022 edition – was created in late fall of 2021 to include
a gentler/more inclusive approach to writing AND more diverse student examples.*

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Write until you surprise yourself.



C.G. Drews
@PaperFury



writers are either

- a) very excited to write all their epic stories
- b) very tired all of the time
- c) very into the idea of living deep in an ancient forest with a wild garden and wilder cat and slowly learning magic from old books
- d) all of the above

8:28 AM · 11/26/21 · [Twitter Web App](#)

chapter zero:

Hello there.

This chapter aims to cover WHAT makes this textbook different and since this may not be a chapter ALL teachers want to cover, it's all being housed in a chapter called zero because IF a teacher wanted to delete this chapter, it would NOT screw up the sequence of the other chapters. How thoughtful is that?

Okay, so let's dive in.

what makes this book different?

A.

Most creative writing textbooks cover the three popular categories of literature: poetry, nonfiction, and fiction. This book is different in two ways, then, because not only does it attempt to cover MORE genres and categories, BUT it is also a free textbook. More for free? What the what? Yes, it's true.

B.

This book implements as much accessibility and inclusivity as possible.

C.

This book acknowledges that writing is subjective, and that what might be “good literature” to one person may not be the same to someone else. Therefore, teachers of writing should be highly encouraged to use a theory called ungrading when grading/assessing student work.

D.

One piece of the puzzle is technically missing – the history to some of these genres and categories. To keep the book brief and to focus it on PRACTICE, those historical nuggets are left out, BUT readers of this book should feel free to read up on any of the genres and categories via Wikipedia, etc. at any point in time, of course!

TO RECAP:

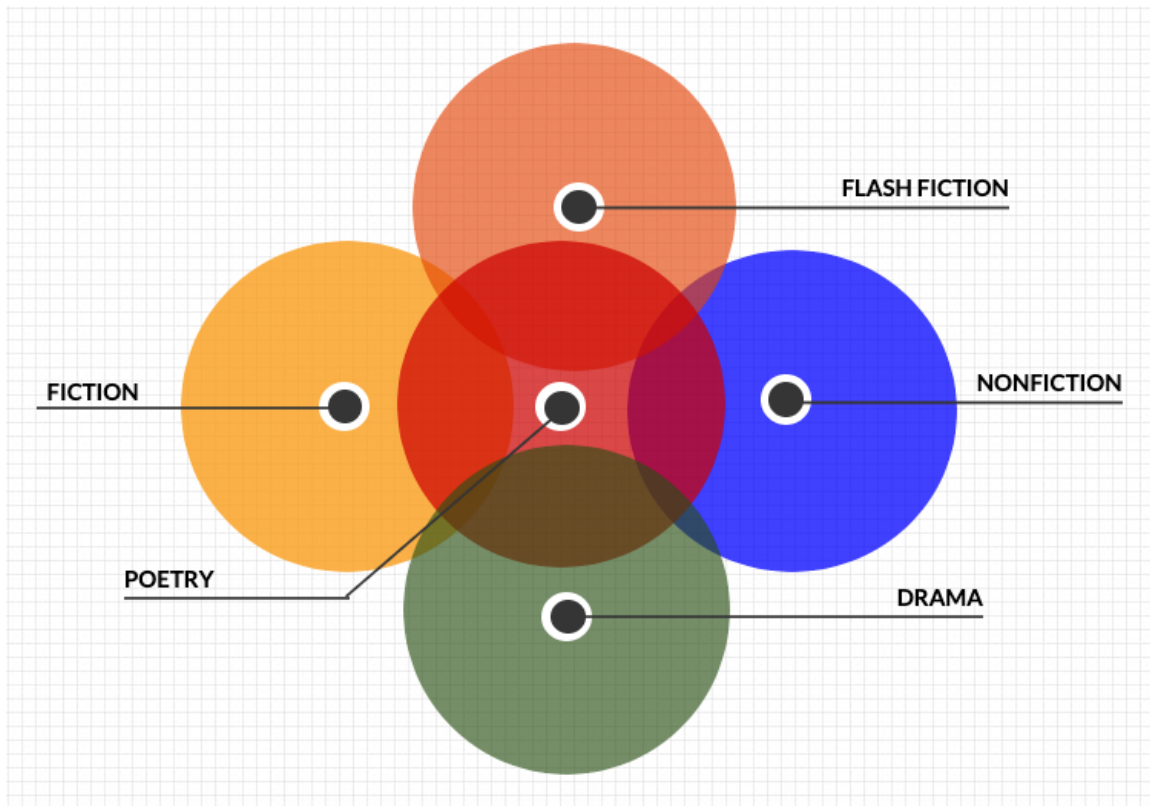
In this book, we'll go over some of the general principles of writing practices as well as advice and tips on how to write creatively, but mainly, you'll be introduced to as many genres and categories as possible. We won't get bogged down in doing the writing process “perfectly” or creating “perfect literature.” The goal is to learn about as many genres as possible, practice writing in those genres, and get feedback.

Explanations and details of A, B, and C follow...

a.categories and genres

To recap, sort of, this textbook covers the categories – also called genres – of creative writing, and you probably realize the OVERLAP¹ possible with these categories and genres, but let's conduct a quick review² with a few visuals.

In this first Venn diagram, the main categories/genres covered in the book are shown overlapping each other. One might ask, how can poetry show up in fiction, flash fiction, drama, and nonfiction? Well, how can it?



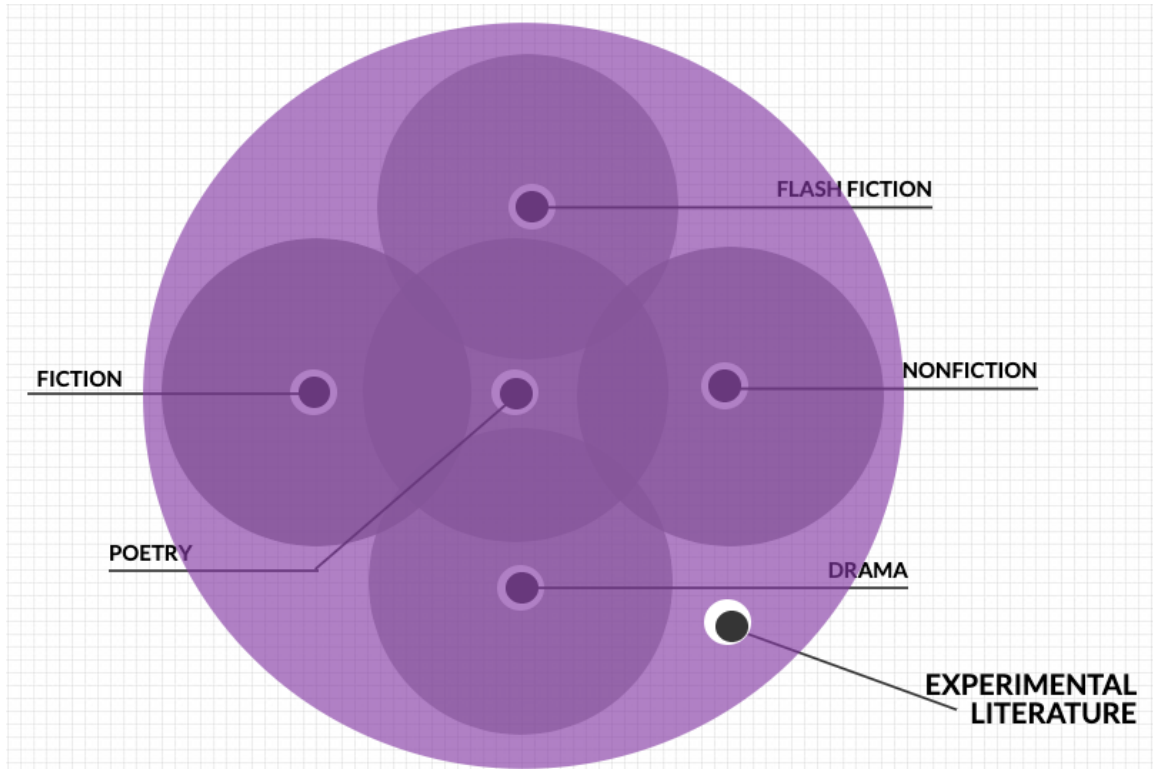
questions:

- What do you already know about these genres and categories?
- What could be created at the intersection of each of these circles?
- Can fiction overlap with nonfiction? What could that look like? Can flash fiction overlap with drama? What could that look like?³

¹ The circles on the cover of this textbook are meant to symbolize that overlap. FYI.

² And this might not be review. And that's okay.

³ We might have to come back to this after we learn more about the categories and genres, especially flash fiction, which may be new to some people.

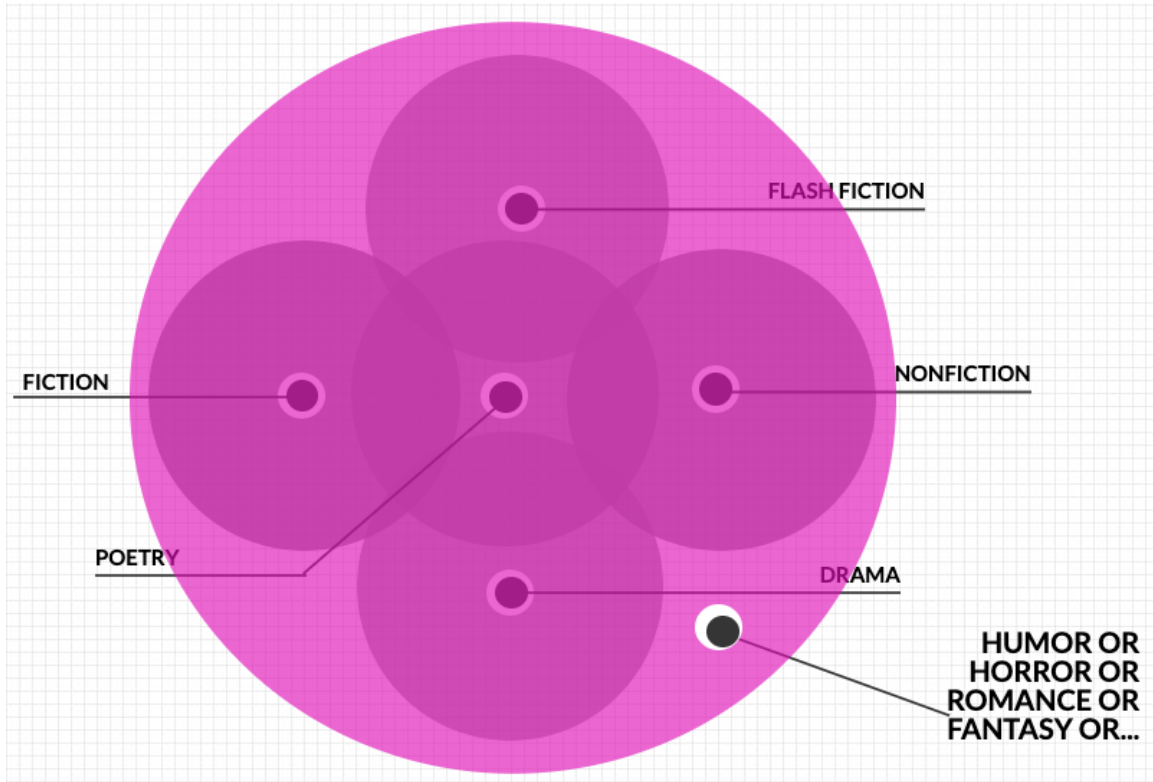


The gigantic purple circle shows us that experimental literature can be found in all of these genres and categories.

So, what about the categories and genres that the book covers in the Final Chapter?

Okay...

Let's say you really like to write fiction... well, within fiction itself is the possibility that you could write romance fiction or fantasy fiction. On the flip side, someone your polar opposite might write nonfiction in those same specialties... there's a lot of overlap. Check out the massive pink circle illustrates this point in a visual manner:



The reason for separating the five “core” categories and genres – poetry, flash fiction, fiction, drama, and nonfiction – from the others in the Final Chapter is because once you understand those five, you can really dive into the specialties. AND, let’s be honest, testing out one’s writing skills with BASIC poetry and fiction is easier – probably?! – than testing out one’s skills with horror and humor right away.

b.accessibility and inclusivity

Here are the specific measures that were taken to ensure inclusivity in this book's content AND how students can gain access to that inclusive content.

What this all means is the following:

ACCESS

- This book is accessible in both paper and digital formats. The digital is free; the paper format is available through Amazon and students only pay for the paper since the book is under a \$0 royalty.
- The digital formats come in Google Doc, Microsoft Word, PDF for print, and PDF for screen-readers. These formats are all available at: bit.ly/NDSCS-Open-Folder
- The book may be printed in Large Print eventually.
- Audio chapters will be offered via the LMS or a Google folder.

INCLUSIVITY

- Most of the he/she pronouns have been flipped for they/them pronouns.
- "White-sounding" names have been replaced by more diverse ones.
- "Husband" or "wife" have been replaced by "partner."
- The majority of examples in this book, by students or otherwise, are **not** written by white, heterosexual, cisgender men.

c.ungrading

Music theory teacher Kris Shaffer⁴ says that “letter grades do an absolutely horrible job” of three things that would help students improve their writing: (1) determining whether students understand a concept well enough to implement it, (2) identifying elements of student writing that need improvement, and (3) helping students learn to better self-assess. Shaffer makes his argument specifically about writing music, but I’ve recast it here for writing words. Each of these three goals presents a helpful perspective on developing authors’ needs. An author’s ability to compose requires skill, understanding, and situational familiarity. None of those goals are met through a letter grade. Grades help label, sort, and rank students; they don’t inform students, target instruction, or encourage self-awareness. Those who have left school and begun their careers have long stopped expecting grades to help determine what they do and don’t do well because grades aren’t appropriate measures of learning. Schools need to stop relying on grades, too.

Instead, we should teach people how to improve their writing through reflection and peer review. Variations of peer review help us write in many of our day-to-day situations. We learn what sorts of text messages work best by observing how our friends text and respond to us. We learn what makes an effective email by reading the ones we get and responding or deleting as we see fit.

In other words, situations, not teachers, define the importance of writing.

If grades tell nothing meaningful about writing ability, and if learning to work as/with peer reviewers provides insights into and feedback about writing performance, then the traditional structure of writing education is backward.

Writing should not be done for a grade. Teachers should not grade writing; instead, they should empower their students to meaningfully assess the effectiveness of writing.

questions:

- Do you learn more when you have intrinsic reasons versus extrinsic ones? Give an example...
- What does it mean to you to know you may assess yourself and your learning in this course?

⁴ Snippet from = Friend, Christopher R. “Student Writing Must Be Graded By The Teacher.” *Bad Ideas About Writing*. Edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Libraries, Digital Publishing Institute, 2017. CC-BY.

Wednesday February 6, 2013⁵

"Some years ago Sir Ken Robinson, the author and creative advocate, once told a story of a six year-old girl in school.

The girl was sitting in the back of the classroom drawing when the teacher walked back to her and asked "What are you drawing?" The girl said "I'm drawing a picture of God." To which the teacher laughed a little and replied: "But nobody knows what God looks like." And the little girl said "They will in a minute."

In telling this story Sir Robinson explains that children aren't afraid to take chances. If they don't know something they'll risk failing or being wrong. Creativity isn't about being wrong, of course, but to quote Sir Robinson: "If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original."

In those circumstances we have to look to children as examples. What do children do if they don't know something? They think about it and then make assumptions, but they make those ideas without fear of being wrong and without worrying of failing."

[...]

Posted 2/6/2013 at 4:15 PM

questions:

- What do you know about the topic of creative writing, overall?
- Have you written creatively before? If so, what have you written?
- Are you ready to practice writing in various genres and categories?
- Are you willing to take risks? Are you willing to be wrong, whatever that might mean?

⁵ Blog entry by Sybil Priebe, licensed CC-BY.



chapter zero: exercises

Let's get our creative juices flowing – and make our brains limber? – with some exercises.⁶

| exercise 1: opposite day.

One of our first exercises might be to introduce ourselves in an opposite manner. Yep.

Here's an example:

I AM NOT A TEACHER.

I do not appreciate weird things, and I do not have an open mind when it comes to students' perspectives and ideas on how to write. I do not use the word "stuff" because it's not professional; I also never, ever swear. It's not a proper way for an English teacher to be; it's as if people think words are just words? I'm no lexicographer, but bad words exist. They should be abolished, along with the books that use them.

⁶ These exercises, and any questions or activities or projects found in this textbook, are all about fulfilling the goal of practicing writing in order to challenge ourselves AND to see what we excel in, too. Some teachers may assign students to answer the questions or complete the activities within the chapters; some may want to only assign the exercises. It's all very flexible.

| exercise 2: abc, 123.

When we write, we're using the alphabet. Duh. Yet, how many times have we used these letters to organize or brainstorm? Try using the alphabet to brainstorm different things characters could say in different pieces of fiction and drama and nonfiction. This exercise is nice and light; however, you may use the dialogue you create later on – you never know!

A = "Ask him if he thinks he's being an asshole."

B = "Bullshit! It's all BS, isn't it?"

C = "Could you be normal for five seconds?"

D = "Don't you dare tell me who I am."

E = "Excellent." Like Mr. Burns on *The Simpsons*.

F = "Farts. I have too many brain farts today."

G = "Oh, good god, Peter. You did NOT say that to her, did you?"

H = "What.The.Hell?"

I = "It's about time, nimrod."

J = "Jeezus Marth and Mary... will you please hurry up?"

K = "Kindly remove your hand from my shoulder; I don't like to be touched."

L = "Love is an action, so show me you care!"

M = "My writing is different, and I don't care that it is."

N = "No one has written a book like this, Sylvia. You're a genius."

O = "Oh.My.God. For real?"

P = "Please put a mask on; we're in the middle of a pandemic."

Q = "Quirky. Yep, that's the word. She's quirky. Don't you agree?"

R = "Rarely do I say this but that TV show is garbage."

S = "Shoot. What did I do now?"

T = "Take me with you, dear alien. I want to escape this planet."

U = "Unfortunately, some teachers don't accept late work, and they are basing your learning on arbitrary deadlines."

V = "Verbally abusive. That's the phrase, people. You're all being verbally abusive in this meeting, and it has gotten way out of control."

W = "Will you hug me, so we can get that out of the way?"

X = "X marks the spot, doesn't it?"

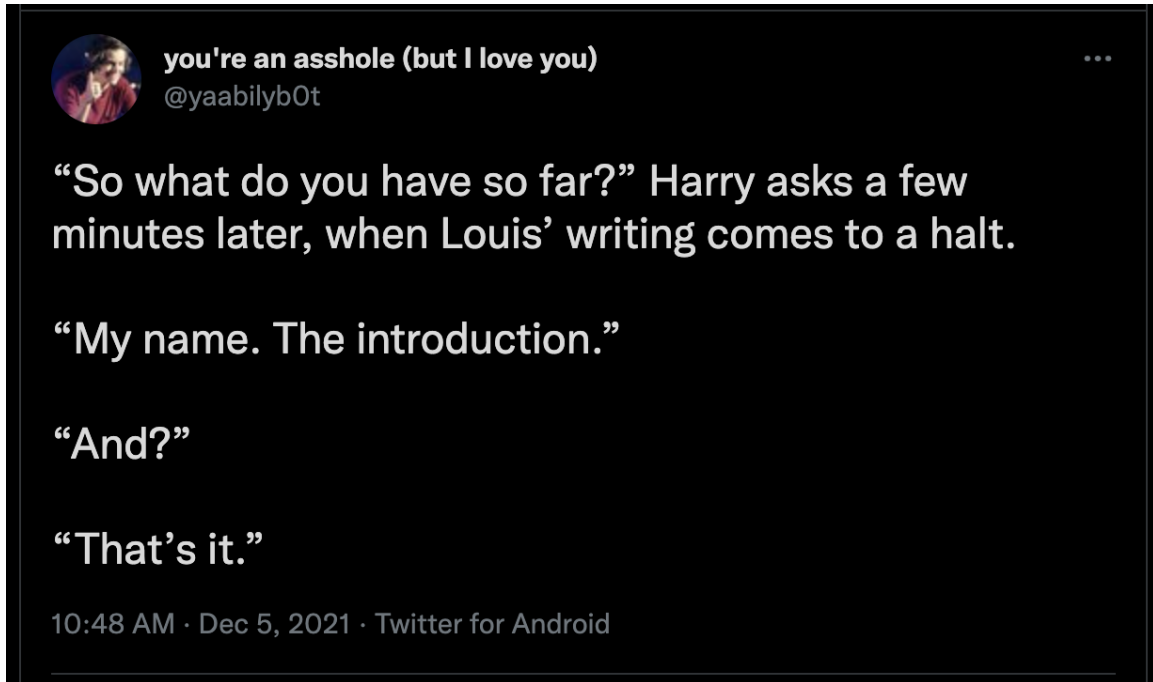
Y = "Yes, I will take this very cool creative writing class because I want to write epic things with genuine humans."

Z = "This classroom is like a zoo. And all the animals can talk."

exercise 3: scandal!

Write a few paragraphs about the most "scandalous" thing that happens to you in the course of a normal day in the style of a gossip columnist/blogger. Writing in the third person is suggested but not mandatory. Including easily misconstrued photographs might be a nice addition. Exaggerate, make up catch phrases/nicknames, speculate, perpetuate stereotypes, be offensive etc.

“Writing is thinking on paper.”



chapter 1: intro to creative writing:

Creative writing⁷ is any writing that goes outside the bounds of “normal”⁸ “professional,”⁹ journalistic, “academic,”¹⁰ or technical forms of literature, typically identified by an emphasis on narrative craft, character development, and the use of literary tropes or with various traditions of poetry and poetics. Due to the looseness of the definition, it is possible for writing such as feature stories to be considered creative writing, even though they fall under journalism, because the content of features is specifically focused on narrative and character development.

Both fictional and nonfictional works fall into this category, including such forms as novels, biographies, short stories, and poems. In the academic setting, creative writing is typically separated into fiction and poetry classes, with a focus on writing in an original style, as opposed to imitating pre-existing genres such as crime or horror. Writing for the screen and stage—screenwriting and playwrighting—are often taught separately but fit under the creative writing category as well.

⁷ "Creative Writing." *Wikipedia*. 13 Nov 2016. 21 Nov 2016, 19:39 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_writing>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

⁸ Whoa, what is normal anyway?

⁹ What IS the definition of “professionalism”?

¹⁰ Can't academic writing be creative?

Creative writing can technically be considered any writing of original composition.

the creative process:¹¹

Some people can simply sit down to write and have something to write about. For others, finding something to write about can be the hardest part of creative writing. Assuming that you are not in the first group, there are several things you can do to create ideas. Not all of these will work for all people, but most are at least useful tools in the process. Also, you never know when you might have an idea. Write down any ideas you have at any time and expand on them later.

For stories and poetry, the simplest method is to immerse yourself in the subject matter. If you want to write a short story, read a lot of short stories. If you want to write a poem, read poems. If you want to write something about love, read a lot of things about love, no matter the genre.

THE WRITING PROCESS “REMINDER”¹²

Please Note: Not all writers follow these steps perfectly and with each project, but let’s review them to cover our butts:

1. BRAINSTORMING
2. DRAFTING
3. REVISING
4. EDITING
5. PROOFREADING

Outline¹³ your entire story so you know what to write. Start by writing a summary of your story in 1 paragraph. Use each sentence to explain the most important parts of your story. Then, take each sentence of your paragraph and expand it into greater detail. Keep working backward to add more detail to your story. This is known as the “snowflake method” of outlining.

Different people write in different ways. Find a method that works for you and finally, the broader your knowledge of the language and the more that you have read, the better your writing will be.

¹¹ "Creative Writing/Introduction." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 10 May 2009, 04:14 UTC. 9 Nov 2016, 19:39 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Introduction&oldid=1495539>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

¹² It doesn't really matter who created it; all you need to know is that you don't HAVE to follow it perfectly. Not many people do.

¹³ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

getting started:

- Find a comfortable space to write: consider the view, know yourself well enough to decide what you need in that physical space (music? coffee? blanket?).
- Have the right tools: computer, notebook, favorite pens, etc.
- Consider having a portable version of your favorite writing tool (small notebook or use an app on your phone?).
- Start writing and try to make a daily habit out of it, even if you only get a paragraph or page down each day.
- Keys to creativity: curiosity, passion, determination, awareness, energy, openness, sensitivity, listening, and observing...

GETTING IDEAS:

Ideas are everywhere! Ideas can be found:

- Notebook or Image journal
- Media: Magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, movies, etc.
- Conversations with people
- Artistic sources like photographs, family albums, home movies, illustrations, sculptures, and paintings.
- Daily life: Standing in line at the grocery store, going to an ATM, working at your campus job, etc.
- Music: Song lyrics, music videos, etc.
- Dreams
- Beautiful or Horrible Settings
- Favorite Objects
- Favorite Books
- How to generate ideas:
 - Play the game: "What if..."
 - Play the game: "I wonder..."
 - Eavesdrop.
 - Use your favorite story as a model.
 - Revise favorite stories - nonfiction or fiction - into a different genre.

WRITER'S BLOCK:¹⁴

Writer's block can happen to ANYONE, so here are some ways to break the block if it happens to you:

- Write down anything that comes to mind.
- Try to draw ideas from what has already been written.
- Take a break from writing.
- Nap.

¹⁴ "Creative Writing/Fiction technique." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 28 Jun 2016, 13:38 UTC. 9 Nov 2016, 20:36 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Fiction_technique&oldid=3093632>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

- Read other peoples' writing to get ideas.
- Talk to people. Ask others if they have any ideas.
- Don't be afraid of writing awkwardly. Write it down and edit it later.
- Set deadlines and keep them.
- Work on multiple projects at a time; this way if you need to procrastinate on one project, you can work on another!
- If you are jammed where you are, stop and write somewhere else, where it is comfortable.
- Go somewhere where people are. Then people-watch. Who are these people? What do they do? Can you deduce¹⁵ anything based on what they are wearing or doing or saying? Make up random backstories for them, as if they were characters in your story.

peer workshops and feedback acronyms:¹⁶

Having other humans give you feedback will help you improve misunderstandings within your work. Sometimes it takes another pair of eyes to see what you “missed” in your own writing. Please try not to get upset by the feedback; some people give creative criticism and others give negative criticism, but you will eventually learn by your own mistakes to improve your writing and that requires peer review and feedback from others.

If you are comfortable having your friends and family read your work, you could have them¹⁷ peer review your work. Have a nerdy friend who corrects your grammar? Pay them in pizza perhaps to read over your stuff!? If you are in college, you can use college tutors to review your work.

Peer Workshop activities can help create a “writing group vibe” to any course, so hopefully, that is a part of the creative writing class you are taking.

¹⁵ Deduce = to reach a conclusion.

¹⁶ "Creative Writing/Peer Review." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 16 Aug 2016, 22:07 UTC. 9 Nov 2016, 20:12 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Peer_Review&oldid=3107005>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

¹⁷ This textbook we'll try to use they/them pronouns throughout to be inclusive of all humans.

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



don't forget to read!

Saturday January 5, 2008¹⁸

I'm thinking about making a PPT based on this...

"You may not think of yourself as a reader and writer.
But you are doing both in the broadest sense all the time.
You're reading your world every day; you compose your life.
In the kitchen each A.M., you read the cupboards and refrigerator
for breakfast options, cereal to eggs to bagels.
You read the weather and read your closet, choosing your clothes by
a complicated writer's formula: what's clean, what represents who I
want to be today, what's appropriate for the weather?
You read the newspaper, perhaps, choosing quickly which story
engages you and which you don't need to read further.
You read everyone at school and at work.
You read the signs and ads and marquees on your way home and write
your evening plan in your head: go to the mall, stop in to listen to
the band at X, or stay home and watch Y on TV.
You steal your daily habits from your family (think about
Thanksgiving meals), your friends (there are clothes you borrow,
sayings you pick up), your developing age and tastes (as a child you
never ate artichokes, but now...)
You steal the right office or school moves by watching others in the
same or similar situations.
You see what I mean, I think."
-Wendy Bishop, "Reading, Stealing, and Writing Like a Writer,"
Elements of Alternative Style, 1997.
Posted 1/5/2008 at 4:20 PM

"If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot... reading is the creative center of a writer's life... you cannot hope to sweep someone else away by the force of your writing until it has been done to you." – Stephen King

By the time¹⁹ students arrive in college, stories beginning with "once upon a time" are long gone, and in their place are difficult and dense texts – often multimedia texts – from a range of fields each with its own set of conventions. Instead of drawing on models of early literacy education that focus on teaching reading and writing

¹⁸ Blog entry by Sybil Priebe; licensed CC-BY.

¹⁹ Snippet from = Carillo, Ellen C. "Reading and Writing Are Not Connected." *Bad Ideas About Writing*. Edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Libraries, Digital Publishing Institute, 2017. CC-BY.

simultaneously, college and universities largely privilege writing over reading. This hierarchy is evidenced by the universal first-year writing requirement in American colleges and universities, as well as by writing across the curriculum programs. The integrated approach to teaching reading and writing falls away to students' peril and causes great frustration in the professors who often attribute students' struggles in their courses to poor writing ability, when these problems are often related to students' reading difficulties. While students' eyes may make their way over every word, that does not mean that students have comprehended a text or that they are prepared to successfully complete the writing tasks associated with the reading, which often involve summary, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

More importantly, if students are not given the opportunity to continue working on their reading throughout their college careers, they may struggle analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating all that surrounds them since comprehension is a crucial step toward these more advanced interpretive practices. Students may lack the ability to read the world around them because they do not have the tools to recognize the values and assumptions that inform the images, advertisements, news stories, political campaigns, and ideas with which they come into contact daily. By not focusing on reading as an equally creative and active enterprise as writing—very much writing's counterpart in the creation of meaning—colleges and universities are potentially producing students, or citizens, who think reading is passive. These students might blindly accept whatever comes their way rather than actively engaging ideas, asking questions, and seeking out multiple perspectives.

Although writing is more often thought of as a creative act, reading is just as creative. When one writes, one is creating meaning by putting words and ideas together. [...] This is why a few people might read the same novel²⁰ but each take something different from it. That personal transaction with the text has affected how each reader creates meaning. When reading and writing are taught alongside each other in the college-level classroom, students can gain practice experiencing and relishing in opportunities to create meaning not just through writing, but through reading everything from print texts to art to websites to national news events, all of which they will continue to engage beyond school. Focusing on active reading approaches, including everything from comprehension strategies to ways of determining something's inherent values and biases to productive methods of responding, is crucial if students are going to leave postsecondary institutions prepared to be informed, aware, and engaged citizens.

²⁰ The original text does not place a comma here, but Microsoft Word wants to! It's understandable with or without the comma, isn't it?

| questions:

- What did you like to read as a child? Why?
- What do you read now (social media counts!)? Why? What do you enjoy about reading what you do read?
- Try to tally up how much you read everyday – from text messages to email, etc. How many words do you think you read and analyze on a daily or weekly basis? Now, ask yourself: How does taking in ALL those words affect who you are as a writer and reader?

| activity:

This chapter could be copied and pasted into an editable Google Doc so that students could annotate collaboratively and discuss their reading strategies.

READING STRATEGIES²¹

Most discussions and writing assignments—from brief responses to in-depth research papers—will depend on your ability to understand what you read. Following are some strategies for getting the most out of assigned readings.

- **PURPOSE.** When you start a reading assignment, identify your purpose and write it down somewhere such as on a sticky that you put on the first page of the book or on your computer screen. Keep that information nearby and refer to it occasionally as you read.
- **GOAL.** Your primary goal is to identify the main point, the idea the writer wants to communicate. Finding the main point helps you understand the details—the facts and explanations that develop and clarify the main point. It also helps you relate the reading to things you learned in class or in other assignments.
- **PAUSE.** Regardless of what you read, stop occasionally and assess how well you understand what you are reading. If you aren't confident, go back and read it again. Don't just push ahead.²²
- **MARK IT UP.** The best way to remember the information you read is to do something physical with it, something beyond just letting your eyes scan the page. For example, taking notes as you read helps your brain retain the information.
- **TALK ABOUT IT.** A good way to review and reinforce what you've learned is to discuss the reading with classmates. Discussions can help you determine whether your understanding is the same as that of your peers. They can also spark new ideas or insights.

questions:

- In what ways are you an “active reader”?
- Go back to the first blog post in this chapter – do you agree with Wendy Bishop about all the things you “read” each day?

activity:

<Students could create an activity that would assist all students in reading more actively. Share that activity with your instructor. It might end up in this spot of the textbook!>

²¹ 1, 2, 3 Write! by Gay Monteverde is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

²² This tip might as well be called The Power of the Pause. Pause in your reading. Take a minute to understand that last sentence or paragraph.



chapter 1: introductory exercises.

These exercises piggyback on the topics of this chapter, which are “getting started,” “feedback,” and “reading.”

| exercise 1: getting started.

For a quick creative writing exercise, try one of the writing prompts below, excerpted²³ from Chronicle Books’ *642 Tiny Things to Write About*. Each prompt was created by a writing teacher at the San Francisco Writers Grotto to be done in 10 minutes or less. Feel free to take more than 10 minutes, if you need to!

- Write a eulogy for a sandwich, to be delivered while eating it.
- Write the ad for an expensive new drug that improves bad posture. Now, list the possible side effects.
- Write the passenger safety instructions card for a time-travel machine.
- An undercover spy is about to impersonate you in all aspects of your life. Write instructions.
- Write your life story in five sentences.
- As a talking Chihuahua, what would you tell your humans about the new crying baby who now lives with you?
- Pick a place you’ve never been to. Explain why you are moving there.
- What piece of advice do you most often give and least often follow?
- If you were given one extra hour today and you weren’t allowed to use it for anything you’d normally do (e.g.; eat, sleep, etc.), what would you do with that hour?

| exercise 2: feedback.

Find a classmate’s writing to give feedback to and practice the WWW/TAG approach.

²³ From: <https://blog.ed.ted.com/2015/11/17/21-fun-things-to-write-about-in-10-minutes-or-less/>

| exercise 3: reading.

Read the “Reading Strategies” one more time and then compose a paragraph where you discuss how you might use those strategies in this course, within this textbook, and in the future.

| exercise 4: observations. *

Write down observations that you have right now where you are. Focus on ALL senses (hear, see, taste, touch, feel) and try to give details: color, texture, etc. Shoot for one sentence for each observation.

| exercise 5: clothing. *

Write down observations based on the people you have seen, met, or been around for a day. Focus the observations on describing their personalities but only through a description of the clothes they were wearing.

*These could be considered jumpstart exercises to the next chapter...

“Because writing isn’t just about writing.”



Dr. Stephanie Richmond

@profrichmond

Replying to @cjdenial and @WeaverRew

That I think is the key: the topics may not be pleasurable in fact many are deeply disturbing and uncomfortable. But some of the elements of research and writing can be pleasurable: tactile nature of archival research, the joy at a well executed sentence or paragraph.

3:03 PM · Dec 6, 2021 · Twitter for iPad

chapter 2: review of elements

If you've ever read a story, you've read from a particular point-of-view, you've dealt with various character types, imagined the setting, read dialogue, and you've seen a plot in action. So, essentially, this brief chapter sums up what you've already seen, but by reviewing this, you can understand all the variety within writing.

points-of-view:²⁴

FIRST-PERSON VIEW

The first-person narrative makes it necessary that the narrator is also a character within his or her own story, so that the narrator reveals the plot by referring to this viewpoint character as "I" (or, when plural, "we"). Oftentimes, the first-person narrative is used as a way to directly convey the deeply internal, otherwise unspoken thoughts of the narrator.

"When I moved to Minnesota, I found there was a thriving and determined movement, a grassroots movement, to revitalize the Ojibwe language. And I've never come to be a competent speaker. I have to say that right now. But even learning the amount of Ojibwe that one can at my age is a life-altering experience."

---Louise Erdrich

²⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "Narration." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 30 Nov. 2016. Web. 30 Nov. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

THIRD-PERSON VIEW

Third-person narration provides the greatest flexibility to the author and thus is the most commonly used narrative mode in literature. In the third-person narrative mode, each and every character is referred to by the narrator as "he", "she", "it", or "they", but never as "I" or "we" (first person), or "you" (second-person). In third-person narrative, it is necessary that the narrator is merely an unspecified entity or uninvolved person that conveys the story, but not a character of any kind within the story being told.

“The seller of lightning-rods arrived just ahead of the storm. He came along the street of Green Town, Illinois, in the late cloudy October day, sneaking glances over his shoulder. Somewhere not so far back, vast lightnings stomped the earth. Somewhere, a storm like a great beast with terrible teeth could not be denied.”
---from Ray Bradbury’s *Something Wicked This Way Comes*

OMNISCIENT POINTS OF VIEW / FIRST-PERSON OMNISCIENT VIEW

A rare form of first person, where the narrator is a character in the story, but also knows the thoughts and feelings of all the other characters. It can seem like third person omniscient at times.

MULTIPLE-PERSON VIEW

Sometimes, an author will use multiple narrators, usually all of them storytelling in the first person. In stories in which it is important to get different characters' views on a single matter, such as in mystery novels, multiple narrators may be developed. The use of multiple narrators also helps describe separate events that occur at the same time in different locations.

For example, in Chuck Klosterman’s *Downtown Owl*, one chapter is told by the perspective of a teacher, the next a student, the next an old man in the town. This allows the reader to see all sorts of viewpoints for one particular experience or situation.

ALTERNATING PERSON VIEW

While the general rule is for novels to adopt a single approach to point of view throughout, there are exceptions. Many stories, especially in literature, alternate between the first and third person. In this case, an author will move back and forth between a more omniscient third-person narrator to a more personal first-person narrator. Often, a narrator using the first person will try to be more objective by also employing the third person for important action

scenes, especially those in which he/she is not directly involved or in scenes where he/she is not present to have viewed the events in first person.

SECOND-PERSON VIEW

Probably the rarest mode in literature (though quite common in song lyrics) is the second-person narrative mode, in which the narrator refers to one of the characters as "you", therefore making the audience member feel as if he or she is a character within the story. [Ex: Create-Your-Own-Story books... remember those?]

"Life will break you. Nobody can protect you from that, and living alone won't either, for solitude will also break you with its yearning. You have to love. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth. You are here to risk your heart. You are here to be swallowed up."
— Louise Erdrich, *The Painted Drum*

common characters & archetypes:²⁵

Characters can be classified by their role in the story. Some common roles are:

STOCK CHARACTER

- Standard, predictable background characters: The "best friend" of the main character.

PROTAGONIST

- The hero or central character: *Captain Marvel*, *James Bond*

ANTAGONIST

- The villain: The Bad Witch in *Wizard of Oz*.

ANTIHERO

- A protagonist without heroic qualities: Jack Sparrow in *The Pirates of the Caribbean*, Michael Scott on *The Office*.

Make your protagonist have flaws.²⁶ Even though a hero sounds like they should be perfect, giving them something that holds them back will help readers empathize with them. Maybe your hero will do anything to save their life, even if it involves killing someone or maybe they're selfish and only care about themselves. Brainstorm common personal flaws and pick one for your character.

²⁵ Wikipedia contributors. "Character (arts)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 20 Nov. 2016. Web. 20 Nov. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

²⁶ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Let your antagonist have some redeeming qualities. Just like how heroes can't be entirely good, your villain of the story can't be completely bad. An evil villain just for the sake of being evil makes your character flat and uninteresting. Give the antagonist a redeeming quality, such as doing what they need to save their child, so a reader can sympathize with them.

setting:²⁷

Consider all 5 senses when describing your settings. Think about what characters in your story would see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. This will help you create a more vivid setting that readers will imagine the location better and feel like they are a part of it.

- Make lists of what your characters would experience when they first arrive in your setting. What sights would they see? Who would be there?

Write descriptions for each of your settings so you have an understanding of them. Work on brief paragraphs describing the landscape, people, culture, and animals for each of the locations you want to include. Think about the major set pieces in the locations and how the characters interact with them. If you need to get more detailed about wildlife or special quirks about your world, expand your notes further.

common plots:²⁸

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER

The protagonist sets out to defeat an antagonistic force (often evil) which threatens the protagonist and/or protagonist's homeland. Examples: *The Hunger Games*, *Shrek*.

RAGS TO RICHES

The poor protagonist acquires things such as power, wealth, and a mate, before losing it all and gaining it back upon growing as a person. Examples: *Cinderella*.

THE QUEST

The protagonist and some companions set out to acquire an important object or to get to a location, facing many obstacles and

²⁷ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

²⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "The Seven Basic Plots." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 20 Nov. 2016. Web. 20 Nov. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

temptations along the way. Examples: *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Land Before Time*, *Indiana Jones*, *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*...

VOYAGE AND RETURN

The protagonist goes to a strange land and, after overcoming the threats it poses to him or her, returns with experience. Examples: *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Wizard of Oz*.

COMEDY

Light and humorous character with a happy or cheerful ending; a dramatic work in which the central motif is the triumph over adverse circumstance, resulting in a successful or happy conclusion. Most romances fall into this category. Examples: *Bridget Jones Diary*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

TRAGEDY

The protagonist is a hero with one major character flaw or great mistake which is ultimately their undoing. Their unfortunate end evokes pity at their folly and the fall of a fundamentally 'good' character. Examples: *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Breaking Bad*.

REBIRTH

During the course of the story, an important event forces the main character to change their ways, often making them a better person. Examples: *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Despicable Me*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Use **"The Hero's Journey"**²⁹ template for storytelling. A Hero's Journey is a common storytelling device to make sure your main character goes through an emotional rollercoaster throughout your writing. Your hero starts in their ordinary and comfortable world, but something or someone makes them go out of their comfort zone. Throughout the story, they will hit their rock bottom before redeeming themselves and saving the day. Work through the 12 steps of The Hero's Journey for your protagonist.

- The Hero's Journey is not a set-in-stone way to write stories, but it will help guide you if this is the first time you've written.
- This works best in long-form writing, like a novel or screenplay.

²⁹ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019.
<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Pace your story so action³⁰ happens frequently. Think of your story happening in 3 acts, where the first act is what makes your protagonist go on the adventure, the second act is developing the conflict, and the third act is the resolution. You can quicken or slow your pacing by using shorter and longer chapters, adding details, or shifting to subplots.

- Use detailed language, but don't be over-explanatory or else you risk bogging down your writing.

dialogue:

Work on writing believable dialogue³¹. Take each character's upbringing, education, age, and career into consideration when you make your characters speak. Avoid using dialogue to info dump in stilted or unnatural language.

- Make sure each of your characters sounds different or else your readers will have a hard time telling which character is speaking.
- Avoid clichés like, "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" or "I have a bad feeling about this."
- Listen to how people talk in real life, so you have an idea of how people speak. Ask if you can record a conversation and try to transcribe the audio.

Dialogue³² is another way to bring life to your narrative. Dialogue is conversation or people speaking in your story. Engaging dialogue goes beyond what is simply being said to include description of non-verbal communication (facial expressions, body movement, changes in tone and speed of speech) and characterization. The way people speak and interact while talking reveals much about them and the situation. Writing natural sounding dialogue is not easy. Effective dialogue must serve more than one purpose - it should:

- Drive the plot forward,
- Reveal information about the characters, and
- Build tension or introduce conflict.

Dialogue is a great way to show, rather than tell.

Basic Dialogue Rules

1. Use a comma between the dialogue and the tag line.

³⁰ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

³¹ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

³² Anderson, Dana. "Narration." *Writing Unleashed*, Version 1. NDSCS; 2016. CC-BY-NC-SA.

- a. "I want to go to the beach," she said.
2. End punctuation goes inside the quotation marks.
 - a. He asked, "Where's the champagne?"
3. When a tag line interrupts a sentence, it should be set off by commas.
 - a. "That is," Wesley said, "that neither you nor me is her boy."
4. Every time you switch to a different speaker, start a new paragraph.
 - a. Even if the speaker says only one word, with no accompanying attribution or action, it is a separate paragraph.
5. Start a new paragraph when you wish to draw the reader's attention to a different character, even if that character doesn't actually speak.
6. For internal dialogue, *italics* are appropriate.

Sample Dialogue

"So, what was it really like?" I asked.

"I've told you. It was amazing."

I shifted to my side so I could look at her. "You have to give me more than that," I insisted, "and not the mom and dad version."

Liv mirrored my move to her side and propped up her head with her arm. Her blue eyes searched my greens, looking for the right words. "I shouldn't--"

We broke our gaze as we heard our mom call for us. Once again, I didn't get the truth.

| questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

your voice

Find a tone³³ of voice for your writing. Your voice is what makes your writing unique and will set you apart from other writers. Use your own life experiences and language to help shape the way you write so readers can experience how you tell a story. Your voice will depend on what point of view you're using.

- Examples of tone include sarcastic, enthusiastic, indifferent, mysterious, wry, somber, acerbic, smug, pessimistic, and so on.
- The tone can also be formal or informal. Your writing's voice can be shaped by what point of view you've written your work. For example, you may be able to use more slang or informal language if you're writing in the first person.

holes in diversity

Once one figures out their voice – in an academic setting or not – they can start to understand the necessity of employing that voice to tell their story. This book wants to encourage ALL humans to write, whether the writing is published or unpublished. One should note, however, that some stories are not as prominent in the “literature industry” and that makes them all the more valued to be told. Here are some examples:

- People of color, especially women of color
 - Examples: Roxane Gay, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker
- First Nations / First Peoples / Indigenous Peoples
 - Example: Louise Erdrich³⁴
- Immigrants / Refugees / Migrants
 - Examples: Junot Díaz, Bharati Mukherjee, Jamaica Kincaid
- Humans who are LGBTQIA or pansexual or asexual
 - Examples: David Sedaris, Augusten Burroughs, James Baldwin
- Humans with disabilities
 - Example: Octavia E. Butler
- Humans of size, a.k.a humans who are fat
 - Examples: Aubrey Gordon, Jess Baker

In particular, these types of stories seem to be missing from literature:

- Stories where one's skin color isn't the guiding factor of the plot

³³ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

³⁴ She has ties to the Wahpeton, ND area!

- Stories where the fact that characters are lesbians, or gay, or bisexual, or transgender or queer or intersex or asexual isn't the main topic of discussion
 - Example: the TV show, *Schitt's Creek*
- Stories about people with disabilities where the disability isn't the character's main "problem"
- Stories about fat people where intentional weight loss isn't in the plot at all

| questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>



chapter 2: exercises of the elements

Let's practice some of the elements, yeah?³⁵ These exercises cover how to create characters, think about setting and plot, create dialogue, and think about your voice.

| exercise 1: the name game.³⁶

Here is your challenge: for the next few days, collect names. You might collect them from obituaries, news stories, random lists, and spam. Spam is great for funny names. Then go through your list, choose a name, and write a short character sketch* based off that name.

*FYI = Character Sketch: "A character sketch simply summarizes the key personality traits, background, behaviour and nature of a particular character."³⁷

| exercise 2: lists are your friend.³⁸

Prep for future stories by making a list of lists.

- 5 possible endings for your story
- 5 twists
- 5 possible subplots
- 5 ways the subplots could tie into the main plot
- 5 ways the character could grow
- 5 surprising things that we could learn about a character
- 5 ways to add some unexpected elements to the book (humor, suspense, sadness, fear)
- 5 ways to describe the main setting/another setting

| exercise 3: through another person's eyes.³⁹

Create a setting that involves 2-3 characters. Describe the setting. Then write a paragraph from the point of one character. Now write the

³⁵ These exercises, and any assignments found in this textbook, are all about fulfilling the goal of practicing writing anything in order to challenge ourselves AND to see what we excel in, too.

³⁶ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/character-development/the-name-game/>

³⁷ Team Leverage Edu. "How to Write a Character Sketch?" 07 Oct 21. <https://leverageedu.com/blog/how-to-write-a-character-sketch/>

³⁸ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/outlining/lists-are-your-friend/>

³⁹ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/character-development/through-another-person-s-eyes/>

same interaction from another character's point of view. For example: your paragraph could involve the point of view of a convenience store clerk contrasted with a customer's point of view of the same incident.

| exercise 4: the party.

Sketch out an outline of characters one might find at a party. Set the scene, too, and give us a few plot lines that may occur before, during, and after the party. You don't have to write the story, simply give us an outline of these pieces.

| exercise 5: choose your adventure.⁴⁰

In a "Choose Your Adventure" book, you are forced to make a decision at each and every plot point. The decisions you make will take you down diverging paths and dictate your eventual fate. Try this if you're stuck on a plot development detail in your story. Sketch out the two different paths that a character can experience from one plot point, depending on what action he or she chooses to take.

| exercise 6: DIY.

Create your own exercise that requires students to test out the elements in this chapter. Share it with the class or teacher.

| exercise 7: the room.⁴¹

Write a description of the room you are in from a character you've created. What would the character notice first? What would they find odd? What would they love about the room? What would they dislike? Go beyond describing the physical space and capture their attitude about what they see. Let them be snarky or wax poetical. Whatever captures their emotions about the space.

| exercise 8: your voice.

Find a nugget of writing by someone, anyone. Then translate that paragraph (or dialogue or whatever it is) into YOUR VOICE. This may be tough but ask yourself how YOU would say the things in the piece by this other person. What words would you use instead? What words need to be added or deleted? Is the tone the kind of tone you like? How can that be changed to sound more like YOU?

⁴⁰ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/plot-development/choose-your-adventure/>

⁴¹ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/setting/room/>

“Write about what disturbs you, what you fear, what you have not been willing to speak about. Be willing to be split open.”

---Natalie Goldberg



chapter 3: poetry

Poetry⁴² is easy to recognize but hard to define.

Let's start with Webster's definition: "The art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts." As lovely as that sounds, it may already say too much about this unique and unpredictable art form. Rhythm is important; it's perhaps the only element in poetry we can truly count on. Rhymes are optional, but some sort of rhythm to the reading of quality poetry will always almost exist.

We can experience poetry through our eyes or our ears. It is usually meant to excite pleasure, but it can also reflect sorrow or regret. That brings us to "beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts."

Poetry often contains these things, but sometimes it can just be silly and simple. So, while Webster's Dictionary defines poetry in specific words, it still may not include the full picture of what poetry is.

Poetry does not mean to limit us. Find poems you love and share them with classmates and friends. Discover your own meanings in poetry and discuss those meanings without making them conform to an understood critical meaning. Poetry can be sweet or silly, short or long, fun, thoughtful, or personal. It can have more than one voice. Let poetry help you find connections in your life. Tie poetry into other areas. You could use a poem as an intro to a science report!⁴³

⁴² "Choosing High Quality Children's Literature/Poetry." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 26 Feb 2013, 18:45 UTC. 18 Nov 2016, 16:47 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Choosing_High_Quality_Children's_Literature/Poetry&oldid=2492503>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

⁴³ This might be a hidden bonus point? Write a poem about your recent science report and email it to the instructor.

Subject yourself to several different forms and then choose a style to create your own stuff within. Have fun! If you do not enjoy poetry, try some different kinds. Keep looking until you find something you like and then expand upon that.

devices and forms

Poetry⁴⁴ uses forms and conventions to suggest differential interpretations of words, or to evoke emotive responses. Devices such as assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and rhythm may convey musical or incantatory effects. The use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony, and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations. Similarly, figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, and metonymy establish a resonance between otherwise disparate images—a layering of meanings, forming connections previously not perceived. Kindred forms of resonance may exist, between individual verses, in their patterns of rhyme or rhythm.

devices of poetry

ALLITERATION

Repetition of consonants, particularly at the beginning of words. Ex: It was the sweet song of silence.

ALLUSION

A reference or mention of something from history or the arts, nature, society, etc. Ex: Saying that someone's love affair was like Romeo and Juliet's.

AMBIGUITY

Inexactness.

ASSONANCE

Repetition of similar vowel sounds within a word rather than similar sounds at the beginning or end of a word. Ex: "I'm reminded to line the lid of my eye."

IRONY

Expressing meaning using language that signifies the opposite, for humorous or emphatic effect.

⁴⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "Poetry." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 28 Nov. 2021. Web. 12 Dec. 2021.

METAPHOR

A direct comparison between two things. Ex: This classroom is as stale as a hospital.

ONOMATOPOEIA

Words that imitate sounds like Bang! Or Meow!

PERSONIFICATION

Giving humanistic characteristics to non-humans. Ex: The dog nodded in agreement.

RHYTHM

A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.

SIMILE

A comparison using "like" or "as." Ex: That classroom is like a hospital.

SYMBOLISM

The use of symbols to represent something.

forms of poetry:⁴⁵

COUPLET

A pair of lines of verse. It usually consists of two lines that rhyme and have the same meter. Two words that rhyme can be called a couplet.

Example:

I did but saw her passing by.
But I shall love her till I die.

BALLAD

A ballad⁴⁶ is a form of verse, often a narrative set to music. Ballads are often 13 lines with an ABABBCBC form, consisting of couplets (two lines) of rhymed verse, each of 14 syllables. Another common form is ABAB or ABCB repeated, in alternating eight and six syllable lines.

⁴⁵ "Choosing High Quality Children's Literature/Poetry." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 26 Feb 2013, 18:45 UTC. 18 Nov 2016, 16:47
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Choosing_High_Quality_Children's_Literature/Poetry&oldid=2492503>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

"Creative Writing in the EFL Classroom/Poems." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 30 Oct 2009, 20:50 UTC. 18 Nov 2016, 17:30
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing_in_the_EFL_Classroom/Poems&oldid=1650139>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

⁴⁶ Wikipedia contributors. "Ballad." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 27 Oct. 2021. Web. 13 Dec. 2021. This text is available under the CC-BY-SA license.

FREE VERSE AND NARRATIVE

There is no fixed pattern, and it can, but does not have to, use rhyming words. Lyric poems focus on feelings and visualizations rather than on a story. Narrative poems tell a story.

HAIKU

Usually about nature, this style from Japan consists of three unrhymed lines. The first and last line contain five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables. These are easy in theory to fill in the syllables, but it can be hard for the students to actually make them meaningful.

LIMERICK⁴⁷

A **limerick** is a form of verse, usually humorous and frequently rude, in five-line, predominantly anapestic trimeter with a strict rhyme scheme of AABBA, in which the first, second and fifth line rhyme, while the third and fourth lines are shorter and share a different rhyme.^[3] The following example is a limerick of unknown origin:

The limerick packs laughs anatomical
Into space that is quite economical.
But the good ones I've seen
So seldom are clean
And the clean ones so seldom are comical.

Another Example:

There was a young woman named Sybil
who had the notion to scribble.
She set out one pen
one that was very zen
And the ink, it decided to dribble.

SONNET

A sonnet is made up of fourteen lines of rhymed iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is a line made up of five beats. English sonnets have a rhyme scheme of abab cdcd efef gg. It is usually one stanza long. Here is an example of a sonnet by a student:

“Sonnet 1” by S. M. Prince⁴⁸

Oh, how this raucous crowd both cheers and sneers,
A tide of mirth unduly wrought on me,
‘Twas not my peerless wit nor jest I fear,
‘Twas not my prose which folk have come to see.

⁴⁷ Wikipedia contributors. "Limerick (poetry)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 11 Dec. 2021. Web. 12 Dec. 2021.

⁴⁸ “Sonnet 1” by S.M. Prince licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA. Created for NDSCS English 211 course in the Spring of 2021.

I come from forest pines which hide my form,
I grew out crooked, prodded but unbent,
My frozen boughs persist in seeking warmth,
My needles prick but leave a sapid scent.

If not for nimble fingers, rapt'rous song,
They'd call a lumberjack to cut me down,
Capricious folk claim I do not belong,
At worst, I'm useless and, at best, a clown.

But I am neither invalid nor fool;
I am the arbiter of truths most cruel.

QUATRAIN

A quatrain is a four-lined, rhyming poem or stanza. Quatrains have several possible rhyme schemes. The first is designed as two couplets joined together with the a a b b pattern. Other rhyme patterns are a b a b, a b b a, and a b c b.

Example: "Weather"

Evening red and morning gray (a)
Set the traveler on his way (a)
But evening gray and morning red (b)
Bring the rain upon his head (b)

VILLANELLE⁴⁹

The villanelle⁵⁰ is a nineteen-line poem made up of five triplets with a closing quatrain; the poem is characterized by having two refrains, initially used in the first and third lines of the first stanza, and then alternately used at the close of each subsequent stanza until the final quatrain, which is concluded by the two refrains. The remaining lines of the poem have an a-b alternating rhyme.

examples of poetry

"O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!" BY WALT WHITMAN⁵¹

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!

⁴⁹ Wikipedia contributors. "Poetry." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 28 Nov. 2021. Web. 12 Dec. 2021.

⁵⁰ Need an example? Check this page: <https://literarydevices.com/villanelle/>

⁵¹ This poem is in the public domain.

O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.
O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up--for you the flag is flung--for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths--for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.
My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

SUNGLASSES' PARTS, A GRAVEYARD ON MY DASH⁵²

seeking importance in my view, getting some sun
soon to cover crow's feet
a pulse behind my tattoo
constellation of a family tree, shooting stars
bring us closer?
some facial scar to heal
as it listens to Enigma, through a wiring job
through my electric genius
movement of arms in my daydream
to another song, in another time
a non-moment I cherish

| more student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

| questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

⁵² This poem is by Sybil Priebe (20 September 2008). Text available under Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

HERE IS THE PRACTICE PROJECT =
Compose an original poem that tries out one form and two devices.
Forms: sonnet, couplet, quatrain, haiku, or free verse/narrative



chapter 3: poetry exercises

| exercise 1: line exchange.

Give a sentence (line) to a classmate and then “steal” a sentence (line) to use from a classmate in order to write a poem with it.

POETRY EXAMPLES.

Student Example #1⁵³ = Sentence stolen: "Peace is what tomorrow needs."

Peace is what tomorrow needs,
while 2020 has not been a breeze
all we can do is take a minute to breathe
January 2020 started off harsh
if only we knew what was going to come in March
COVID-19 has taken many lives young or old
"Wear your masks" are all we are being told
Peaceful protests and harmful riots
leaving us in fear and feeling disquiet
no one knows how tomorrow will be
but peace is what tomorrow needs

Student Example #2⁵⁴ = The sentence chosen: "You shine like the sun."

You shine like the sun
Your soul is so radiant
Why are your eyes sad?

Please never forget
You're worth more than any jewel
You are my treasure

No matter the darkness
You will always shine brightly

⁵³ Example from Lavender Upshaw is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

⁵⁴ Example from Galadriel Young is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

Never give up
Never give in

Student Example #3⁵⁵ = "I'm learning how to live a dying life" was the line taken from a classmate.

I'm learning to live a dying life.
It's not as easy as it sounds.
For in doing so, my will needs to lie down.
Self-denial has never been my strongest suit,
I'm not Paul or Timothy,
I feel I struggle so through my infirmity.
But I'm thankful for the Power
That renews my strength each day
And helps me take each feeble step
Along the Narrow Way.

exercise 2: mish-mash.

Take a piece of paper. Tear it up into many pieces. Many! Then write various words on each piece. You could even use the back sides of the paper, too. Write down verbs (run, holler, screw) and nouns (girl, beer, cigar) and adjectives (pretty, stupid, red) and adverbs (quickly, slowly)... then mix up the pieces of paper. Attempt, then, to create poems out of the jumbled mess in front of you. You might end up with something really weird or really cool. Poetry doesn't have to rhyme, make sense, or be serious.

exercise 3: food carton.

Can you write a poem using the words on a food carton?

Vitamin Water Poem⁵⁶
ok sure
we think it'll brighten your day
please recycle it.

if you ask us,
a few good things:
-mornings
-pancakes
-15 min snooze
-let's be honest
-the sound of birds chirping
-reverse osmosis

⁵⁵ Example from Megan Guenther is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

⁵⁶ Example created by Sybil Priebe; it's licensed CC-BY.

in what feels like a blink,
120% of your daily value is a bit overrated.
but don't worry,
2.5 servings for best results.

it's no coincidence
one fat pass stick per bottle!

| exercise 4: lengths

- Write a poem in which all the lines are radically different lengths.
- Write another poem in which all the lines are exactly the same length.

| exercise 5: song lyrics

Print off the lyrics to your 5 favorite songs. Then mesh them together in one poem. What does the poem say about you?

SYBIL'S MASHED UP POEM:⁵⁷

If I could touch one lonely soul,
Hold on tight to your dream
If I could heal and be so bold
And you want so much but you're all out of luck
To be a spark, to be a light
When you're so downhearted and misunderstood
Set one heart on fire;
That's all I ever wanted
I've had enough, this is my prayer
That I'll die livin' just as free as my hair
I've had enough, this is my prayer
Just because I want my friends to think I'm dynamite
I just wanna be myself and I want you to love
Me for who I am
Don't want to change and I don't want to be ashamed
I'm the spirit of my hair, it's all the glory that I bear
If I could heal and be so bold
Set one heart on fire;
That's all I ever wanted
I've had enough, this is my prayer

⁵⁷ Songs used: "All I Want" by Kate Earl, "Hair" by Lady Gaga, and "Hold On Tight" by ELO.

**“Be courageous and try to write in a way that
scares you a little.”**

---Holley Gerth



Micro Flash Fiction 
@MicroFlashFic

Everyone at my parents' wedding died within the next year, except my mother.
They died on different days, in different places. No one was charged with a crime. My mom refused to admit it was strange.
But I've spent my life trying to solve the riddle of what happened to my family.

3:21 PM · Dec 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App

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chapter 4: flash fiction

The definition, essentially, of this genre is: VERY brief fiction (or nonfiction). It consists of a low word count (150-500, typically). Other characteristics include: letting the reader fill in gaps, showing rather than telling, and uses specific examples to explain abstract ideas.

tips for writing flash fiction:⁵⁹

- Brevity is key.
- All the pieces of typical fiction (character development, plot development, description of scenes, etc.) writing must be made concise. If in a typical fiction piece, a writer would describe the characters in detail, they have to skim that down for Flash Fiction.
- Descriptions need to be specific - A purple shirt might change to a Vikings t-shirt to allow the reader to fill in the backstories. Instead of saying that the character went for a walk by a pond, the pond might have a name (Mini-Mystery Lake) that alludes to something for the reader to wonder about.
- Stylistic features like flashbacks and changing points-of-view will be difficult, so keep to the basics of the story and leave details to the readers' imagination.

⁵⁸ You might get the option, in the fiction chapter, to finish off this story as Practice?

⁵⁹ "Creative Writing/Mini Sagas." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 26 Oct 2009, 19:53 UTC. 18 Nov

2016, 16:10 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Mini_Sagas&oldid=1648560>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

| a student example of flash fiction

“A CONVERSATION YOU AND A STRANGER HAVE ON THE PHONE...”⁶⁰

I received a phone call from an unfamiliar number, and I decided to answer it. The conversation started and this is how it went.

“Hello, this is Q.”

An older man answered. He said, “Hello, I am trying to get a hold of my daughter. Is this Maria?”

I said, “No this is not, I’m sorry. May I ask who this is? Maybe I can help.”

He said, “My name is Otto. I have not spoken to my kids in a few weeks now. They gave me this phone and I am still unsure how to work it. “

I replied, “Alright, well let’s start with who Maria is.”

“Oh yes, Maria is my oldest daughter of my three children. She has long black hair and light brown eyes. She is pregnant with my first grandchild and I miss her dearly.”

“She sounds lovely Otto. Can I ask what kind of phone do you have? Are you able to touch the screen to open different applications?”

“Yes I can Q.”

“Alright. After our conversation, I want you to click on contacts and look for Maria’s name on there and then hit the green telephone icon. This will let you call her.”

“Alright, I appreciate your help Q. Can I ask you one last question?”

“You certainly can Otto.”

“When is the last time you have spoken to your parents?”

“I don’t remember honestly. I have been so caught up and work and trying to finish this book I have been writing.”

Otto said, “I appreciate you taking the time to help me Q. Do not forget to slow down and relax a little. You might end up helping an old man like me again.”

| questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

⁶⁰ “A conversation you and a stranger have on the phone..” by Willow King is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

.....
: HERE IS THE PRACTICE PROJECT =
: Compose an original story using these typical steps/elements of Flash
: Fiction.
:
: Step 1: Write an original flash fiction story with a catchy first line like
: "So, there we were..."
: Step 2: Remember to jump into the action immediately; you don't have a lot
: of space to build a plot.
: Step 3: Hint at a backstory with your character(s), but don't give the
: reader the backstory - you don't have the space!
: Step 4: Feel free to foreshadow other things that might happen after this
: little story!
:



chapter 4: flash fiction exercises

These may or may not be assigned by your instructor, but they are still really cool little exercises!

exercise 1: line exchange.

Give a sentence (line) to a classmate and then “steal” a sentence (line) to use from a classmate for this flash fiction activity. Then compose one flash fiction piece of about 100 words, then another flash fiction story of 150-200 words, and THEN one more flash fiction piece of 250-300 words.

FLASH FICTION EXAMPLES OF LINE EXCHANGES.

Student Example #1⁶¹ = The sentence used: “She solemnly waited at the bus stop.”

She checked her phone: 6:52. "six fifty-two, six fifty-two," she chanted under her breath, shifting on the balls of her feet. *Stop.* She lowered her heels to the ground. She practiced steadying her breathing. In, two, three, four. Out, two, three, four. Though she kept her eyes fixed on the sidewalk below her, the sound of cars passing was deafening. Her dress cuffs itched. She squeezed her eyes closed and flicked her right hand. *Stop; people will see.* She wills her hand to still. Opening her eyes once more, she checked her phone: 6:53. *Why is it so bad today,* she thought with a frown. *Because today is going to be different: an office party. Joy. What am I going to talk about? How can I hide my autism? Stop thinking about it.* The bus always came at seven, she knew. She knew because she took it every weekday to get to work. She had six minutes until the bus came, and only then could she relax because she hadn't missed it. From there, she would have twenty minutes to read from her book until the bus stopped at the plaza. From there, she would get her French vanilla coffee and cinnamon bun from the coffee shop across from her work. At the front desk of her work, she would sign in at 7:30 exactly. No one had to know how pivotal this routine was to her, especially her boss. How would he react if he knew about her

⁶¹ Example from S. M. Prince is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

disability? He would never promote her, that's for sure. He probably would have never hired her in the first place. *Stop thinking about it.* She checked her phone again: 6:55. She recalled her mother's words: *Don't make a scene.* She took a deep breath and schooled her features. *Relax.* She solemnly waited at the bus stop.

Student Example #2⁶² = Sentence used: "Thoughts, flooding my head like waves on the beach."

Laying in my room looking at my ceiling. Thoughts, flooding my head like waves on the beach. My mind congested but my body resting. Who knew being a teenager was fun but challenging at the same time? A room to myself is my own freedom. My time to reflect on my day, reflect on my life, reflect on everything that is going on around me. Feelings, crossing me like a busy intersection. How do I feel so many things at once? I wanted to grow up and be an adult, but now I realise being young ain't bad after all.

Laying in my empty room looking up at my blank ceiling. Thoughts, flooding my head like waves on the beach. My mind is congested with so much going on in there, but my body is resting and at peace. Having a room all to myself is my own freedom. It's my time to reflect on my day, reflect on my life, reflect on everything that is going on around me. Feelings, crossing me like a busy intersection. Not just an intersection but an intersection in the busiest city. How do I feel so many things at just one time? My body lays still in bed, but my mind constantly feels like it's on a treadmill that doesn't have an off button. I wanted to grow up and be an adult so badly. In fact, it'd be the only thing I would wish for when blowing out my candles on my birthday. But now I realise being young ain't so bad after all.

After a long, busy day here I lay all by myself in my empty room looking up at my blank ceiling. Thoughts, flooding my head like waves on the beach. Except tonight it feels like a tsunami. My mind is congested and filled with a mix of thoughts and emotions. There is so much going on in there but I can't even figure out what it is. My mind is foggy like clouds on a rainy day. Deep, dark grey clouds with lightning and thunder. All of this going on in my mind, however my body is resting and at peace like a quiet, back street road. Having a room all to myself is my own type of freedom. It feels like I am outer space, living on my own planet or even in another galaxy. That's my time to reflect on my day, reflect on my life, reflect on everything that is going on around me. Feelings, crossing me like a busy intersection. Not just an intersection but an intersection in the busiest city. With car horns going off, many people walking the streets, loud noises from all the buses and trains, the sirens from ambulances. It all gets too much for me. How do I feel so many things at just one time? My body lays as

⁶² Example by Ambah is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

still in bed as ever, but my mind constantly feels like it's on a treadmill that doesn't have an off button. I really wanted to grow up and be an adult so badly. In fact, I couldn't wait to be called an adult one day. It would be the only thing I'd wish for when blowing out my candles on my birthday. But now I realise being young ain't so bad after all.

Student Example #3⁶³ = Sentence stolen: "I woke up to silence and darkness."

I woke up to silence and darkness. I could feel boards beneath my body. I didn't know where I was or who was there with me. My only way of knowing was that I was taken on the corner of 49 and 6th street. Taken in such a way that nobody realized that I was gone. I was starting to wonder if anyone was ever going to come looking for me. I had no family and was able to make money working on such a corner. I had nothing to live for, but right at that moment, I wanted to live to see another day.

I woke up to silence and darkness. I could feel the creaking unstable boards beneath my trembling corpse. I had no idea where I was or what kind of person was there with me. The only thing that I knew at the moment was that I was taken on the lively corner of 49 and 6th. I was taken in such an unforthcoming way that not one single person detected it. I was getting worried and started to ponder whether or not anyone would come to a reckoning for me. I knew that there was a slim chance of anything adequate coming out of this. I had no family which meant that I had no means of support other than my job working on such a corner. I had nothing to live for, but at that very moment, I desired to live to see another day.

I woke up to utter silence and unimaginable darkness. I could feel the creaking unstable boards beneath my trembling corpse. I peered with my eyes but there was nothing in sight. There was a far off blood-curdling scream in the distance that made my rigid body freeze in motion. I had no idea where I was or what kind of awful person was there with me. The only thing that I knew at the moment was that I was taken on the lively corner of 49th and 6th. It was a tall bony man who looked and smelled as if he hadn't freshened up in months. The smell of a rotting animal corpse that lay lifeless on the side of an occupied highway. It angered me that I wasn't able to capture his ungodly facial features. I was taken in such an unforthcoming way that not one single person detected it. It was as if he was a customer that I had to please anyone else but me. I was getting worried and started to ponder whether or not anyone would come to a reckoning for me. I knew there were a slim chance and a long shot of anything adequate coming out of this. I had no family which meant that I had no means of support other than my job working on such a corner as that was my source of income. I had nothing to live for, but at that very moment, I desired to live to see another day.

⁶³ This example from Brenna is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

| exercise 2: 10x10.

Write Ten teeny stories about ten people who live in the same town; each story can't be longer than 10 sentences.

| exercise 3: the word salad.⁶⁴

Our subconscious minds combine items in unexpected, sometimes whimsical ways. Set a timer for twenty minutes and use at least three of these words in your draft: a red scarf, windshield wiper, chrome, booger, blowtorch, spatula, CD-ROM, postage stamp, frittering, karma, calamity, heartburn, bandage.

| exercise 4: letter to my younger self.

Choose an age to write to (you at 10? 15?). What would you tell your younger self?

| exercise 5: advertisement.⁶⁵

Write an advertisement putting your 12-foot long crocodile on the market. Then write the story behind why you had to sell your pet crocodile in the first place.

⁶⁴ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/the-word-salad/>

⁶⁵ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/advert/>

**Dedicated to everyone who wonders if I am
writing about them.**

I am.



Fiction Writing Tips
@WritingCraft

The best novels are those which are realistic and natural, with characters and scenes drawn from real life, although not necessarily from common, everyday life. Extraordinary characters, doing extraordinary things, and saying extraordinary words.

#novelwriting #writetips

6:57 PM · Nov 21, 2021 · Twitter Web App

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chapter 5: fiction

The typical layout to any story⁶⁷ is a beginning, middle, and end. The middle is a traditional hotspot where the climax of the story occurs.

character development:

Characters are what they do on the page, so you'll need to justify the behavior of characters (show their fears, hopes, loves, hates, motivations and how these led to action).

What readers need to know about a character is typically less than writers think!

Multidimensionality: What do they hate? What is their favorite color? Are they obsessive about something, and if so what? What are their favorite expressions and exclamations? What are they afraid of?

plot development:

Writers need to create conflict and turmoil, and the opening scene is where one can get into the conflict quickly. Good writers show who their characters are instead of telling the reader. Example: Instead of telling the reader a character is kind, they narrate a scene where the character is being kind to another character, etc. Good writers use narrative skills and exposition (examples).

⁶⁶ Do you agree with this tweet's message?

⁶⁷ "Creative Writing/Fiction technique." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 28 Jun 2016, 13:38 UTC. 9 Nov 2016, 20:36
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Fiction_technique&oldid=3093632>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

You may choose to have a weaving back story that pops up in the story. The basic plots (there are fewer than 25 original plots) are useful to research, and in each scene, the writer might need to ask: Which comes first? The character or the plot? The writer, at times, might have to decide if there will be secondary plots...

climax:

The reader expects a climax to the story and closure so, as a writer, you can satisfy the reader or play on their expectations. Ultimately, you decide a good and logical spot to quit as well as a good peak/twist for the story.

setting and scene:

Each scene or chapter should answer: Where, When, Who. These scenes are the drivers of the plot. It will be up to you as the writer how to arrange and order scenes; it's important to keep the story moving and keeping the reader interested. It's useful to alternate between fast action and slow action. When you start to edit, you'll decide then what scenes are needed and which are useless.

dialogue:

Writers can easily show who their characters through dialogue. Dialogue also allows for the revealing of back story (and making it sound natural).

The use of interior monologue can also be useful when a writer wants to show who a character is and move the plot along.

"He's such a jerk," she stated calmly.

"But he's in love with you."

She looks up from her phone with a perplexed look on her face: "Well, he's got a screwed-up way of showing it."

point-of-view:

Is it First Person? Third? Be clear on how you set this up and keep it consistent, unless as a clear and distinct device (e.g. *Game of Thrones*).

First person point of view involves the use of either of the two pronouns "I" and "we". Second person point of view employs the pronoun "you". Third person point of view uses pronouns like "he", "she", "it", "they" or a name.

lengths:

- Most define a short story as a story that is under 7,500 words in length.
- Novellas can be defined as longer than a short story, yet shorter than a novel; novellas are typically 17,500 to 39,999 words long.
- Novels contain 40,000+ words.

novel writing:⁶⁸

SELECTING A THEME

No matter what it is that you want to write about, the thing to do is to GET STARTED. The idea is not to wait for the whole story to crystallize, and not to keep procrastinating; pick up your pen (or get down to your keyboard) and start - that is the only way to get it done.

When thinking about a theme for your story, be sure not to confuse it with the conflict, as they are two very different things. Conflict is what drives the events of the story, whereas theme is the overall idea or emotion that ties it all together. For example, imagine you are writing a crime story, and the conflict occurs when the hero comes home to find a note saying that his daughter has been kidnapped by an escaped convict. Possible themes for such a story could be good vs. evil, the strength of the human spirit, or the unbreakable bond between parent and child.

RESEARCH

It is very important for a novel to be well researched, no matter what the subject or topic is. It makes the story more interesting and authentic. The research that goes into each of their books is what makes them all the more interesting.

Research can help you add detail and texture to your story that might otherwise be lacking. For stories that you invent spells (fantasy), research into existing methods of magic can help you come up with ceremonies that you might well be able to adapt, adding a colorful touch to your fiction.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTERS

How do you decide the personalities of characters in your novel? A suggested method is to base them on real people you know (without offending them). Another idea along those lines is to take characteristics of some friends (or enemies) and take them to the extreme. Breathe life into your characters and make them think on their own. Once your characters are living breathing creatures, the plot should fall around them.

Take characteristics of yourself, or the opposite characteristics of yourself, and spread them through many characters. Experiment: give your female characters characteristics of male friends, and vice versa.

⁶⁸ "Creative Writing/Novels." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 4 Mar 2011, 19:49 UTC. 16 Nov 2016, 21:26
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Novels&oldid=2064408>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

Another way to build up your characters is to keep your eyes and ears open. Look around you, especially in public places such as airports and malls and college campuses. Observe the people around you: how they behave - the way they scold their children, the way people in love show affection openly. You will learn a lot of nuances which you can include.

The way people dress is often reflective of their attitude. A lot of good authors use this technique of describing a person's clothes and thereby reflecting their characters' personality. Try this: notice people in a public place and try to describe their clothes by linking this with the way you picture their personality.

Naming your characters is another very important aspect to take seriously.

PLOT HOLES

Something that might be scary to deal with is plot holes. A reader might point out a little mistake your character said that could contradict something you wrote earlier on. Hopefully it will not be such a huge mistake that you will have to write half your book, but believe me, it can happen. Do not feel bad about making mistakes because everyone makes them. You are not a bad writer because you made a huge mistake and had to rewrite a whole chapter.

A hard lesson you may have to learn is simply letting go of things. It depends on what you are writing, but if there is something in your novel that is completely unnecessary (i.e., no character development in a particular scene, a particular scene is not very entertaining, or introduces a minor character that will confuse things later) you may need to erase it and forget about it. It is hard, but before you erase big parts of your novel, however, SAVE EVERYTHING! Especially on a computer. This is another reason feedback is important. You might think it is the worst trash ever written but if a hundred other people think it is brilliant, you need to consider that.

an example of fiction: “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin (1894)⁶⁹

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's

⁶⁹ Retrieved from Lumen Learning: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/introliterature/chapter/the-story-of-an-hour-by-kate-chopin/> This piece is in the public domain.

name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter

moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him-sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door-you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease-of the joy that kills.

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

HERE IS THE PRACTICE PROJECT =

Write about yourself as a villain, in third-person. Be sure the piece includes the elements of: character development, dialogue, plot, climax, and setting.



chapter 5: fiction exercises

These may or may not be assigned by your instructor, but they are still really cool exercises!

exercise 1:

Listen to a song, imagine its music video, and then write the story of that music video.

exercise 2: bad fairytale.

Write a fairytale that starts with “Once upon a time...” but turn the fairytale formula upside-down and make sure we don’t learn any lessons from it.

exercise 3: random page.

Pull a book from your shelf, open to a random page, pick a random sentence, and use that sentence as the first line of a short story.

exercise 4: finish tweet.

Finish the story from the tweet that begins the Flash Fiction chapter.

exercise 5: eavesdrop.

Write in public (a coffee shop, a library), and eavesdrop on someone else’s conversation. Snatch a line you hear and write a story around it.

exercise 6: love and hate.

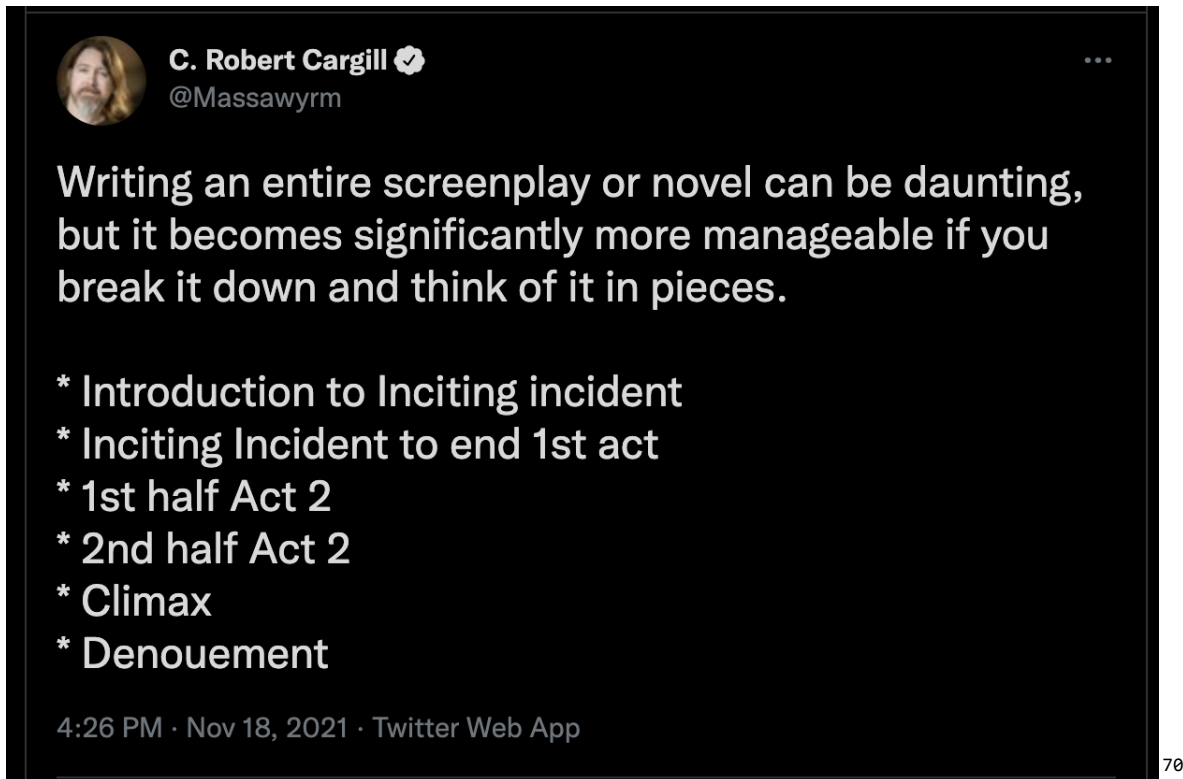
Describe the same character - in the first description, make the reader fall in love with them; in the second description, repulse the reader.

exercise 7: bedroom.

Describe a young character's bedroom using the setting to reveal the character. What does the furniture look like? What's on the walls? In the drawers? Under the bed?

“Lie about everything but passion. Chairs can talk. Pigs can fly. But if you don’t care about what you’re saying, no one else will.”

---Meg Rosoff



chapter 6: drama

A tidbit of history about drama:⁷¹

Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "action," which is derived from "to do." The two masks associated with drama represent the traditional generic division between comedy and tragedy.

We will view drama and the composition of plays the way others use a traditional approach to theatre which is rooted in character and narrative structure, with emphasis on a play's arc through its beginning, turning point, and ending. There is overlap, then, between composing fiction and creating a play.

In a three-act play⁷², each act usually has a different tone to it. The most commonly used, but not always, is the first act having a lot of introductory elements, the second act can usually be the darkest with the antagonists having a greater encompass, while the third act is the resolution and the protagonists prevailing. There is an age-old saying that "the second act is the best" because it was in between a starting and ending

⁷⁰ FYI, from an online dictionary, denouement means: "the final part of a play, movie, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together, and matters are explained or resolved." This may have been obvious from context, but hey, why not share the definition?!

⁷¹ Wikipedia contributors. "Drama." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 24 Dec. 2016. Web. 24 Dec. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

⁷² Wikipedia contributors. "Act (drama)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 21 Sep. 2016. Web. 21 Sep. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

act and thus being able to delve deeper into more of the meat of the story since it does not need to have as prominent introductory or resolute portions. Of course, this is not always so, since a third act or even a first act can have the common second act characteristics, but that type of structure is the most used.

Act 1: Introduction to conflict and characters.
Act 2: The obstacle or complication arises!
Act 3: The resolution.

*The number of scenes varies.

typical screenplay format:⁷³

Although some writers utilize their own modifications on the standard screenplay format, there is a basis upon which all feature film screenplays are formatted.

The standard screenplay format is devised for simplicity of reading by many different departments in addition to roughly timing out to one minute of screen time for one page of script.

Screenplays should be written in **twelve-point Courier font**. Twelve-point Courier is an important component of the standard format for two reasons. One is nostalgic (Courier font resembles the look of a page written on a mechanical typewriter), but the other reason is highly practical: Courier is a monospaced font meaning every glyph is the same width (as opposed to variable-width fonts, where the "w" and "m" are wider than most letters, and the "i" is narrower). With a monospaced font only a certain number of letters will fit on each row and each page, assuring uniformity of the format and achieving the one page per minute of screen time formula.

Margins are generally set as such (spaces are assuming 12-point font at 72 spaces per line):

- Scene Number (if used) is 1.25 inches from the left edge or 13 "spaces" in
- Scene Heading 1.75 inches from the left edge or 19 spaces in
- Action 1.75 inches from the left edge or 19 spaces in (cut off at 55 characters (including spaces) per line)
- Dialogue 2.75 inches from the left edge or 29 spaces in (cut off at 35 characters (including spaces) per line)
- Character name is centered on the page (about 43 spaces in)
- Parenthetical direction is 3.5 inches from the left or 36 spaces in (cut off at 16 characters (including spaces) per line)

⁷³ "Movie Making Manual/Writing/Screenplay Format." Wikibooks, *The Free Textbook Project*. 1 Dec 2017, 04:35 UTC. 22 Jun 2019, 13:18
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Movie_Making_Manual/Writing/Screenplay_Format&oldid=3336745>.

ELEMENTS OF THE SCREENPLAY

Screenplays traditionally start with FADE IN in the upper left-hand corner of the first page, immediately followed by the scene heading for the first location.

SCENE HEADING (SLUG)

A scene heading always starts with a distinction whether the location of the scene is indoors or outdoors. INT. signifies an interior location whereas EXT. signifies an exterior location. These are always abbreviated and followed by a period and one blank space and then the name of the location where that scene takes place. Scene headings, also called slugs, are placed for each and every location in the screenplay, including all the various elements of a location. For example: INT. OLD HOUSE LIVING ROOM might be followed by INT. OLD HOUSE KITCHEN if the characters or action moves to the kitchen. It is not correct to have INT. OLD HOUSE and move characters from one room to the next within the same scene. Each room is treated as a separate location in the script because when the film is actually shot these sequences will most likely be shot out of order (all scenes in the kitchen will be shot together and all scenes in the living room will be shot together, possibly on different days) and, possibly, in completely different physical locations (the kitchen may be a practical location in an Old House, the living room might be built on a soundstage). Some writers like to put a hyphen between the main location and the sub location, IE: INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM and INT. OLD HOUSE - KITCHEN, but this is not required. Following the location name is one or two hyphens (depending on writer's taste) and the time of day the scene takes place; DAY, NIGHT, DAWN, DUSK, EVENING or MOMENTS LATER, CONTINUOUS (if the scene is immediately after the following as in the characters walking from the living room to the kitchen in one conversation). After the Scene heading, there are two carriage returns (one blank space) and the ACTION begins. Scene headings are always in all capital letters.

ACTION

Action is the description of what is happening in the scene, IE: Mark walks into the living room from the kitchen and picks up his books. Action is always written in present tense (Mark walks, not Mark walked). Action is in non-indented paragraph/prose form and is the longest element on the page (spanning from the far left to the far-right hand margins of the page). It is generally accepted that action should not be longer than 10 lines without a break. Action also describes the locations, as much as necessary. Action is always in traditional English upper/lowercase. There are two-line breaks between the end of action and the name of a character speaking (one blank line between action and character name) or the beginning of a new scene (one

blank line between the end of action and the scene heading for the next scene).

CHARACTER NAME

When dialogue is spoken, it is preceded by the name of the character speaking the dialogue. The Character Name is placed on its own line and centered on the page. It is always in capital letters. There are some modifiers that can be placed after the character name in parenthesis (separated by a single space). Voice Over (V.O.) IE: JOHN (V.O.) is dialogue that is presented on the film's audio track but is not spoken by the character on screen. Voice Over can be a voice on a telephone or the sound of the character's own thoughts. Off Screen (O.S.) IE: JOHN (O.S.) is dialogue that is spoken by a character in or immediately near the physical location of the scene, but who is not visible on the screen in that shot or scene. This could be a character speaking from another room. There is only one-line break after the character name before dialogue (no blank space).

DIALOGUE

Dialogue is the actual spoken words by the character. It is placed immediately under the centered character's name and indented considerably from the left-hand side and slightly from the right to stand out on the page. Dialogue is presented in standard upper/lowercase text (ALL CAPS can signify extreme emphasis or SHOUTING). Underline and italics can be used for emphasis but should be used sparingly.

PARENTHETICAL DIRECTION

This is very brief (usually one or two words) of direction or clarification that is placed within a character's spoken dialogue. It is placed, indented from the dialogue, on a separate line and enclosed in parenthesis. Parenthetical direction is only specific to the speaking character (not to other characters in the scene) and should be extremely brief. It can indicate a change in direction of conversation to a different character in the scene, a notation on a specific emotion or intent in the following dialogue. Parentheticals are always in the middle of dialogue - dialogue never ends with a parenthetical direction. Parenthetical direction is usually written in all lowercase letters IE: (beat). After the dialogue ends, there are two-line breaks (one blank space) between the next character name or action or a new scene heading.

Some standard format notes:

- The first time a character is introduced in action, their name is presented in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS to point out their introduction.
- Sound effects such as a phone RINGS or an alarm BEEPS are placed in all capital letters to point them out.

- Scene transitions such as DISSOLVE TO:, CUT TO:, FADE TO BLACK: are placed flush right, on their own line. They are placed at the end of a scene with one blank space before a new scene heading. Generally speaking, they should be used sparingly.

possible template:

FADE IN:

INT. BASIC HOTEL SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

JOE and ANN burst through the doors into a clean, well-lit seminar room.

JOE
Are we in time?

ANN
How could they start without us?
We're the presenters!

Joe catches his breath as he leans against the table at the front of the room.

JOE
(looking about
the room)
We are?

ANN
Don't be an idiot. You know we've
been invited to discuss love and life.

JOE
So why is the room empty?

Ann and Joe both look out across the room -- rows of empty chairs and not a person in sight.

ANN
Hey, hey, hey, don't worry!

She takes a deep breath. Then she looks at the clock on the wall and smiles.

ANN

(continuing)
We're an hour early. We should
practice.

JOE
Okay, you start.

| a student example of an unformatted screenplay:

The Breaking News Newscast⁷⁴

Anchor: We now interrupt this broadcast of 2-hour elevator music with breaking news, we have just discovered that our towns top potato fryer has gotten his head stuck in a barrel of gasoline, and well hand it off to Mike on the scene. Tell us what's happening Mike.

Mike: Well, it seems that according to the witnesses, Howard here was at the 24-hour McDonalds fryin up his best Idahos when all disaster broke lose when he had just remembered he had forgotten to tie his shoelaces and slipped into the fryer which thankfully had been turned off just earlier that day.

Anchor: Well, if the fryer was turned off how did fry them potatoes?

Mike: Well, that's simple Anchor, he didn't. Right after he floated to safety an angry FBI agent drove right through the wall causing Howard fly in the air and land right back into the fryer.

Anchor: That still doesn't explain how he got his head stuck in that gasoline barrel.

Mike: Well, after the agent wrung the oil out of Howard he realized he had compromised the classified oil barrels in his van and then they broke lose of the van and started rolling everywhere. One of them caught up to Howard and he fell face first into the barrel. Thankfully all the other barrels left the 24-hour McDonalds.

Anchor: Thankyou Mike, we are now receiving word of classified oil barrel attacks all over our quiet town of Iowa as the law enforcement are warning everyone to stay inside. We still have yet to know of how we can kill the beasts or if we have any chance of defeating them at all. In other news the fire department is hosting a big match and lighter festival complete with a picnic and booze.

⁷⁴ This piece of drama by Phoenix Black is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA; it was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

Screen cuts to black

Anchor: Breaking News as the town of Iowa is in chaos after the classified oil barrels invaded the Lighter and Matches festival lighting them and anything else in their way on fire. Officials and the Fire department are baffled to how this could have happened. We turn to Mike who is on the scene.

Mike: Everyone is running and screaming as the classified gasoline barrels are charging at anything they see.

Anchor: I wasn't aware that the barrels could see Mike.

Mike: Well, they can Anchor, we have that all the barrels are wearing multiple goggles that gives them the ability to see, I'm uh not sure how we didn't notice that before.

Anchor: Yeah, that's a pretty big oversight buddy.

Mike: Yeah....

Anchor: Well in other news a new flight school has opened up in Iowa and people are pretty excited about it.

The screen fades to black.

Anchor: Breaking News as there is no where to hide now the classified oil barrels have learned how to fly. The officials place the blame on the flying school that taught these barrels how to fly we now go to the scene to the instructor himself. Sir why would you ever teach these monsters after they have caused so much destruction?

Instructor: Well at first I wanted to teach them because they held me up at gun point but...

Anchor: Wait your saying that the oil barrels held you up at gunpoint?

Instructor: Yeah, so?

Anchor: You're saying that BARRELS held you up at gunpoint?

Instructor: Yes..

Anchor: Alright..

Long paused silence

Instructor: Anyway, after that happened I thought who am I to discriminate against learning, just because they're barrels doesn't mean they can't learn how to fly. So, I started at the basics and we trained for a whole 24-hours until they were ready. And when they took off I realized **(starts to tear up)** I had never seen anything more majestic and off they went into the sunset... **(breaks down into sobbing)**

Anchor: That was beautiful.... **(breaks down into sobbing with the Instructor)**

The scene fades to black.

Anchor: Breaking news as we have now gotten word on the whereabouts of the FBI agent that started this whole mess. We now go to the scene to Mike, who we have now found out is the FBI agent. Mike why did you do this.

Mike: Well Anchor I was fed up with life that day and well when I got those unfried fried potatoes I just lost it. I didn't know what I was doing and before I knew it I was wringing the oil out of Howard. The poor man didn't know what he had done but it was too late.

Anchor: That's a little lesson for you kids out there to always tie your shoelaces or else you'll destroy your town with classified gasoline barrels and teach them how to fly.

Mike: That sure is a valuable lesson Anchor.

Anchor: It sure is...

Awkward silence

Anchor: But seriously Mike, why create classified oil barrels in the first place.

Mike: You mean classified gasoline barrels.

Anchor: That's what I said.

Mike: Oh **(pause)** well that's classified Anchor.

Anchor: Come on Mike, we've all been wondering where these things came from.

Mike: Sorry Anchor it's classified.

Anchor: Come on Mike!

Mike: No!

Anchor: Please!

Mike: No, Anchor!

Anchor: I'll be forced to blackmail you!

Mike: I'll be forced to silence you!

Anchor: Come on!

Mike: No

Anchor: Come on!

Mike: No

Anchor: Come on!

Mike: No Anchor!

Anchor: Come on please!

Mike:

The screen fades to black.

Sports with Bob: Breaking news as the disappearance of Anchor Smith has swept the newsroom with panic as I am now the Anchor. In other news, Howard has finally been freed from the classified oil barrel and the law has been passed in town hall that no one can discriminate against anyone who wants to learn how to fly. The flight instructor has now been appointed mayor since I guess we didn't have one before. This is Sports with Bob, now onto Sports...

Scene fades to black.

This is the end of the show.

| questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

HERE IS THE PRACTICE PROJECT =

Compose an original mini-play of about 1000 words. Possible topics could include college life, relationships, humorous encounters, or you could just create a very silly news broadcast!

Practice the typical format/template of a screenplay while incorporating insightful dialogue, descriptive scenes, and ACTION! Bonus⁷⁵ if you break down the screenplay into Acts 1, 2, and 3!

⁷⁵ This may or may not be worth actual "bonus points."



chapter 6: drama exercises

| exercise 1: hypothetical dialogue.

Write hypothetical dialogue you'd like to have with someone you do not like right now. Be authentic. Be upset and angry.

| exercise 2: but why?⁷⁶

To beef up your skills at creating dialogue AND characters, write a script where you keep asking your characters why. Here's an example:

"Why are you grumpy?"

"I have a hangover."

"Why do you have a hangover?"

"My friend was in a bad accident, and I thought he might die?"

"Why did you think he might die?"

"His girlfriend lied to me about how serious the accident was."

"Why did she lie about that?"

"She's jealous of our relationship."

"Why?"

"I think she's insecure and has trust issues."

| exercise 3: "the hammer and the hatchet"⁷⁷

A stranger walks into the general store and buys a hammer, a hatchet, some rope, and an apple. You are working at the register. Write the conversation you have with him.

| exercise 4: presidential.⁷⁸

Write a presidential speech about why your country needs more ice cream.

⁷⁶ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/character-development/but-why/>

⁷⁷ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/the-hammer-and-the-hatchet/>

⁷⁸ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/presidential-speech/>

| exercise 5: classmates.

Write dialogue using statements classmates have written in previous exercise posts.

"I think new writers are too worried that it has all been said before. Sure, it has, but not by you."

---Asha Dornfest



chapter 7: nonfiction

Nonfiction⁷⁹ is content (often, in the form of a story) whose creator, in good faith, assumes responsibility for the truth or accuracy of the events, people, and/or information presented. Authors of such accounts genuinely believe or claim them to be truthful at the time of their composition or, at least, pose them to a convinced audience as historically or empirically factual.

types of nonfiction:

Common literary examples of nonfiction include expository, argumentative, functional, and opinion pieces; essays on art or literature; biographies; memoirs; journalism; and historical, scientific, technical, or economic writings.

Journals, photographs, textbooks, travel books, blueprints, and diagrams are also often considered non-fictional. Including information that the author knows to be untrue within any of these works is usually regarded as dishonest. Other works can legitimately be either fiction or nonfiction, such as journals of self-expression, letters, magazine articles, and other expressions of imagination. Though they are mostly either one or the other, it is possible for there to be a blend of both. Some fiction may include nonfictional elements.

What is a "life" when it's written down? How does memory inform the present? Why are autobiographies and memoirs so popular?

⁷⁹ Wikipedia contributors. "Non-fiction." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 14 Nov. 2016. Web. 14 Nov. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

distinctions:

Simplicity, clarity and directness are some of the most important considerations when producing nonfiction. Audience is important in any artistic or descriptive endeavor, but it is perhaps most important in nonfiction. In fiction, the writer believes that readers will make an effort to follow and interpret an indirectly or abstractly presented progression of theme, whereas the production of nonfiction has more to do with the direct provision of information. Understanding of the potential readers' use for the work and their existing knowledge of a subject are both fundamental for effective nonfiction.

ELEMENTS

Here are some typical elements in nonfiction pieces:

- Factual information, according to what the writer remembers
- Reflection
- Organization: if not chronological, it should still make sense to reader
- Quality content: the details/description should be concise and vivid
- Dialogue (optional)

a student example of nonfiction⁸⁰

We were sitting in the living room when it happened, and I was so nervous I could have exploded. My heart was in my mouth, and the pounding of it made me so anxious I struggled to get the words out. But I had to say it. I had no choice. I'd never been extraordinarily brave, but when something was necessary, I could do it.

"Do you even love me anymore?", I asked him, looking down. My voice didn't sound like my own.

I knew his answer long before he said it. He paused, and that silence was hours, years, and endless nights. The end of a relationship with someone I adored with all my heart, but who didn't adore me. His dark eyes found mine, and, very quietly, he answered.

"No," he said. He couldn't look at me, and instead focused his eyes down on the floor. I thought he was a coward. I wasn't angry about it at the time, but disgusted. He had been blatantly unhappy in our relationship for so long, but didn't have the guts to end it. When you find a wounded animal you don't drag out their pain. You do the humane thing and shoot them, ending their suffering. You give them peace. And he was a coward who never had the strength to end mine.

I always despised crying. I was raised in a broken home, one where crying loudly would be met with blind drunken anger. So when he finally

⁸⁰ This piece of nonfiction by Jamie Olson is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA; it was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021. The prompt for this project was "Write about an event that changed you."

admitted what I had known for too long, I kept my cool. I swallowed those feelings into a pit and held them there. I didn't want them anyways. Nobody likes to feel hurt or weak.

"Okay. I'm moving out today then.", I said. Cordially, cool-ly. Like this was a business meeting between coworkers rather than a break-up.

I called my friend, Kaity, and asked her if I could stay with her. She accepted. My roommate-ship with her would not last very long. After it ended I would live with my good friend Parsheana before she moved out and I lived alone. When we were roommates I met some of her band friends from Hazen, including my now-boyfriend Ethan. My happiness with him always makes me wish I left David sooner. Everyone in the world deserves to be with someone who loves them.

When I looked back years later, I could never find where it went wrong. I still can't. When did our relationship turn, from late night dates with Chinese food and video games, into mean remarks about my body? I used to sit behind David on the couch as he sat on the floor, and hunch over him. I would rest my head on his shoulder and twine my fingers through hair. I loved him.

Becoming best friends with David saved me. I got away from my step-family, who promptly kicked me out three weeks after I told them I had a boyfriend. He helped me see that life wasn't so bad. It wasn't stupidly pointless. David wrapped me in his arms and understood that feeling. He had the scars on his arms to prove it. And he was my best friend, but somewhere after our one-year anniversary he stopped being happy. He started saying negative things about me. He stopped sleeping in the same bed, arguing that he wanted to stay up and play games all night. He started pulling away with irritation when I touched him.

I'll never forget one of the first times that David said something mean to me. I can't remember if it was the very first, but I think it was close. His words turned me into a statue. Remembering them brings back that feeling. It's like they're frozen deep in my brain. I was trying on some new summer clothes, some capris and a t-shirt. He and his friend Christian were playing PlayStation in the living room. I wanted to show off my new clothes, and went out to the living room. I was confident. I felt cute, and I liked wearing capris a lot so I was rocking them. I got David's attention, and he looked at me, and said something I never expected him to say.

"Wow, you need to lose weight," he said. Nonchalantly, like his behavior was completely normal.

Ouch. I really did freeze up. It'd have been easier to have been slapped across the face, in a way. Christian stopped playing PlayStation and looked at me. He wasn't the best guy, and had a bad habit of fucking around on his girlfriends, but he had a heart. He had faults, but putting down his girlfriends wasn't one of them. The look he gave me was full of sympathy. That look did it. Staring into Christian's blue eyes pulled me out of my frozen trance. I began to tear up before heading back into the bedroom.

David followed me, and told me all about how “he wanted the best for me”, and he “wanted to help”. Swearing that he loved me and apologizing.

After that happened the comments became pretty regular. When you read about abuse you learn that it escalates a little at a time until it becomes normal. Well, him saying that to me normalized it, and made it regular. Suddenly it was all about me being too fat. [...] I wasn’t horrendously overweight or anything, but the comments did their toll on my self-esteem. I started to hate myself and every curve I had.

It hurt to take that leap and force him to admit he didn’t want to be with me anymore, but those words ripped off the band-aid. It wasn’t easy to heal. Going through a breakup and living on my own forced me to be more independent. I have this journal entry from that time period where I wrote about how lost I felt. I didn’t know who I was and I was just going through the motions. I got my GED because I should, accepted a promotion at work because it paid well, and started college.

Eventually I figured it out, but when I think about this chapter of my life now I think of self-discovery. Leaving David took courage, and everything that came after took even more. I learned to deal with stressful adult responsibilities on my own. Bills, cleaning, and car troubles kept me busy, but it was peaceful. I focused on myself. In the start of my next relationship I stood my ground when I didn’t like something, and I still do.

My experiences with my ex taught me that your love for others should not dull the love you have for yourself. For, at the end of the day you should feel good about who you are. There will be times in life where you have to stand alone, where it gets hard to carry on, and in those times you have to hold yourself up. You have to be resilient and look out for yourself. You are your own person, and can be anything you want to be, and I choose to wake up and be myself and find joy in doing so. As Dr. Seuss once said, “There is no one alive who youer than you!”. My breakup with David helped me realize this, because it pushed me out of being who I was. I was comfortable and co-dependent. It made me a better person. One that is stronger and knows who I am.

questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

.....
HERE IS THE PRACTICE PROJECT =
Compose an original piece about a person, place, or thing in your life. Make sure to include these elements: Factual information, according to what the writer remembers; Reflection; Organization; Quality Content/Details
.....



chapter 7: nonfiction exercises

| exercise 1: jekyll and hyde.⁸¹

Describe yourself twice. Once as the hero and once as the antagonist.

| exercise 2: sweater.⁸²

Describe your favorite item of clothing. Is it a favorite because of how it feels, how it looks, or because of an event you wore it to? What do you think the item of clothing shows about you?

| exercise 3: blue.⁸³

You are talking to a blind man who asks you to describe the color of the sky. Write down what you would tell this man without once using the word "blue" in your explanation.

| exercise 4: translate your memories.⁸⁴

Study an old photo of yourself or your family from your childhood. It's probably easy to remember the who, the where, the what. But for this exercise we want to go deeper. Close your eyes and remember the details of the event. How did you feel when anticipating the event? How did you feel if it was a surprise? How did you feel if it didn't turn out as you anticipate? How did others at the event treat you? How did you react to them? Now, translate those FEELINGS into an event, place, child that would take place today.

| exercise 5: the food critic.⁸⁵

Write a review of a restaurant at which you recently ate. Describe the food as much as you can. Feel free to be eviscerating as well.

⁸¹ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/character-development/jekyll-and-hyde/>

⁸² <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/sweater/>

⁸³ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/blue/>

⁸⁴ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/translate-your-memories/>

⁸⁵ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/the-food-critic/>

| exercise 6: your name.

Why do you have the first name you have? What is the story behind it? What is the history behind your last name? (You might have to interview family for this.)

**Sometimes the words come out of my fingers
better than they come out of my mouth.**



chapter 8: experimental literature

This chapter covers all the weirdos of creative writing... the kinds of creative literature that don't fit nicely into the typical genres and categories.

alternative style

Alternative Style is the category used for those pieces of writing and literature that don't fit perfectly into any of the other categories of creative writing.

- Perhaps, it's a piece of writing that has three poems with different points-of-view mixed with made-up definitions and cartoon images of the imaginary people behind each poem. Sure, some people might say: "Oh, that's multi-genre since it's using many genres: poems, definitions, and images," but others would say: "Wait, there's a change in point-of-view? These people are made-up? Multi-genre pieces usually stick with one voice, etc."
- Perhaps, it's a poem done complete in emoticons.
- Or it's a piece of writing that plays with punctuation in a way that suggests it is its own alien language.

definition of a similar term:

Alternative Literature⁸⁶ (often stylized as Alt Lit or Alt-Lit) is a term used to describe a particular literature community that publishes and/or draws its motifs from the internet, internet culture, and "a population of people that are connected with one another through their

⁸⁶ Wikipedia contributors. "Alternative literature." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 11 Oct. 2016. Web. 11 Oct. 2016. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

interest in the online publishing world." It includes various forms of prose, poetry, and new media.

Alt Lit writers share Gmail chat logs, image macros, screenshots, and tweets, which are then self-published as poetry books and/or novels.

TIPS FOR WRITING IN ALT STYLE:

1. Start with a brief genre, like a poem or definition
2. Then ask yourself:
 - a. What have I not seen done to a poem or definition?
 - b. What else can be merged into this genre to make it really, really different?
 - c. Can you play with point-of-view, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, voice, format, etc.?
3. After answering those questions, ask yourself more questions.
4. Push beyond "normal." Play around. Get crazy with your creativity.
5. Then draft it out.

| student example #1:⁸⁷

One day I was 🚶 to my 🏠, on the way I encountered a 🐕, I was so 😱, the 🐕 started barking at me, no one was nearby to help chase the 🐕 away, I grabbed a 🥕 and chase the 🐕 until I made it to my 🏠. My 🧑 was 👩, she welcomed me to a dinning table, we started 🍴. I told my 🧑 about the 🐕 chase on my way to her 🏠, and she was terribly 😡 at the owner of the 🐕. She 📞 a 🚔 to come and arrest the owner of the 🐕 that almost hurt me. It was 🌙 and I was 😱 to go back home by myself, my sweet 🧑👧 with me back home, and I was very 😊 appreciated her help, my 🧑 is amazing.

Transcription: One day I was walking to my aunty house, on the way I encountered a dog, I was so scared, the dog started barking at me, no one was nearby to help chase the dog away, I grabbed a stick and chase the dog until I made it to my aunty house. My aunty was cooking, she welcomed me to a dinning table, we started to eat. I told my aunt about the dog chase on me to her house, and she was terribly angry at the own of the dog. She called a cop to come and arrest the owner to the dog that almost hurt me. It was dark and I was scare to go back home by myself, my sweet aunty walks with me back home, and I was very happy and appreciate her help, my aunty is amazing.

⁸⁷ This emoji story by Panther Geu is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA; it was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

student example #2:⁸⁸

My rules:

1. No capitalization
2. No formatting
3. Incorrect punctuation
4. Incorrect spelling
5. Bad spacing in sentences

hello everyone ! **today** I talk bout this class & how much i enjou be in it. and what is has taught me, I like this class coz it tort me how to write and b creative. It tort me to use my imagination & think off all tha things I could ever thinkd of an just write bout it. I like how it **look into many**. Different type of genre which allow me too explore all the different kind off writing pieces

That can be written. my favourite 1 out of all off them wuld have 2 be the POETRY unit bcoz I really enjoy riting poems & seen how creative u can get wit it. i **especially** like. to read or wrote poems that rhyme , coz it make me wanna keep readin along and see. all that things that can be rhymed with. overalllll i don't minded writing at ALLL wich is why I think

I'm don't struggle with this class.

But. I didn't expect there to be as much writing as there was wich was silly of me coz it is a writing class.. so I should've have know. but I still got everything done so it was not really an issue for me . THIS CLASS HAS MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I AM IMPROVED ? I think my writing has

Became. a lot more creative ANDDD it has made me use my head a lot more AND actually think outside the box wen coming up with cREative pieces to write...

what i also enjoy from dis class. Is , readingg other classmates! Pieces and also hearing their point of view in . our weekly discussion posts. It allow me 2 open upp & see other ppl's point of view on all the different genres. We covered IN THIS CLASSSS, I have A Lot of RESPECT. for authors and wriiters ANDD I. believed any 1 who is consdaring taking a writin class but is unsure. I think they shold take it. everyone should. Even tho it' s a fpcus on writing I THINK IT ALSO IMRPOVES<< YOUR READING AS WELL, Thanku <3

⁸⁸ This piece of experimental literature by Ambah is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA; it was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

multi-modal, -genre, & -vocal

Let's start with the definitions, although you can probably guess by the word "multi" that this kind of creative writing combines many elements, modes, voices, and genres:

- Multi-Genre: Multiple genres working together toward one common theme or topic.
- Multi-Modal: Multiple modes (audio, visual, and text) working together toward one common theme or topic.
- Multi-Vocal: Multiple voices speaking to one theme or topic in a piece of writing or a in a presentation.

A Multi-Genre Sample would look like this: The topic might be to research global warming. A multi-genre project covering this topic would contain an introduction, then perhaps a chart of temperatures at the North Pole over a span of decades. This might be followed by a scientific study of ocean levels over time. That study might be followed by a story from someone who has lived near the North Pole and what they've witnessed with the polar ice caps.

- A personalized multi-genre project would contain genres showing off my personality. I might Multi-Genre use my favorite Beck song along with a story that explains my obsession with creativity and surrealism. I could create a cartoon of myself, too, and write or find a poem that reflects who I am.

A Multi-Modal Sample would look like this: If we use the same topic of global warming, this kind of project would include an introduction via Powerpoint with music in the background that contains lyrics about the earth and taking care of it, etc. Then, instead of multiple genres on the slides of the Powerpoint, this project would contain visuals of global warming, including photos from the North Pole along with various charts.

- A personalized multi-modal project would contain photographs of my life with audio of my favorite song or maybe me reciting a poem I've written. The poem - the text mode - could be placed alongside the photographs or by themselves on blank slides of a presentation.

A Multi-Vocal Sample would look like this: Let's stick with global warming as a topic one last time. This kind of project would showcase different voices about the topic, so perhaps a student completing this project would interview a few different science teachers about their viewpoints on the topic. This project could also include the student writer's voice, and other students who have some knowledge on the topic.

- A personalized multi-vocal project would contain voices showing off my personality. This Multi-Vocal means I could interview people about myself or create separate imaginary voices of my personality: "the nerd" could tell a story, "the oldest sister" could tell a story, and "the athlete" could tell another story.

tips for writing multi-modal/genre/vocal:

- CITE SOURCES! Anything that doesn't come from your own brain needs to be cited somewhere in the project. This is typical for all writing.
- Keep your voice authentic.
- Connect the pieces well. Make sure the reader can see why you've used a chart or a certain song or a specific voice in any project.

A LIST OF VARIOUS WRITING GENRES

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| • Journal Entries | • Encyclopedia Article |
| • Personal Letter | • Short Scene from a Play with Notes for Stage Directions |
| • Greeting Card | • Dialogue of a Conversation |
| • Schedule or To Do List | • Short Story |
| • Inner Monologue | • Invitation |
| • Classified or Personal Ads | • Magazine Story |
| • Personal Essay or Autobiography | • Ghost Story |
| • Philosophical Questions | • Myth or Fairy Tale |
| • Top Ten List | • Talk Show Panel |
| • Glossary or Dictionary | • Recipe or Menu |
| • Poetry | • Classroom Discussion |
| • Song Lyrics | • Character Analysis |
| • Business Letter | • Case Study |
| • Biographical Summary | • Comedy Routine or Parody |
| • Transcript of an Interview | • Picture book |
| • Speech or Debate | • Chart or Diagram |
| • Historical Times | • Brochure Newsletter |
| • Context Essay | • Timeline |
| • Textbook Article | • Map |
| • Science Article | • TV Ad or Infomercial |
| • Business Article | • Travel Brochure |
| • A Report | • How to Guide |
| • Lesson Plan | • Receipts |

| an example of multi-genre:⁸⁹

To the People Who Care to Read this,

Maybe I should start with this: I have always liked school. I have always liked learning, sitting and taking in whatever knowledge my teachers could plop into my head, and I have loved creating. I live in my head - letting my thoughts grow into creative, crazy ideas. And as Steve Ward, one of my undergraduate professors, said: “It is in the process of creating where we learn the most. Not in the product.”

my whole being is a dark chant
which will carry you
perpetuating you
to the dawn of eternal growths and blossomings
in this chant i sighed you sighed
in the chant
i grafted you to the tree to the water to the fire.

My process, as he mentioned, began as a junior in high school. That is where my need, my desire, to compose started really. I had a small book I’d been writing, and maybe there is a distinct moment in English class where “it all started.”

10 Nov 93

Trudy is telling me about her boyfriend AGAIN (sheesh) and sex... blahblahblah who knows. I’m trying to pay attention as geeky as that f##king is. Morris just said something about Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson and **transcendentalism**. I am super curious. Who are these guys anyhow? What is this all about?

I would sit hunched over in class and highlight their words.

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Oddly, at that time, I put my passion with words on the back burner. That same year, I took drafting technology classes at NDSCS and fell in love with the designs of floor plans. I urged my parents to allow me to go to North Dakota State University, but not because I wanted to be a writer - because I thought I wanted to be an architect. I thought I wanted to design houses, not sentences or lessons. I wanted to mimic my dad, with his career in construction.

⁸⁹ This multi-genre example comes from Sybil Priebe and is licensed CC-BY-NC-SA.

life is perhaps
a long street through which a woman holding a basket
passes everyday
life is perhaps
a rope with which a man hangs himself from a branch

Then, during my freshmen year of college, depression hit once again just like it had my freshman year of high school. Suddenly, I questioned everything. I went on a bagel-a-day diet. I napped with a growling stomach and skipped classes.

But, slowly, I met people, fell for boy, and tried with all my might to reach out of a hole that I had jumped into.

life is perhaps a child returning from school.
life is perhaps lighting up a cigarette
in the narcotic repose between two love-makings
or the absent gaze of a passerby
who takes off his hat to another passerby
with meaningless smile and a good morning.

"They" say if you want to see change in yourself, fall in love. Love is insane that way, I guess. So, in Mason, I found parts of myself that I seemed to have lost after high school. My goofiness and my femininity.

Unfortunately, he gave me a false sense of security. I started to depend on him. My studies started to lack, and even though I changed my major to English Education, I still felt unsure about my future. My mother couldn't understand why I wanted to be a teacher rather than an architect, and Mason looked at my writings and wondered why I didn't sound more mature. The only people, at that time, that seemed to have faith in me and my abilities were me, my siblings, and my father.

life is perhaps that enclosed moment
when my gaze destroys itself in the pupil of your eyes.
and it is in the feeling
which i will put into the Moons impression
and the Nights perception
in a room as big as loneliness
my heart
which is as big as love
looks at the simple pretexts of it happiness
at the beautiful decay of flowers in the vase
at the sapling you planted in our garden
and the songs of canaries

which sing to the size of the window.
ah
this is my lot

Teaching was and is still my religion (“something one believes in and follows devotedly; a point or matter of ethics or conscience”). I told this to the people in Battle Lake, MN as they interviewed me a day in May of 1999, weeks after graduation. All I know is that they liked me enough to hire me on the spot.

my lot is
a sky which is taken away at the drop of a curtain
my lot is going down a flight of disused stairs
to regain something amid putrefaction and nostalgia
my lot is sad promenade in the garden of memories
and dying in the grief of a voice which tells me

I really, truly started to find myself in Battle Lake. Mason had ditched me, yet I found myself alone in a new world - in a relatively new job, with new students, and a new found freedom. Lots of soul-searching occurred that summer before I began teaching. Slowly, he left my mind, and peace entered. But being alone has always been easy for me. I could do the Walden thing.

“Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.”
– Henry David Thoreau

I could live alone on a lake without much contact with people and be OKAY. So, in my happy solitude, I threw my passions and energy into my teaching, into getting to know my students.

i love
your hands. i will plant my hands in the garden
i will grow i know i know i know
and swallows will lay eggs
in the hollows of my ink-stained hands.

I struggled. I went home at 4:30 most afternoons and would sleep until the next morning. My efforts seemed to be defeating me. And besides all that, my social life was lacking. The school wanted X; the students needed Y. My life yearned for Z. I kept trying to keep me above water.

i shall wear
a pair of twin cherries as earrings
and i shall put dahlia petals on my fingernails

But I couldn't keep up the facade for long. I had to defend myself to many people yet wanted to teach with my liberal ways. Well, life doesn't work out that way - a person doesn't always get her way. Suddenly, in March, I got the letter from the superintendent asking me to meet with him and the principal. Female intuition kicked in. I was about to get canned.

In pure shock, I sat there as he told me that I, Sybil Priebe, someone who ALWAYS reached her goals, always had done everything RIGHT in her whole life, had, in fact, not added up to "district standards" as a teacher.

But I knew who I was, and I was not about to be defeated. So that same day, after writing an email to all my family and friends, I took out the Graduate School application that I had hidden in my desk. I filled out the missing parts, found some sample writings in my file cabinet, and used the postage from the school that was about to screw me over to mail it up to North Dakota State University. I would return to the campus that challenged me in the first place.

there is an alley
where the boys who were in love with me
still loiter with the same unkempt hair
thin necks and bony legs
and think of the innocent smiles of a girl
who was blown away by the wind one night.
there is an alley
which my heart stolen
from the streets of my childhood.
the journey of a form along the line of time
inseminating the line of time with the form
a form conscious of an image
coming back from a feast in a mirror.

In graduate school, I found my path, my lot. I wanted to teach college freshmen - fresh meat - fresh minds. Others thought I should go on to get my Ph.D., but I knew that wasn't what was next. I also didn't think returning to my hometown was next for me, but it worked. And it worked well.

I am lucky enough to know that teaching and writing is where I want to be. I foresee many more struggles, but I am willing to not let them get me down. I will not let people make me question who I am. I know. And only I know.

and it is in this way
that someone dies
and someone lives on.

no fisherman shall ever find a pearl in a small brook
which empties into a pool.
i know a sad little fairy
who lives in an ocean
and ever so softly plays her heart into a magic flute
a sad little fairy
who dies with one kiss each night
and is reborn with one kiss each dawn.

Sincerely,
Sybil

Genres used: Letter, Poem, Journal Entry, Quotes, and a Definition

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| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

| questions / activities.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

.....
HERE IS THE PRACTICE PROJECT =
Create a multi-genre piece or a multi-vocal piece or a multi-modal piece. OR
create something that fits experimental literature. Use the details,
content, and explanation in these chapters to understand these genres and
their "required" elements.
.....



chapter 8: weird exercises

| exercise 1: the power of words.⁹⁰

Write a list of ten words across ten columns. Then go to each column and add nine more words under each word, so that the result is ten columns and ten rows, a total of one hundred words. Just reading the list and noticing the creative leaps your mind has made may surprise you. Continue the exercise by using all one hundred words in a short fiction story. Then use that same 100 words in a poem. How are the themes in the poem and story similar?

| exercise 2: stickers.

Sticker Art Project! Create a poem on a tiny piece of paper. Make a few copies. Stick it up around town or campus in hidden places.

| exercise 3: animoto.

Play with animoto.com. Create a visual poem.

| exercise 4: DIY.

Come up with your own strange exercise, put the instructions on a piece of paper. Then exchange your “assignment” with a classmate. Complete the exercise that has just been invented.

| exercise 5: boring?!⁹¹

It is commonly known that a telephone directory might be the most boring text in the entire world. Here is your challenge: write a page of a telephone directory and figure out SOME way to make it interesting.

⁹⁰ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/the-power-of-words/>

⁹¹ <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-exercises/writer-s-block/telephone-directory/>

| exercise 6: double vowels.⁹²

Write a paragraph with twenty words with double vowels. Examples: poodle, peep, needle.

| exercise 7: back and forth.⁹³

Write a few sentences that makes sense if you read them from left to right or right to left. See how long you can make the sentences!

EXAMPLE:

Bob liked Mary and Bill.

Bill and Mary liked Bob.

| exercise 8: red grass.⁹⁴

Write a paragraph that starts with this sentence: The grass smells red.

| exercise 9: the new dictionary!

Create a brief dictionary – maybe 10 entries? – of words you’ve just invented!

| exercise 10: something else.

Take a nonliterary written document of any sort and play with its language and graphics until it is SOMETHING ELSE. Example: take a magazine ad, a bulletin board flier, a bank check, a restaurant menu, a pizza box, a beer label, a newspaper page, a highway billboard, a postcard, some bathroom graffiti, a movie poster etc. and ALTER or simply DISPLAY the piece in such a way that we see it as something creative.

| exercise 11: dragon.

Tell the story of a dragon who owns a jelly bean factory in an experimental way.

⁹² This exercise was plucked out of a book called *Unjournaling*; it’s a funky little book. You should buy it and try the exercises if you have the money and extra time.

⁹³ Another snippet from *Unjournaling*.

⁹⁴ Another snippet from *Unjournaling*.

Sometimes, only paper will listen to you.



chapter 9: final chapter

This final chapter contains brief information, with some samples/examples of the following: Children's Literature, YA (Young Adult) Literature, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Horror, Humor, Graphic Novels, and Romance. It ends with information on how to get published.

chapter 9.1: children's literature

Children's literature⁹⁵ or juvenile literature includes stories, books, magazines, and poems that are enjoyed by children. Modern children's literature is typically classified in two different ways: genre or the intended age of the reader.

Children's literature can be traced to stories and songs, part of a wider oral tradition, that adults shared with children before publishing existed. The development of early children's literature, before printing was invented, is difficult to trace. Even after printing became widespread, many classic "children's" tales were originally created for adults and later adapted for a younger audience. Since the fifteenth century much literature has been aimed specifically at children, often with a moral or religious message. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are known as the "Golden Age of Children's Literature," because many classic children's books were published then.

definition:

The *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* notes that "the boundaries of genre... are not fixed but blurred". Sometimes, no agreement can be reached about whether a given work is best categorized as literature for adults or children. Some works defy easy categorization.

classification:

Children's literature can usually be divided into categories, either according to genre or the intended age of the reader.

BY GENRE

A literary genre is a category of literary compositions. Genres may be determined by technique, tone, content, or length. According to Anderson, there are six categories of children's literature (with some significant subgenres):

- Picture books, including concept books that teach the alphabet or counting for example, pattern books, and wordless books
- Traditional literature, including folktales, which convey the legends, customs, superstitions, and beliefs of people in previous civilizations. This genre can be further broken into subgenres: myths, fables, legends, and fairy tales
- Fiction, including fantasy, realistic fiction, and historical fiction

⁹⁵ Wikipedia contributors. "Children's literature." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 3 Jun. 2019. Web. 22 Jun. 2019. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

- Non-fiction
- Biography and autobiography
- Poetry and verse

BY AGE CATEGORY

The criteria for these divisions are vague, and books near a borderline may be classified either way. Books for younger children tend to be written in simple language, use large print, and have many illustrations. Books for older children use increasingly complex language, normal print, and fewer (if any) illustrations. The categories with an age range are these:

- Picture books, appropriate for pre-readers or children ages 0–5
- Early reader books, appropriate for children ages 5–7. These are often designed to help children build their reading skills
- Chapter books, appropriate for children ages 7–12
 - Short chapter books, appropriate for children ages 7–9
 - Longer chapter books, appropriate for children ages 9–12
- Young adult fiction, appropriate for children ages 12–18

brainstorming:⁹⁶

In order to write a good book for children, you must do the following:

- Use funny words.
- Do not use inappropriate language.
- Use a readable font (large enough for everyone to read).
- Use bright colors while drawing a picture to catch the child's eye.
- Keep the reader interested in the book.
- Make sure that the theme of the story is clear and understandable so the children can relate to what is happening in the story and be interested in what happens next.
- Write about something you learned or experienced when you were in that children's age group you want to write about.
- Make the characters' characteristics interesting and clear.
- Ask children's opinions and suggestions on what you are writing. Use some children's interests.
- Make sure that the pictures depict this very well
- Depending on your race you may have different ideas than others. Try to add that into your writing. Religion may also change your writing.
- Include the different aspects of the people (genre, environment, background and such)
- Use easy pictures so children can understand.

⁹⁶ "Writing a Good Book for Children." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 5 May 2014, 18:37 UTC. 22 Jun 2019, 14:33
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Writing_a_Good_Book_for_Children&oldid=2646527>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

| example: The Land of Nod⁹⁷



From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay,
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.
All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do—
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.
Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

| questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

⁹⁷ Edited by Dickinson, Joshua. *Readings in Children's Literature*. Compiled from Copyright-Cleared Materials Available on Project Gutenberg or the Web. 03 Nov 19. Email: Jdickinson15@gmail.com

chapter 9.2: young adult (YA) literature

Young Adult Literature is a pretty new genre, and there are many ways to define it. The ALA (American Library Association) says YA Literature includes books written for people 12 to 18-years-old.

start with the setting:⁹⁸

YOUR TOWN:

To show the kind of region this your characters are living in, give the town a name that reflects its character. Place names in Massachusetts and Connecticut sound straight out of England; you can use a name like Suffolktown, Studham or Foxboro. A city in the South could have stolen a Native American name like Matchagokie, while your British Columbia town could be named Quappasett or something else that reflects the First Nations history of that province. Something French-sounding like Guyet could set your story in Quebec. Towns in Southern California often have Spanish names like Los Higos; consider using one of these if you are writing a story about your SoCal teens. If you want to give the reader the idea that your town is right in the middle of nowhere in Middle America, try a name like Janesville or Oakville.

YOUR SCHOOL:

You will most likely make some mention of the characters' school in the story, and if you bring the school in the story often enough, you will probably have to come up with a name. Many high schools just take their name from the town they are in: Fairsprings High School, Elmtown High School. In New York city there are schools named simply by P.S. and a number: P.S. 132. Your Southern California high school will often have a Spanish name with a pretty meaning: Robles Lindos. And many high schools named themselves after public figures: Eisenhower High or William Randolph Hearst High School.

The names of schools can carry a symbolic meaning. A high school could be named Sweet Groves while the students there have struggle-filled lives that are anything but sweet. The school in *The Escape* is named Lincoln High, which reflects the faculty's hypocritical proclamations about freedom.

A school's mascot can give you some idea of what the faculty of the high school aspire to. A mascot like the Trojans would show that they hope to give teens a classical education, and if the mascot is the Spartans it would hint that the school is pretty strict, and the sports teams have a "go merciless" on the enemy ethos. A feline mascot (the lions, the cougars, the jaguars) could be more playful, but would still be a sign that the principal hopes his students will "claw" rival schools. Mascots can be ironic: after

⁹⁸ "Writing Adolescent Fiction/Setting." Wikibooks, *The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Jun 2019, 20:58 UTC. 22 Jun 2019, 14:49
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Writing_Adolescent_Fiction/Setting&oldid=3551328>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

all, in real life, the mascot for conformist Columbine High School was the Rebels. Choice of mascot can also set the tone for your story: if your students are known as the Turkeys, your story becomes light-hearted and even silly.

creating your characters:⁹⁹

The character's external aspects include factors such as age, race, gender, physical strength, health, disability, clothing, and jewelry.

A character's appearance is probably the most basic technique of characterization and individualization: what a person looks like reveals a great deal about who that person is, their attitude, perhaps even their mental state, their economic and social status, and so on. We sometimes form our initial attitude about a person based on their appearance, and we either like or dislike them; we either take them seriously or we dismiss them.

Although some stories rely on external character aspects in their plot—for instance in the film *Speed*, the antagonist is caught because one of their fingers is missing—not all stories do so. This does not mean, however, that the author does not need to know what the character looks like. The author should know his character's external aspects even if none of these will make it into the story, even if the plot will not rely on them. When the author does include external aspects of character in the story, he must make sure that every aspect mentioned serves a purpose. No aspect should be brought up unless it will be paid off; the external aspects must have story consequences. External aspects of character matter: they are the significant details that reveal character nature and past, they affect the formation of character, they can create a need, have thematic significance, serve as motifs, limit and create opportunities for action, and be consistent or contrast with the character's story function.

EXTERNAL ASPECTS:

The most obvious external factors of a character that influence their formation as a person are gender, race, and physical appearance. This is because gender, race, and physical appearance influence the formative experiences a person will go through, experiences that determine who they become and affects their way of seeing the world as well as themselves.

Race is another external factor that affects the development of a person's nature because race determines what kind of experiences a person will have, how they will be treated, and it comes with expectations, like gender, of what is acceptable and what is not. An African-American or Asian or Arab child experiences different things than does a white child, even if they live in the same neighborhood. Of course, a Hispanic teen attending a

⁹⁹ "Writing Adolescent Fiction/Creating your characters." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 31 Dec 2014, 04:28 UTC. 5 Dec 2016, 18:24 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Writing_Adolescent_Fiction/Creating_your_characters&oldid=2750830>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

predominantly Hispanic high school in Southern California has different experiences than a Hispanic teen who attends Beverly Hills High School.

Besides race and gender, physical factors have a great deal of influence on the formation of a character. A fat kid lives in a different world than a slim kid, even if they live in the same neighborhood and are the same gender and race. An attractive person lives a different kind of existence than an unattractive one.

Of course, gender, race, and physical appearance are not the only external factors that can affect a character's formation. Take for instance a teenager who can't afford the right clothes and has to wear clothing from a thrift store instead.¹⁰⁰ This will have an impact on them, one way or the other. It will affect how they feel about themselves, and it will motivate them to do something to fit it; perhaps they will take a job at the expense of academics. It may force them to compensate by focusing on being a perfect student. Whatever happens as a result, their clothing will affect them in a way that will have consequences.

themes to consider for YA literature:

- Teen Pregnancy
- Body Image
- Suicide and Depression
- Academic Pressure
- Drugs
- Dealing with Loss
- Bullying
- Sexual Orientation
- Teen Angst
- Poverty and Socioeconomic Status
- Eating Disorders
- Growing Up Different

items to note about YA:

Since YA is the newest genre, there's much more buzz about it, and here's what people are saying...

- Students who read YA¹⁰¹ are more likely to appreciate literature and have stronger reading skills than others. YA also allows teachers to talk about "taboo" or difficult topics with their students. For example, a 2014 study shows that using Laurie Halse Anderson's novel *Speak* aided in discussions on consent and complicity. Those who read about tough situations like date rape are more emotionally prepared to handle the situation if it arises. It is important to use

¹⁰⁰ Unless they grew up in the 1990s when wearing secondhand stuff was super cool. Just saying.

¹⁰¹ Wikipedia contributors. "Young adult fiction." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 7 Dec. 2021. Web. 9 Dec. 2021.

diverse literature in the classroom, especially in discussing taboo topics, to avoid excluding minority students.

- Literature written for young adults can also be used as a stepping stone to canonical works that are traditionally read in classrooms, and required by many school curriculums. In *Building a Culture of Readers: YA Literature and the Canon* by Kara Lycke, Lycke suggests pairing young adult literature and canon works to prepare young adults to understand the “classic literature” they will encounter. YA can provide familiar and less alienating examples of similar concepts than those in “classic literature.”

DIVERSITY

- English language young adult fiction and children's literature in general have historically shown a lack of books with a main character who is a person of color, LGBT, or disabled. In the UK 90% of the best-selling YA titles from 2006 to 2016 featured white, able-bodied, cis-gendered, and heterosexual main characters. Between 2006–2016, eight percent of all young adult authors published in the UK were people of color.

CRITICISM

- Criticism has been put forth against YA fiction for being heavily commercialized and marketed and reinforced by capitalist institutions such as Hollywood, the media and a publishing industry lacking diversity. Others have critiqued commercial YA novels and franchises for implicitly promoting capitalism and reactionary ideologies even when the books may seem progressive. Author Ewan Morrison says: "The dystopian narratives which are currently consuming the minds of millions of teens worldwide are now communicating right-wing ideas." Andrew O'Hehir, describing commercial YA novels, wrote: "They are propaganda for the ethos of individualism, the central ideology of consumer capitalism, which also undergirds both major political parties and almost all-American public discourse."

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

| questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

chapter 9.3: sci-fi

Science fiction¹⁰² became popular when Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein* in 1818 and has become a diverse genre in books and film. It may seem challenging to write, but if you have a good story in your head you can easily work through it. Once you have inspiration and design your setting and characters, you can write a science fiction story that readers could enjoy!

What is the difference between fantasy¹⁰³ and science fiction¹⁰⁴? At first glance, it can seem like a simple question. Science fiction often takes place in a dystopian society sometime in the future and contains elements of advanced technology. A fantasy story, on the other hand, is usually set in the fantasy realm and includes mythical creatures and supernatural powers. Though the similarities between these two genres are readily apparent, there are more similarities and crossovers between the two genres than first meets the eye.

Read old and new science fiction writers to see what ideas have been done. Go to your local library or bookstore and browse the science fiction section. Read the back-cover blurbs to see what stories they've written and read through the whole book if it interests you. This way, you'll get an idea of how to write effectively in the genre.

- Try authors like Ray Bradbury, H.G. Wells, Isaac Asimov, and Andy Weir.
- Ask an English teacher or a librarian for suggestions on books or authors.
- Read writers for the format/genre that you want to write, such as screenwriters if you want to do a screenplay or short story writers for a short story.

Watch science fiction movies to get visually inspired. Find movies with premises that interest you and take a few hours to watch them. Write notes on what set pieces or ideas you like so you can reference them later when you're writing. Listen to the dialogue to get a sense of how your characters should speak.

- Watch older movies like *Jurassic Park*, *Blade Runner*, *Alien*, or *Star Wars*, as well as new movies like *The Martian*, *Ex Machina*, *Interstellar*, and *Arrival*.

¹⁰² Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

¹⁰³ This category is covered in the next chapter, so this quote helps to explain the differences.

¹⁰⁴ Written by the MasterClass staff. "Science Fiction vs. Fantasy: How Are Science Fiction and Fantasy Distinct?" <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-are-science-fiction-and-fantasy-distinct>

Look online or scientific journals for recent breakthroughs. When new discoveries are made, they're often published in many magazines or journals. Write down any discoveries or articles that are interesting so you can incorporate the ideas into your writing.

- Look for journals that cover multiple areas of science, such as *Nature* or *Science*.

Stay up to date with current world news to get real-life inspiration. If you plan on writing a science fiction story that takes place in the future, use events currently happening in the world to help shape your universe. Watch or listen to news from around the world to get your inspiration. This could help you develop a realistic future, or even something you could incorporate into a world of your own.

- For example, if news came out about the discovery of a new super virus¹⁰⁵, you could write a story about the last few survivors or how finding a cure went wrong.

Use the “What if...” thesis model to generate a story premise. Ask yourself questions like “What if this happened?” or “What if this were possible?” Brainstorm ideas based on your research or inspiration to get your ideas on paper. Mark the ideas that you think are strong and expand them into a few sentences detailing your story.

- For example, the “What if” question for *Jurassic Park* is “What if dinosaurs were brought back to life for our entertainment?”

building the setting:

Choose a time period for your story. Even though science fiction usually takes place in the future, you can create sci-fi for any time period. Perhaps you want aliens to invade a small town in the 50s or make a time travel story that goes into the past. Think about what time works best for your story and use it as your setting.

- Using the far, far future will give you the most freedom to explore ideas while setting your story in the past will restrict you.
- If you set a story in the past, make sure to research the time period to see what technology existed, what events were taking place, and how people spoke. Check for what clothing they wore and what customs they followed.

Research real locations and their histories to incorporate into your world. Even if your story takes place on a distant planet, take influence from cultures and events here on Earth. This will add more relatability to your story and make the world seem more grounded and real.

¹⁰⁵ WHOA. This was written in 2019!

- For example, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a futuristic society, but the themes of treatment of women and slavery come from real culture.
- Experiment with mixing different cultural practices when creating an alien race. For example, you may blend a nomadic culture that dresses like the Vikings.

Incorporate real science into how your world functions. Even if you want people to fly, you should explain how and why they can. Keep most of your science loosely based in reality so readers have a familiar thing to latch onto. If not, they may get lost in the universe you're creating.

- If you're introducing new technology that is completely foreign to readers, make sure to describe it in detail so they understand it.
- For example, *The Martian* uses real science to send a man to Mars and for how he's able to survive once he's stranded.

Consider all 5 senses when describing your settings.

- Make lists of what your characters would experience when they first arrive in your setting. What sights would they see? Who would be there?
- For example, if your story takes place in a world where the oceans dried up, you could describe the heat, the taste and smell of salt in the air, and the large salt deposits and valleys where the oceans once were.

Write descriptions for each of your settings so you have an understanding of them. Work on brief paragraphs describing the landscape, people, culture, and animals for each of the locations you want to include. Think about the major set pieces in the locations and how the characters interact with them. If you need to get more detailed about wildlife or special quirks about your world, expand your notes further.

- For example, if you were going to do a brief description of Pandora from the movie *Avatar*, you may write: "Pandora is a large jungle planet inhabited by a tall, blue humanoid race called the Na'vi. The Na'vi exist in a tribal society with chiefs and spiritual leaders guiding them. They worship and bond with the lush and colorful wildlife around them."

creating memorable characters:

Make your protagonist have flaws. Even though a hero sounds like they should be perfect, giving them something that holds them back will help readers empathize with them. Maybe your hero will do anything to save their life, even if it involves killing someone or maybe they're selfish and only care about themselves. Brainstorm common personal flaws and pick one for your character.

- For example, Superman's flaw is that he'll do whatever he can to save the world, but he will not kill. Putting him in a situation where he may have to harm someone makes your hero go through an interesting choice and keeps the reader on the edge of their seat.

Let your antagonist have some redeeming qualities. Just like how heroes can't be entirely good, your villain of the story can't be completely bad. An evil villain just for the sake of being evil makes your character flat and uninteresting. Give the antagonist a redeeming quality, such as doing what they need to save their child, so a reader can sympathize with them.

- For example, HAL from *2001: A Space Odyssey* sees the human crew endangering their mission and chooses to wipe them out.
- Remember that the villain is often the hero of their own story.
- If your villain is a monster, they do not need to have a redeeming quality, but it could be interesting if they do. Consider having a monster feed its children rather than hunting people for fun.

example: chapter 5 of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley¹⁰⁶

IT WAS on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the

¹⁰⁶ “Shelley, of course, started the modern genre of science fiction with her famous novel, and introduced a whole new mythology into human thought.” – This commentary comes from the *Sci-fi & Fantasy Anthology* by Whatcom Community College; it is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, continued a long time traversing my bed chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain: I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed: when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed down stairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned, and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring, by bodily exercise, to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the

streets, without any clear conception of where I was, or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear; and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:-

“Like one who, on a lonely road,
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.”

Continuing thus, I came at length opposite to the inn at which the various diligences and carriages usually stopped. Here I paused, I knew not why; but I remained some minutes with my eyes fixed on a coach that was coming towards me from the other end of the street. As it drew nearer, I observed that it was the Swiss diligence: it stopped just where I was standing, and, on the door being opened, I perceived Henry Clerval, who, on seeing me, instantly sprung out. “My dear Frankenstein,” exclaimed he, “how glad I am to see you! how fortunate that you should be here at the very moment of my alighting!”

Nothing could equal my delight on seeing Clerval; his presence brought back to my thoughts my father, Elizabeth, and all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection. I grasped his hand, and in a moment forgot my horror and misfortune; I felt suddenly, and for the first time during many months, calm and serene joy. I welcomed my friend, therefore, in the most cordial manner, and we walked towards my college. Clerval continued talking for some time about our mutual friends, and his own good fortune in being permitted to come to Ingolstadt. “You may easily believe,” said he, “how great was the difficulty to persuade my father that all necessary knowledge was not comprised in the noble art of bookkeeping; and, indeed, I believe I left him incredulous to the last, for his constant answer to my unwearied entreaties was the same as that of the Dutch school-master in the Vicar of Wakefield: — ‘I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek, I eat heartily without Greek.’ But his affection for me at length overcame his dislike of learning, and he has permitted me to undertake a voyage of discovery to the land of knowledge.”

“It gives me the greatest delight to see you; but tell me how you left my father, brothers, and Elizabeth.”

“Very well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that they hear from you so seldom. By the by, I mean to lecture you a little upon their account myself. — But, my dear Frankenstein,” continued he, stopping short, and gazing full in my face, “I did not before remark how very ill you appear; so thin and pale; you look as if you had been watching for several nights.”

“You have guessed right; I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest, as you see: but I

hope, I sincerely hope, that all these employments are now at an end, and that I am at length free."

I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive, and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster; but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself I then paused; and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty; and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me; but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy, and ran down to Clerval.

We ascended into my room, and the servant presently brought breakfast; but I was unable to contain myself. It was not joy only that possessed me; I felt my flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and my pulse beat rapidly. I was unable to remain for a single instant in the same place; I jumped over the chairs, clapped my hands, and laughed aloud. Clerval at first attributed my unusual spirits to joy on his arrival; but when he observed me more attentively he saw a wildness in my eyes for which he could not account; and my loud, unrestrained, heartless laughter frightened and astonished him.

"My dear Victor," cried he, "what, for God's sake, is the matter? Do not laugh in that manner. How ill you are! What is the cause of all this?"

"Do not ask me," cried I, putting my hands before my eyes for I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room; "he can tell. — Oh, save me! save me!" I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously, and fell down in a fit.

Poor Clerval! what must have been his feelings? A meeting, which he anticipated with such joy, so strangely turned to bitterness. But I was not the witness of his grief, for I was lifeless, and did not recover my senses for a long, long time.

This was the commencement of a nervous fever, which confined me for several months. During all that time Henry was my only nurse. I afterwards learned that, knowing my father's advanced age, and unfitness for so long a journey, and how wretched my sickness would make Elizabeth, he spared them this grief by concealing the extent of my disorder. He knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself; and, firm in the hope he felt of my recovery, he did not doubt that, instead of doing harm, he performed the kindest action that he could towards them.

But I was in reality very ill; and surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life. The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was forever before my eyes, and I raved incessantly concerning him. Doubtless my words surprised Henry: he at first believed them to be the wanderings of my disturbed imagination; but the pertinacity with which I continually recurred to the same subject, persuaded him that my disorder indeed owed its origin to some uncommon and terrible event.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared, and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring; and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence. I felt also sentiments of joy and affection revive in my bosom; my gloom disappeared, and in a short time I became as cheerful as before I was attacked by the fatal passion.

"Dearest Clerval," exclaimed I, "how kind, how very good you are to me. This whole winter, instead of being spent in study, as you promised yourself, has been consumed in my sick room. How shall I ever repay you? I feel the greatest remorse for the disappointment of which I have been the occasion; but you will forgive me."

"You will repay me entirely if you do not discompose yourself, but get well as fast as you can; and since you appear in such good spirits, I may speak to you on one subject, may I not?"

I trembled. One subject! what could it be? Could he allude to an object on whom I dared not even think?

"Compose yourself," said Clerval, who observed my change of colour, "I will not mention it, if it agitates you; but your father and cousin would be very happy if they received a letter from you in your own handwriting. They hardly know how ill you have been, and are uneasy at your long silence."

"Is that all, my dear Henry? How could you suppose that my first thoughts would not fly towards those dear, dear friends whom I love, and who are so deserving of my love."

"If this is your present temper, my friend, you will perhaps be glad to see a letter that has been lying here some days for you; it is from your cousin, I believe."

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

chapter 9.4: fantasy

Fantasy¹⁰⁷ as a genre has even older and more tangled roots than Sci-Fi, since it utilizes the oldest source material human culture created: myth, legend, folklore, ritual, and religion. Maybe that is why comprehensive scholarly fantasy anthologies are so hard to find, scholars don't know quite what to put in them.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FANTASY AND EARLIER FANTASTIC WORKS¹⁰⁸

Even the most fantastic myths, legends and fairy tales differ from modern fantasy genre in three respects:

- Modern genre fantasy postulates a different reality, either a fantasy world separated from ours, or a hidden fantasy side of our own world. In addition, the rules, geography, history, etc. of this world tend to be defined, even if they are not described outright. Traditional fantastic tales take place in our world, often in the past or in far off, unknown places. It seldom describes the place or the time with any precision, often saying simply that it happened "long ago and far away." (A modern, rationalized analog to these stories can be found in the Lost World tales of the 19th and 20th centuries.)
- The second difference is that the supernatural in fantasy is by design fictitious. In traditional tales the degree to which the author considered the supernatural to be real can span the spectrum from legends taken as reality to myths understood as describing in understandable terms more complicated reality, to late, intentionally fictitious literary works.
- Finally, the fantastic worlds of modern fantasy are created by an author or group of authors, often using traditional elements, but usually in a novel arrangement and with an individual interpretation. Traditional tales with fantasy elements used familiar myths and folklore, and any differences from tradition were considered variations on a theme; the traditional tales were never intended to be separate from the local supernatural folklore. Transitions between the traditional and modern modes of fantastic literature are evident in early Gothic novels, the ghost stories in vogue in the 19th century, and Romantic novels, all of which used extensively traditional fantastic motifs, but subjected them to authors' concepts.

By one standard, no work created before the fantasy genre was defined can be considered to belong to it, no matter how many fantastic elements it includes. By another, the genre includes the whole range of fantastic

¹⁰⁷ Sci-fi & Fantasy Anthology by Whatcom Community College is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

¹⁰⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "History of fantasy." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 17 Nov. 2021. Web. 9 Dec. 2021.

literature, both the modern genre and its traditional antecedents, as many elements which were treated as true (or at least not obviously untrue) by earlier authors are wholly fictitious and fantastic for modern readers. But even by the more limited definition a full examination of the history of the fantastic in literature is necessary to show the origins of the modern genre. Traditional works contain significant elements which modern fantasy authors have drawn upon extensively for inspiration in their own works.

example: “The Three Infernal Jokes” by Lord Dunsany¹⁰⁹

This is the story that the desolate man told to me on the lonely Highland road one autumn evening with winter coming on and the stags roaring.

The saddening twilight, the mountain already black, the dreadful melancholy of the stags’ voices, his friendless mournful face, all seemed to be of some most sorrowful play staged in that valley by an outcast god, a lonely play of which the hills were part and he the only actor.

For long we watched each other drawing out of the solitudes of those forsaken spaces. Then when we met he spoke.

“I will tell you a thing that will make you die of laughter. I will keep it to myself no longer. But first I must tell you how I came by it.” I do not give the story in his words with all his woeful interjections and the misery of his frantic self-reproaches for I would not convey unnecessarily to my readers that atmosphere of sadness that was about all he said and that seemed to go with him where-ever he moved.

It seems that he had been a member of a club, a West-end club he called it, a respectable but quite inferior affair, probably in the City: agents belonged to it, fire insurance mostly, but life insurance and motor-agents too, it was in fact a touts’ club. It seems that a few of them one evening, forgetting for a moment their encyclopedias and non-stop tyres, were talking loudly over a card-table when the game had ended about their personal virtues, and a very little man with waxed moustaches who disliked the taste of wine was boasting heartily of his temperance. It was then that he who told this mournful story, drawn on by the boasts of others, leaned forward a little over the green baize into the light of the two guttering candles and revealed, no doubt a little shyly, his own extraordinary virtue. One woman was to him as ugly as another.

And the silenced boasters rose and went home to bed leaving him all alone, as he supposed, with his unequalled virtue. And yet he was not alone, for when the rest had gone there arose a member out of a deep arm-chair at the dark end of the room and walked across to him, a man whose occupation he did not know and only now suspects.

“You have,” said the stranger, “a surpassing virtue.”

¹⁰⁹ This comes from the Sci-fi & Fantasy Anthology by Whatcom Community College; it is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

"I have no possible use for it," my poor friend replied.

"Then doubtless you would sell it cheap," said the stranger.

Something in the man's manner or appearance made the desolate teller of this mournful tale feel his own inferiority, which probably made him feel acutely shy, so that his mind abased itself as an Oriental does his body in the presence of a superior, or perhaps he was sleepy, or merely a little drunk. Whatever it was he only mumbled, "O yes," instead of contradicting so mad a remark. And the stranger led the way to the room where the telephone was.

"I think you will find my firm will give a good price for it," he said: and without more ado he began with a pair of pincers to cut the wire of the telephone and the receiver. The old waiter who looked after the club they had left shuffling round the other room putting things away for the night.

"Whatever are you doing of?" said my friend.

"This way," said the stranger. Along a passage they went and away to the back of the club and there the stranger leaned out of a window and fastened the severed wires to the lightning conductor. My friend has no doubt of that, a broad ribbon of copper, half an inch wide, perhaps wider, running down from the roof to the earth.

"Hell," said the stranger with his mouth to the telephone; then silence for a while with his ear to the receiver, leaning out of the window. And then my friend heard his poor virtue being several times repeated, and then words like Yes and No.

"They offer you three jokes," said the stranger, "which shall make all who hear them simply die of laughter."

I think my friend was reluctant then to have anything more to do with it, he wanted to go home; he said he didn't want jokes.

"They think very highly of your virtue," I said the stranger. And at that, odd as it seems, my friend wavered, for logically if they thought highly of the goods they should have paid a higher price.

"O all right," he said. The extraordinary document that the agent drew from his pocket ran something like this:

"I in consideration of three new jokes received from Mr. Montagu-Montague, hereinafter to be called the agent, and warranted to be as by him stated and described, do assign to him, yield, abrogate and give up all recognitions, emoluments, perquisites or rewards due to me Here or Elsewhere on account of the following virtue, to wit and that is to say that all women are to me equally ugly." The last eight words being filled in in ink by Mr. Montagu-Montague.

My poor friend duly signed it. "These are the jokes," said the agent. They were boldly written on three slips of paper. "They don't seem very funny," said the other when he had read them. "You are immune," said Mr. Montagu-Montague, "but anyone else who hears them will simply die of laughter: that we guarantee."

An American firm had bought at the price of waste paper a hundred thousand copies of The Dictionary of Electricity written when electricity was new,—and it had turned out that even at the time its author had not rightly grasped his subject,—the firm had paid £10,000 to a respectable English paper (no other in fact than the Briton) for the use of its name, and to obtain orders for The Briton Dictionary of Electricity was the occupation of my unfortunate friend. He seems to have had a way with him. Apparently he knew by a glance at a man, or a look round at his garden, whether to recommend the book as “an absolutely up-to-date achievement, the finest thing of its kind in the world of modern science” or as “at once quaint and imperfect, a thing to buy and to keep as a tribute to those dear old times that are gone.” So he went on with this quaint though usual business, putting aside the memory of that night as an occasion on which he had “somewhat exceeded” as they say in circles where a spade is called neither a spade nor an agricultural implement but is never mentioned at all, being altogether too vulgar. And then one night he put on his suit of dress clothes and found the three jokes in the pocket. That was perhaps a shock. He seems to have thought it over carefully then, and the end of it was he gave a dinner at the club to twenty of the members. The dinner would do no harm he thought—might even help the business, and if the joke came off he would be a witty fellow, and two jokes still up his sleeve.

Whom he invited or how the dinner went I do not know for he began to speak rapidly and came straight to the point, as a stick that nears a cataract suddenly goes faster and faster. The dinner was duly served, the port went round, the twenty men were smoking, two waiters loitered, when he after carefully reading the best of the jokes told it down the table. They laughed. One man accidentally inhaled his cigar smoke and spluttered, the two waiters overheard and tittered behind their hands, one man, a bit of a raconteur himself, quite clearly wished not to laugh, but his veins swelled dangerously in trying to keep it back, and in the end he laughed too. The joke had succeeded; my friend smiled at the thought; he wished to say little deprecating things to the man on his right; but the laughter did not stop and the waiters would not be silent. He waited, and waited wondering; the laughter went roaring on, distinctly louder now, and the waiters as loud as any. It had gone on for three or four minutes when this frightful thought leaped up all at once in his mind: *it was forced laughter!* However could anything have induced him to tell so foolish a joke? He saw its absurdity as in revelation; and the more he thought of it as these people laughed at him, even the waiters too, the more he felt that he could never lift up his head with his brother touts again. And still the laughter went roaring and choking on. He was very angry. There was not much use in having a friend, he thought, if one silly joke could not be overlooked; he had fed them too. And then he felt that he had no friends at all, and his anger faded away, and a great unhappiness came down on him, and he got quietly up and slunk from the room and slipped away from the club. Poor man, he scarcely had the heart

next morning even to glance at the papers, but you did not need to glance at them, big type was bandied about that day as though it were common type, the words of the headlines stared at you; and the headlines said:—Twenty-Two Dead Men at a Club.

Yes, he saw it then: the laughter had not stopped, some had probably burst blood vessels, some must have choked, some succumbed to nausea, heart-failure must have mercifully taken some, and they were his friends after all, and none had escaped, not I even the waiters. It was that infernal joke.

He thought out swiftly, and remembers clear as a nightmare, the drive to Victoria Station, the boat-train to Dover and going disguised to the boat: and on the boat pleasantly smiling, almost obsequious, two constables that wished to speak for a moment with Mr. Watkyn-Jones. That was his name.

In a third-class carriage with handcuffs on his wrists, with forced conversation when any, he returned between his captors to Victoria to be tried for murder at the High Court of Bow.

At the trial he was defended by a young barrister of considerable ability who had gone into the Cabinet in order to enhance his forensic reputation. And he was ably defended. It is no exaggeration to say that the speech for the defence showed it to be usual, even natural and right, to give a dinner to twenty men and to slip away without ever saying a word, leaving all, with the waiters, dead. That was the impression left in the minds of the jury. And Mr. Watkyn-Jones felt himself practically free, with all the advantages of his awful experience, and his two jokes intact. But lawyers are still experimenting with the new act which allows a prisoner to give evidence. They do not like to make no use of it for fear they may be thought not to know of the act, and a lawyer who is not in touch with the very latest laws is soon regarded as not being up to date and he may drop as much as £50,000 a year in fees. And therefore though it always hangs their clients they hardly like to neglect it.

Mr. Watkyn-Jones was put in the witness box. There he told the simple truth, and a very poor affair it seemed after the impassioned and beautiful things that were uttered by the counsel for the defence. Men and women had wept when they heard that. They did not weep when they heard Watkyn-Jones. Some tittered. It no longer seemed a right and natural thing to leave one's guests all dead and to fly the country. Where was Justice, they asked, if anyone could do that? And when his story was told the judge rather happily asked if he could make him die of laughter too. And what was the joke? For in so grave a place as a Court of Justice no fatal effects need be feared. And hesitatingly the prisoner pulled from his pocket the three slips of paper: and perceived for the first time that the one on which the first and best joke had been written had become quite blank. Yet he could remember it, and only too clearly. And he told it from memory to the Court.

"An Irishman once on being asked by his master to buy a morning paper said in his usual witty way, 'Arrah and begorrah and I will be after wishing you the top of the morning.'"

No joke sounds quite so good the second time it is told, it seems to lose something of its essence, but Watkyn-Jones was not prepared for the awful stillness with which this one was received; nobody smiled; and it had killed twenty-two men. The joke was bad, devilish bad; counsel for the defence was frowning, and an usher was looking in a little bag for something the judge wanted. And at this moment, as though from far away, without his wishing it, there entered the prisoner's head, and shone there and would not go, this old bad proverb: "As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb." The jury seemed to be just about to retire. "I have another joke," said Watkyn-Jones, and then and there he read from the second slip of paper. He watched the paper curiously to see if it would go blank, occupying his mind with so slight a thing as men in dire distress very often do, and the words were almost immediately expunged, swept swiftly as if by a hand, and he saw the paper before him as blank as the first. And they were laughing this time, judge, jury, counsel for the prosecution, audience and all, and the grim men that watched him upon either side. There was no mistake about this joke.

He did not stay to see the end, and walked out with his eyes fixed on the ground, unable to bear a glance to the right or left. And since then he has wandered, avoiding ports and roaming lonely places. Two years have known him on the Highland roads, often hungry, always friendless, always changing his district, wandering lonely on with his deadly joke.

Sometimes for a moment he will enter inns, driven by cold and hunger, and hear men in the evening telling jokes and even challenging him; but he sits desolate and silent, lest his only weapon should escape from him and his last joke spread mourning in a hundred cots. His beard has grown and turned grey and is mixed with moss and weeds, so that no one, I think, not even the police, would recognise him now for that dapper tout that sold The Briton Dictionary of Electricity in such a different land.

He paused, his story told, and then his lip quivered as though he would say more, and I believe he intended then and there to yield up his deadly joke on that Highland road and to go forth then with his three blank slips of paper, perhaps to a felon's cell, with one more murder added to his crimes, but harmless at last to man. I therefore hurried on, and only heard him mumbling sadly behind me, standing bowed and broken, all alone in the twilight, perhaps telling over and over even then the last infernal joke.

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>



chapter 9.4: horror¹¹⁰

Horror stories can be as fun to write as they are to read. A good horror story can gross you out, terrify you, or haunt your dreams. Horror stories depend on the reader believing in the story enough to be scared, disturbed, or disgusted. However, they can be tricky to write well. Like any fiction genre, horror can be mastered with the right planning, patience, and practice.

Be aware of the subjective nature of the horror story. Like comedy, horror can be a difficult genre to write because what makes one person freak

¹¹⁰ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write a Horror Story." *Wikihow*. 01 June 2019. Web. 22 June 2019. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Horror-Story>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

out or scream can leave another person bored or emotionless. But like crafting a good joke, crafting a good horror story has been done many times by the masters of the genre. Though your story may not appeal to all readers, or elicit cries of terror, there will likely be at least one reader who will respond in horror to your story.

Read several different types of horror stories. Familiarize yourself with the genre by reading effective examples of horror, from classic ghost stories to contemporary horror writing. As famed horror writer Stephen King once said, to be a real writer, you have to “read and write a lot.” Think about ghost stories or urban legends told around a campfire when you were a kid as well as any horror tales you read in school or on your own. You may want to look at specific examples like:

- “The Monkey’s Paw”, an 18th century tale by William Wymark Jacobs about three terrible wishes granted by a mystical monkey’s paw.
- “The Tell-Tale Heart”, master horror writer Edgar Allan Poe’s psychologically disturbing short story of murder and haunting.
- Neil Gaiman’s take on the nursery rhyme of Humpty Dumpty in “The Case of Four and Twenty Blackbirds.”
- You’d be remiss not to read a horror story by arguably the master of the genre, Stephen King. He has written over 200 short stories and uses many different techniques to scare his readers. While there are many lists of his greatest horror stories, read “The Moving Finger” or “The Children of the Corn” to get a sense of King’s style.
- Contemporary writer Joyce Carol Oates also has a famous horror story called “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” that uses psychological terror to great effect.
- Modern non-standard horror, like Stephen Milhauser’s “The White Glove,” uses the horror genre to tell a coming-of-age story.

Analyze the horror story examples. Choose one or two examples you enjoy reading or find interesting in terms of how they use a certain setting, plot, character or twist in the story to create horror or terror. For example:

- In King’s “The Moving Finger”, King takes a premise: a man who thinks he sees and hears a moving human finger scratching a wall in his bathroom and then follows the man closely over the span of a short period of time as he tries to avoid the finger, until he is forced to confront his fear of the finger. King also uses other elements like a Jeopardy game and a conversation between the main character and his wife to further create a feeling of suspense and dread.
- In Oates’ “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”, Oates establishes the main character, a young girl named Connie, by providing scenes of her daily life and then zooms in on one fateful day, when two men pull up in a car while Connie is at home all alone.

Oates uses dialogue to create a sense of dread and allows the reader to experience Connie's growing sense of fear of the threat of these men.

- In both stories, horror or terror is created through a combination of shock and dread, using elements that are possibly supernatural (a moving human finger) and elements that are psychologically disturbing (a young girl alone with two men).

generating story ideas:

Think about what scares you or revolts you the most. Tap into your fears of losing family members, of being alone, of violence, of clowns, of demons, or even of killer squirrels. Your fear will then come across on the page and your experience or exploration of this fear will also grip the reader.

- Make a list of your greatest fears. Then, think about how you would react if you were trapped or forced to confront these fears.
- You could also take a poll of what scares your family, friends, or partners the most. Get some subjective ideas of horror.

Take an ordinary situation and create something horrifying. Another approach is to look at a normal, everyday situation like taking a walk in the park, cutting up a piece of fruit, or visiting a friend and adding a terrifying or bizarre element. Such as coming across a severed ear during your walk, cutting up a piece of fruit that turns into a finger or a tentacle, or visiting an old friend who has no idea who you are or claims you are someone you are not. Use your imagination to create a horrifying spin on a normal, everyday activity or scene.

Create extreme emotions in your reader. Because horror hinges on the subjective reaction of the reader, the story should work to create several extreme feelings in the reader, including:

- Shock: the simplest way to scare the reader is to create shock with a twist ending, a sudden image of gore or a quick moment of terror. However, creating fear through shock can lead to cheap scares and if used too much, can become predictable or less likely to scare the reader.
- Paranoia: the sense that something is not quite right, which can unnerve the reader, make them doubt their own surroundings, and when used to its full effect, make the reader doubt even their own beliefs or ideas of the world. This type of fear is great for slow tension-building and psychological horror stories.
- Dread: this type of fear is the horrible sense that something bad is going to happen. Dread works well when the reader connects deeply to the story and begins to care enough about the characters to fear

something bad that is going to happen to them. Inspiring dread in a reader is tricky as the story will need to do a lot of work to keep the reader engaged and involved, but it is a powerful type of fear.

*Balance intense negative emotions
with intense emotions of wonder or positivity.*

developing the characters:

Make your reader care about or identify with your main character. Do this by introducing clear details and descriptions of the character's routine, relationships, and point of view. Make your characters believable so others will empathize with them.

- Determine the age and occupation of your character.
- Determine the marital status or relationship status of your character.
- Determine how they view the world (cynical, skeptical, anxious, happy-go-lucky, satisfied, settled).
- Add in specific or unique details. Make your character feel distinct with a certain character trait or tick (a hairstyle, a scar) or a mark of their appearance (an item of clothing, a piece of jewelry, a pipe or cane). A character's speech or dialect can also distinguish a character on the page and make them stand out more to the reader.
- Once your readers identify with a character, the character becomes a bit like their child. They will empathize with the character's conflict and root for them to overcome their conflict, while also realizing that this rarely happens.
- This tension between what the reader wants for the character and what could happen or go wrong for the character will fuel the story and propel your readers through the story.

Be prepared for bad things to happen to your character. Most horror is about fear and tragedy and whether or not your character is capable of overcoming their fears. A story where good things happen to good people may be heart-warming, but it will likely not scare or terrify your reader. In fact, the tragedy of bad things happening to good people is not only more relatable, it will also be full of tension and suspense.

- In order to create conflict in a character's life, you need to introduce a danger or threat to the character, whether it's a moving finger, two men in a car, a mystical monkey's paw or a murderous clown.
- For example, in King's "The Moving Finger", the main character, Howard, is a middle-aged man who enjoys watching Jeopardy, has a comfortable relationship with his wife, and seems to live a decent middle-class life. But King does not let the reader get too comfortable in Howard's normal existence as he introduces a scratching

sound in Howard's bathroom. The discovery of the finger in the bathroom, and Howard's subsequent attempts to avoid it, remove it, or destroy it, creates a story where a seemingly normal, likeable man's life is interrupted by the unknown or the unreal.

Allow your characters to make mistakes or bad decisions. Once you have established the threat or danger to the character, you will then need to have your character respond with the wrong move, while convincing themselves they are in fact making the right move or decision against this threat.

- It's important to create enough motivation for the character so their bad decision feels justifiable and not merely stupid or unbelievable. An attractive young babysitter who responds to a masked killer by running not to the telephone to call the police but outside into the deep, dark woods is not only a stupid character move, it also feels unbelievable to the reader or viewer.
- But if you have your character make a justifiable, though flawed, decision in response to a threat, your reader will be more willing to believe and root for that character.
- For example, in King's "The Moving Finger", Howard initially decides not to tell his wife about the finger in the bathroom because he believes he may be hallucinating or confusing the scratching noise for a mouse or animal caught in the bathroom. The story justifies Howard's decision not to tell anyone about the finger by playing off what most people who tell themselves if they witnessed a strange or bizarre event: it wasn't real, or I'm just seeing things.
- The story then justifies Howard's reaction by allowing his wife to go into the bathroom and not comment about seeing a moving finger by the toilet. So, the story plays with Howard's perception of reality and indicates that maybe he did hallucinate the finger.

creating a horrific climax or twist ending:

Manipulate the reader but do not confuse them. Readers can either be confused or scared, but not both. Deceiving or manipulating your readers through foreshadowing, shifting character traits, or a revelation of a plot point can all work to build suspense and create anxiety or fear in the reader.

- Hint at the horrific climax of the story by providing small clues or details, such as the label on a bottle that will later come in handy for the main character, a sound or voice in a room that will later become an indication of an unnatural presence, or even a loaded gun in a pillow that may later go off or be used by the main character.
- Build tension by alternating from tense or bizarre moments to quiet moments where your character can take a breath in a scene, calm down, and feel safe again. Then, amp up the tension by re-engaging the

character in the conflict and then making the conflict feel even more serious or threatening.

- In “The Moving Finger”, King does this by having Howard freak out about the finger, then have a relatively normal conversation with his wife while listening to Jeopardy and thinking about the finger, and then attempt to avoid the finger by going for a walk. Howard begins to feel safe or assured that the finger is not real, but of course, once he opens the bathroom door, the finger seems to have grown longer and is moving much faster than it was before.
- King slowly builds tension for both the character and the reader by introducing the threat and then having it overshadow the rest of the story. As readers, we know the finger is a sign of something bad or possibly evil and are now in a position to watch Howard try to avoid, and then eventually confront this evil.

Avoid clichés. Like any genre, horror has its own set of tropes and clichés that writers should avoid if they want to create a unique, engaging horror story. From familiar images like a deranged clown in the attic to a babysitter alone in a house at night, to familiar phrases like “Run!” or “Don’t look behind you!” – clichés are tricky to avoid in this genre.

- Focus on creating a story that feels personally terrifying to you. Or, add a twist to a familiar horror trope, like a vampire who enjoys cake instead of blood, or a man trapped in a dumpster rather than a coffin.
- Remember that too much gore or violence can actually have a desensitizing effect on the reader, especially if the same pools of blood keep happening over and over again in the story. Of course, some gore is good and likely necessary in a horror story. But make sure you use gore in a spot in the story that is impactful or meaningful, so it can punch your reader in the gut, rather than numb them or bore them.
- Another way you can avoid clichés is to focus more on creating a disturbed or unsettled state of mind for your character, rather than images of gore or pools of blood. Pictorial memories often don’t stick in a reader’s mind, but the effect of these images on a character will likely create a lingering creepiness for the reader. So, aim not for your reader’s imagination but for a disturbance in your character’s state of mind.

| example: “The Shivering Skin” by Anonymous¹¹¹

Excerpt of Journal, Unknown Author, Written in 1874

¹¹¹ Discovered on the *Anonymous Authors Fandom* web site: https://anonymous-authors.fandom.com/wiki/The_Shivering_Skin
Their community content is available under CC-BY-SA unless otherwise noted.

The following is an account on which the circumstances may be found to be unbelievable. I express my deepest condolences with Peter Kregg's family members or friends or anyone who knew him who has happened to come across this document. Peter Kregg was my associate. We had attended the same school of medicine in New Hampshire. At first, he came off as an odd fellow, those of you who know him know that he liked to keep to himself unless you were somehow beneficial to his studies. Over the years I grew to appreciate his work from afar. I noticed his diligence and endless perseverance to keep up his work regardless of the obstacles or unfortunate circumstances that somehow were constantly thrown into his path. Eventually, this admiration could no longer suffice my curiosity and I approached him after one of our early morning lectures. It seemed that he chose to ignore me, but I persisted that he respond and allow me to participate as an assistant in his studies and various experiments. After what seemed to be weeks - or months - of pestering, Kregg gave in to my desires.

Starting as an assistant with Kregg held many similarities to enrolling in a new school of medicine. Gone were the methods of practice on examining cadavers and studying the anatomy of the human body. Phosphorous liquids that glowed an unnatural red and strange jars of blue dust filled my days of study. I never once asked Kregg what medicines or resources he used throughout our experiments out of the fear that he may forbid me to participate in any further activity.

For those of you whose minds are beginning to wander away from my vague ramblings, let me interlude to briefly explain what it was that Kregg and I were studying:

- The integumentary system of the human body was our prime subject. The purpose was to take skin, which is the largest and one of the most important organs in the human body and attempt to reanimate the dead tissue. We did not want to start with cadavers or dead subjects yet, just dead skin. If we were able to reinvigorate the skin cells and bring life back, we would be one step closer to finding a solution to death.
- The effect of temperature on the skin was another essential experiment. One of its functions is to regulate body temperature by sweating when hot and shivering when cold. We concluded that if we were going to try and experiment on the skin in the humid chambers of the Library's West Tower, the skin could produce sweat and get out of our grip. It is difficult to explain when I state that the skin could get out of our grip.

Kregg believed and I should have agreed with him, that the skin could become sentient. He hadn't the faintest idea of the effects of his formula on human skin, so he took every precaution. Due to the skin's tendency to produce sweat to cool down in hot temperatures, we decided it would be safer to experiment in the archives located in the library basement.

We took to action at once. Kregg sent me on a supply run throughout the school. I became drowsy due to sleep loss from the constant raiding of university classrooms night after night. Eventually, I hoarded enough supplies to carry out the experiment. I met Kregg in the bowels of the library at two in the morning. All of the lights had been blown out, so I had to carry my own lantern. As I stepped deeper and deeper into the blackness, I felt an urge of excitement. The excitement could not be exactly attributed to one emotion or the other. I felt inspired; I felt nervous; I felt frightened.

The worst of it came when I had reached the door to the archives. I held the lantern at my side, illuminating everything within a ten meter radius. I could not bring myself to move. Whatever lay in store for me and my future was beyond that door. This was the night I would either be deemed a part of scientific advancement or of catastrophic insanity. Right then, the door swung open to reveal a disgruntled Kregg standing in the dark. Light flickered off his eyes and in the most ironic way, created a sinister appearance. My paralysis broke and I followed Kregg through the archives until we reached the small table in which he had set up the equipment. A small wooden table, roughly six feet long and two feet wide lay next to his collection of liquids and powders. On the table, lay a cadaver. I noticed a miniscule patch of skin had been removed, just above the elbow.

The skin in which Kregg had cut out of the body sat on a stool. Nails were driven into each corner of the square to keep it on the wooden surface. A small candle sat nearby and I placed my lantern next to it. The combined light from both sources created just enough luminance for Kregg to work, but not for me. Kregg told me to stand by and watch. He handed me the journal in which I am writing this document and to record my observations.

I watched as Kregg took a razor and very carefully removed the hair from the skin. Any remaining hair was plucked out with a pair of tweezers. The purpose of this action was to remove any particles which clung to the hair resting on the flesh's surface. This hair caught these particles and protected the skin, but once there was no hair, the skin was vulnerable.

Kregg set down the tweezers and picked up a small syringe. He stuck it into one of his many vials of colored liquid and filled it to roughly halfway. The receptors on my skin alerted my body of the temperature and I shivered; it was cold in the archives and my hair stood up on end. It did not stand on end from the temperature however, but the sight before me. Kregg slowly stuck the syringe in the skin and just gave a small dosage of his formula.

Nothing occurred. Sweat dropped from Kregg's brow despite how cold it was. A single drop landed on the patch of skin. Suddenly, it began to convulse. The outside of the skin bubbled and the sweat glands released what little sweat was left in the skin. The sebaceous glands that produce oil released what little oil was left. It all came out at once and made a thin, liquid membrane on top of the skin. Then it stopped.

Kregg began to furiously whisper in great frustration. I asked him what had happened, if the skin had been alive. Kregg explained that the skin had been alive, yet it believed that a harmful chemical or bacteria was trying to enter the body. It was of a kind the skin had not dealt with before, so it released everything it had to fight it off. Kregg began to shuffle. The main issue in the first trial was that there was not enough skin for cell life to last long enough.

Without hesitation, Kregg filled up the syringe completely. He spun around and bent over the cadaver. I could not see what he was doing until he moved around to the other side of the cadaver. He was injecting the formula in various points throughout the corpse! I meant to speak up, but my cowardice and natural hesitation got the best of me. I could only look on in horror. No precautions had been made, not a single restraint lay on the corpse. We did not know how a large section of skin would react from such a large dosage.

The body began to convulse. Kregg stepped back. I peered closer. It was not the body that convulsed with such violence, but the skin. A horrifying ripping sound began to slowly fill the room. The skin was tearing itself from the cadaver. Kregg could not move. I only saw the back of his head and his frozen body. A loud humming filled the room. It buzzed and rang in my ears. I felt my bones shake. The more it continued, the lower it got. I realized it was not a humming, but the skin moaning. The skin continued to moan until it completely tore itself from the body. It flopped up and fell to the floor, continuing to flail helplessly. Kregg slowly bent down and reached out to pick it back up. The skin latched onto his arm.

Kregg screamed. I could not move. The skin slowly crawled up his body and began to take his form. His screaming became more and more frenzied. I could not stand the sight or sounds before me. I quickly picked up my lantern that lay next to the work table and threw it at Kregg. He stepped towards me, limbs flailing, engulfed in flames. The screaming became a high pitched howl. The thing that was Kregg stepped back and knocked over a crate of old documents. The crate went up in flames and so did the shelf that held it. The banshee-like wail refused to cease and something gave in. My instinct of excitement and survival told me to run. I had no light by which to guide me, but I ran.

I felt myself exit the archives as the warm air from the corridor blew into my face. I fumbled through the dark, hearing cries of hate and pain not too far behind me. I arrived at the stairs to the main level of the library. Quickly, I ascended. I could not waste a single second. Once I reached the top of the stairs, I realized I could not let this creature, this abomination reach the outside world. Despite how I had set it afire, it still came. The cries grew closer as I saw the flickering flames bounce off the stairwell walls. It ascended the corner. I grabbed the nearest large object I could find. It was a chair. I lifted the chair above my head and aimed for the monstrosity. For a brief moment, I made eye contact with the

creature. I hoped to see a troubled Gregg, begging for mercy, but all I saw was disgust and a fierce hatred. I threw the chair at the beast and it fell backwards down the stairs.

The flames from the archives caused a section of the library not too far from me to collapse. The building's destruction was now inevitable. I ran out the doors and into the university courtyard. The flaming building lay behind me; my scientific ambition lay behind me. I swore to write this down, despite how illogical and fearsome it may seem. I swore to document what happened. I planned to take off running into the night. I set a new goal to run, to run from science and the horrors of whatever that flesh became.

The more I live on the road though, the hungrier I get. I stare at my frail, dirty hands and think back to the mess they took part in. I think to how the skin rebelled and fought for its life. It became a new creature of unspeakable terror. I think to how my hands have skin on them as well. My entire body is covered in skin. My entire body is covered in horror.

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

| questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

chapter 9.5: humor

Humor¹¹² demands close attention to language at all levels. Making comedy requires a writer to consider diction, of course, but also to be deliberate about intricacies such as sound and rhythm—after all, it's often just a matter of a few syllables that enables one to be silly. Humor also is an effective means by which to teach the second-most-difficult thing to teach young writers: style. (The most difficult thing is how to spell *ukulele*.) Style often is the first element of writing to go when it comes to teaching young writers—in favor of elements such as developing a thesis, supporting that thesis with evidence, and putting a staple in the upper-left hand corner. But in comedic writing, style is an absolute requirement.

In comedy, it's not word choice, but the hunt for the choicest word. And sentences must be tightly woven to serve as the fuse that carries the spark right to an ending that blows readers away. And maybe even enlightens them.

¹¹² Snippet from = Theune, Michael. "Excellent Academic Writing Must Be Serious." *Bad Ideas About Writing*. Edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Libraries, Digital Publishing Institute, 2017. CC-BY.

On a much larger scale, humor requires vivid descriptions, dazzling metaphors, splendiferous speech acts, and the skillful interrelation of such elements. Writing comedy entails seeing and creating in content and language those productive occasions and opportunities, requiring the writer's willingness to capitalize on them, to see everything as potential set up, and then to land the punch.

In terms of process, it's industry standard for comedy writing to be collaborative. (My friends had to leave before we finished the last paragraph.) About writing in general, many are convinced of the myth of the lone genius, those gassy know-it-alls, picking off ideas in isolation. But that notion of the writer is so bad there's an essay on it in this collection! With humor, students will need each other in order to generate and to test out material. And there's a model for it: the comedy writers' room. And this model has even made it into pop culture—the writers' room is visited again and again in the television shows *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip* and *30 Rock*. Sure, the writers' room in *30 Rock* smells, and the writers play pranks on each other, but they get their work done, and seem to have fun doing it. And they eat a lot of pizza. The collaboration humor calls for is not just collaboration with other people—it's also collaboration with other texts, other sources. It takes a great deal of knowledge to make a joke work. True, a lot of it can be done with oodles of Googling, but who knows? That could be a gateway drug, something to fight the lack of information fluency.

Humor not only can help teach the elements of writing and thinking while emphasizing collaboration, but it also powerfully makes the case for writing. For so many students an explicit argument needs to be made for writing because they are always asking themselves this: Why write when I can speak it into my phone and the phone will dutifully transcribe my thoughts? (And the NSA will keep a back-up file!) Humor makes the writing process matter. In this process, invention is true invention: You're creating something never thought of before. (Unless your essay is about airplane peanuts. In which case, change your topic because you're writing a *Seinfeld* rerun.) Comedy helps authors barnstorm brainstorming. It makes the drafting and revising process more multifaceted, open, searching, continuous—it moves from drafting and reviling to drifting and revving, to riffing and devising, through drafting and revising to after drafting and revising (it's not unusual for performance to be a part of the creation of comedy, which must have voice... even if it's Gilbert Gottfried's). Authors who try to create comedy at the spur of the moment most often find out it simply can't be done—it's just too demanding. It's like... like...like...see? It's really hard!

Of course, just as in any writing class, in a writing class that focuses on comedic technique and process, some communal rules very likely should be established. Is there anything that can't be included in a

humorous piece? How do we work together to make the classroom respectful but also lively and productive? Is it really okay to admit that Carrot Top is occasionally funny? It certainly is the case that, as founding members of the International Society for Humor Studies, Alleen Pace Nilsen and Don L. F. Nilsen, note, “humor is a good tool for teaching about censorship”; however, it also must be recognized that humor simply tends toward the irreverent, and that this is, frankly, ideal. Thus, empowered, young writers—who can feed off of transgression, off of calling power into question—are more likely to tip over and crack up some sacred cows. How much better than to have students be scared cowards! Studying comedic techniques, students also become better, more perspicacious (look it up!) readers—they know how humor works, and so might be less apt to fall for it when some pernicious politician or idiot ideologue trumpets venom cut with a little laughter. Armed to the teeth, they’re also better able to bite back.

There are three theories of humor: incongruity (putting together what doesn’t fit leads to fits of laughter), superiority (seeing others slip on bananas is appealing), and relief (comedy as the jocular discharge of subconscious energies). So, clearly, though initially it may seem incongruous to teach humor while teaching academic writing, such writing—edgy, engaged, careful and powerful—will be superior to so much of what’s come before it. And what a relief that will be!

| student example: “Snow White, Take II.”¹¹³

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a princess. She was hot¹¹⁴. Apparently everybody in the kingdom thought so, too, because they fawned over her in an extreme display of celebrity-fever. They oohed and ahed over her porcelain skin, even going so far as to nickname her “Snow White.” Because that’s cool. Under their breath, the townspeople declared quietly and between themselves that Snow White was the “fairest of the fair.” She was sweet, and pretty, and everyone loved her, and life couldn’t have been more wonderful. There was only one teensy weensy glitch.

Her step-mother, the queen. This chick was insanely jealous of Snow White. Like, would-attempt-murder jealous¹¹⁵. Only, she was queen, so dirtying her own hands over that little matter was well and truly beneath her. However, hiring a hit-man wasn’t. So she did that. Queeny¹¹⁶ did not consult her magic mirror over this dilemma, as she knew her mirror would advise against it. She consulted her mirror every morning with the same intense reverence some grandfathers reserve for their daily newspaper. Every single morning without fail she’d ask the mirror, “Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?” And her mirror would have liked to

¹¹³ “Snow White, Take II” by Megan Guenther is licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

¹¹⁴ Love the bluntness.

¹¹⁵ What great little sidebars!

¹¹⁶ Great nickname!

have said, “Well I can tell ya who’s *off* the wall, toots, and you bet your britches it ain’t me.” But instead he’d sigh and tell her she was the best, by poll of about three or so more than the princess (though he decided not to tell her the last part). He was glad the queen never asked who the sweetest person was because that would have sharply ended his career as royal advisor.

Day after day the queen would ask the same question, and day after day it was taking longer and longer for the poor mirror to find creative ways of disclosing the ever-narrowing gap between her and her step-daughter. One day the gap closed for good as the last loyal and blind peasant kicked the bucket and the queen was no longer getting pity points. The mirror was finally able to report with thinly-veiled glee that the princess was now the most beautiful girl in all the kingdom, by consensus of literally everyone with working eyeballs¹¹⁷. The queen became super upset by this revelation and decided that the only way to regain her status as an attractive older woman was to have the kid bumped off. So she ordered a huntsman to take the girl into the forest, rip out her heart, and then bring it back in a little jewelry box for the queen to keep. Which is exactly what a normal person would request. Except the hit-man somehow had more of a conscience than this fruitcake, since he brought Snow White into the forest and proceeded to explain that her step-mom was planning to have her murdered and that Snow White should probably just hit the road and not plan to come back.

Understandably, this sort of news hits a little hard, so Snow White started to run through the woods, terrified and alone, trying to figure out what was to become of her. Now, in all honesty, death was most likely what was going to become of her until some woodland creatures decided to step in and save the day. As woodland creatures do. They led her to this tiny little cabin in the middle of the woods which was empty and by all appearances abandoned, so Snow White checked the front door, found it unlocked, and decided to just go ahead and make herself at home. Because breaking and entering is okay when a little birdy tells you to¹¹⁸.

So there they were, all singing and doing the dishes, birds and a doe sweeping out the place, raccoons and turtles hanging out the wash, and it’s just a party all up in there. And after it was all over the princess was a little exhausted, (hallucinating will do that) and decided to go take a nap. She conked out across seven little beds upstairs, which was strange, since the fact that nobody was home during the day surely meant it was free real estate. It’s at this point in our story that seven little dwarves show up. Because even fairytales need to be inclusive¹¹⁹.

These seven old and short dudes with names matching the most commonly-felt emotions came home to find their house much, much cleaner than they left it and with a surprising variety of small animals inside, which

¹¹⁷ I adore the sass/snark throughout!

¹¹⁸ Again, the sidebars are fantastic.

¹¹⁹ Bingo!

naturally freaked them out a little bit, so they tip-toed upstairs to see what else had happened while they were at work. There they found this chick had taken over their beds and was out for the count. Rather than do anything, they just sort of stared at her while she slept until she woke up. Which she did, and when she woke up she was quite forgivably alarmed at these tiny intruders to her new house. Upon the explanation that this domain was not her own private property but rather was to be shared collectively, she was apparently ecstatic with the idea of her new roommate situation and proceeded to make them all dinner. The duration of the rest of the evening was rather jovial. As the days went by, this whole situation became fairly convenient for everyone. Snow White had a rent-free living situation, and these little guys had a live-in maid who cooked and cleaned for them, as well as helped them to establish more frequent and careful hygiene practices¹²⁰. This continued for some time, until our villain of the story, Ms. Queen discovered the well-hidden secret of her hit-man and mirror.

One day, as the Queen preened before that poor mirror and asked him to tell her once again who was the most beautiful thing in all the land, the mirror had to declare honestly that since Snow White had not, in fact, kicked the bucket, bought the farm, cashed in, or any other analogy for having her life abbreviated, she was still the fairest of them all. Including the queen. Based on past experience, we should be able to tell pretty accurately what happens next. The queen rolled up her sleeves and decided, "Well, they always say, 'if you want a job done right, you gotta do it yourself.'" So she dug out her cauldron, set the flame on "medium," then poured in a bunch of various obscure liquids and stirred well to combine. Her dipped apples were her specialty, so she decided to make some for the exiled princess as a housewarming gift. Then she disguised herself as a creepy old witch, (because who would ever know the difference, right?) boxed up the apples, and set off for the forest.

Meanwhile, Snow White was happily singing away while she did the daily housework. The birds and forest animals were gathered around to listen to her, as she was just so enchanting and trusting that everything that saw her or heard her automatically fell in love. This was what the wicked stepmother was counting on, as she hobbled into the woods with her basket of totally unsuspecting apples. Somehow the Queen actually managed to find the little cabin, too. I mean, that part was really just glossed over entirely if I remember right. Like, the forest seemed pretty dense and deep, and if that house was all the way in the middle, how in the world did she make it there from the castle in one day? Where was the part where she stopped and tried to ask a turtle for directions? One way or another, she showed up at the Seven Dwarves' house and announced her arrival by knocking on the window, of all things. Snow White opened it and was charmed by the old lady peddling apples, so she accepted a proffered one, took a bite, and BOOM! Dead as a doornail. Or so the Queen thought. So she happily toddled back to her

¹²⁰ Hee hee.

castle, and the mirror once again was forced to say that she was the fairest of them all, and life was grand. For the queen.

For the company of little dudes arriving home that evening, however, life was about to have another very large surprise in the form of their housekeeper and roommate lying dead on the floor and all the woodland creatures mourning her. Which was unfortunate, to say the least, and they were so distraught over the fact that they were going to have to remind themselves to wash their own hands again that they built Snow White an above-ground crypt with a glass top so they and anyone passing by would be able to see how beautiful she was. Apparently nobody noticed that she was still breathing to some extent, but, ya, know. Whatever.

So there they all were. Deer, rabbits, turtles, skunks, perhaps a goldfish or two, and some birds and raccoons for good measure were all gathered around Snow White's coffin with the seven little men, grieving the loss of their beloved princess. Tears swept down everyone's faces and snouts while sobs shook the forest trees which now also have feelings because I said so. Do I know that it's Disney accurate? Well, do you know that it's *not*?? And they're all sad, and crying, and everything is depressing until who should ride up but some dude out for an afternoon galavant on a horse through the woods for no apparent reason whatsoever! He saw this dead girl, and everyone so sad and upset around her coffin, and thought to himself, 'Whoa. She's hot. I should kiss her. That would be respectful and also would probably make everyone feel better.' So this little necrophiliac¹²¹ took off the glass lid covering Snow White, leaned over this by-all-accounts dead person, and planted a wet one on her lips. Now, to someone who's not actually as dead as people thought they were, that would be somewhat surprising.

Since Snow White's indefinite hibernation was so rudely disrupted by this guy macking on her, she sat up. Which did not, for some reason, seem to have the same effect on the dwarves and forest friends as it would have on me. Everyone was just delighted that her royal hotness was alive and well after all, and Snow White was delighted to find that the random stranger who had broken the spell of the Wicked Witch was actually a handsome prince with daddy's money and a sweetheart smile. So she allowed him to scoop her up onto his prancing steed, and with a goodbye wave to all her woodland friends and a kiss on top of each of the seven little bald dudes' heads, she and her hot stranger rode off into the distance. Presumably to get married and live more-or-less happily ever after.

The End, I guess.

¹²¹ Yep, call him what he was.

questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

chapter 9.6: graphic novels¹²²

Learn a drawing style. Manga and US Comic styles are popular, or you can draw humorous cartoons and give it a quirky edge. There are many resources available to learn how to draw. Your local library or bookstore is a great place to find "How to draw" books, but the only way to really improve your drawing skills is to practice. To accelerate the process, have a skilled artist such as a teacher or friend give you lessons, or look over your work and give you pointers. Often just watching a talented artist work is enough to open your mind to the techniques and possibilities. Most of all, don't be afraid to experiment with style. Finding your unique style is often more valuable than simply drawing like everybody else.

Come up with a cast of characters. When doing this, think both about their appearance, and their personality and history. If you have a plot in mind already, that will drive the creation of your characters. Develop the character's appearance by drawing them in as many ways as you can: you will improve your drawing ability and your understanding of the character. Use the character's appearance to develop their personality and use the personality to develop the appearance.

Write out your ideas for the story. They will start out as rough ideas, but eventually you will want a fully developed plot. You can develop this plot in many ways: you can draw out rough pages, you can write it as a narrative story, you can write a page full of ideas, a page full of sketches, or you can write it as a script. Keep in mind, though, that graphic novels take up more space than normal novels, so the plot shouldn't be quite as long. Use the characters and settings to figure out the plot.

Do a rough sketch of your ideas on scrap paper. The usual way this is done is with thumbnails. Figure out the final page size and draw small boxes in proportion to the final page. E.g. If your finished page will be 8.5" x 11" (U.S. Letter) then draw boxes that are 1.5" x 2". You will use these boxes to plan out the entire book, and while many artists feel they can skip this step, generally your design will be better if you do not skip the thumbnail phase. Thumbnails can also be an invaluable tool to organize the production of the book. Thumbnails can be changed much easier than finished pages. Consider the thumbnails your "map" to the finished product. If you have other artists helping you, or if you are dealing with print shops yourself then handing them a photocopy of your finished thumbnails will ensure that everyone knows what you expect the book to be.

¹²² Wikihow contributors. "How to Create a Graphic Novel." Wikihow. 29 March 2019. Web. 22 June 2019.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Graphic-Novel>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Create the finished pages, also known as the original art. There are many ways to work, and they will depend on many factors. If you are publishing it yourself, then you must consider how it will be printed, how it will be trimmed, how it will be bound, how it will be transported, and how it will be distributed, just to name a few. If you are working with a publisher, they will tell you all the specifications. If you are creating a one-off book, then you have a lot more freedom, and can incorporate any medium you want. The basic questions are: Will there be color, or just black and white? Will the edges of the book be trimmed down (allowing bleed) or left untrimmed (no bleed). Bleed is when page contents extend past the edge of the page and are trimmed down to the final size after binding. It allows for a more professional look, since most printers can't reliably print all the way to the paper's edge. Binding (how the pages are held together) is also an important consideration since it will affect how close your artwork can go to the center of the book. There are many types of binding available, all with benefits and drawbacks. The general rule is to keep your important content about 1/2" from the edges and "gutter" (bound side) of the page. Most graphic novels will have three or four steps per page: penciling, lettering, inking, coloring.

Choose your paper. If you plan on painting, or erasing a lot, you may want to consider using Bristol board or some other thick medium. Start by penciling the entire page. Draw lightly and erase with a good eraser. Be as sketchy or precise as you want. You should pencil in the text for each panel as well. Once you're happy with the penciling, begin the inking phase. Use a good black pen or marker. Have different tips for different line widths. An alternative method is brush and ink, which is more challenging, but enables a different style. Good use of inking can make your drawings seem dimensional and bold.

Ink the lettering. If you don't feel confident lettering yourself, you may want to get someone who is, or consider using a computer for the type. Erase any stray pencil lines. Inking can be touched up with white paint, even white white-out.

Color your artwork. Any medium can be used for color reproduction. Watercolor paint, acrylic paint, art markers, color pencil, etc. Increasingly artists are turning to the computer for coloring their work. Get a good PRACTICE! reference for painting, color theory, and any computer software/hardware you plan on using.

And Print, bind, and distribute.

| **student example(s):**

<Provided by student(s) someday>

| questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

chapter 9.7: romance

Romance novels¹²³ are a very popular genre in publishing. A good romance novel can spawn a whole series of novels with similar characters and settings. You may decide to write romance novels as a writerly challenge, or to try your hand at the genre. Start by coming up with fun, engaging ideas for the romance novel. Then, write the novel with your audience in mind. Revise and edit the novel when it's done so it is appealing to readers of romance.

brainstorming:

Use a real-life romantic experience as inspiration. Draw from your own romantic experiences in life and adapt them for your novel. Fictionalize a chance encounter you had on vacation or a special moment you experienced with your partner. Use past romantic relationships as raw material for your novel.

- For example, you may take a passionate but doomed relationship in your past and change around real-life names to fictionalize it. You may also change the setting or small details to make the situation more dramatic.
- You can also use the real-life romances of others around you as inspiration. Maybe you have a friend who is in a stormy romance. Or perhaps you have a sibling who had a passionate relationship in the past.

Use romantic movies or television shows as inspiration. You can also reference romantic movies or tv shows that you enjoy watching. Make your own version of a romantic movie that you like. Reimagine a romance on a tv show with characters that you create or in a different setting.

- You can also use romantic books and songs as inspiration for your romance novel.

Create an engaging main character. Have a main character that is relatable and likeable for readers. The main character, who is usually also the narrator, should be welcoming and accessible to your audience. They should feel unique and interesting to your reader.

- For example, you may have a main character who is a high-profile criminal lawyer by day, and a single woman struggling to meet someone on her level at night. Or you may have a main character who is left by her partner and copes by going back to her hometown.

¹²³ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Romance Novels." Wikihow. 29 March 2019. Web. 22 June 2019.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Romance-Novels>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Focus on a particular type of romance novel. There are many different types of romance novels, from historical romance to young adult romance to paranormal romance. Decide which type you'd like to write. Choose a type that fits your story idea so you can cater to your audience.

- For example, if you are writing a romance set in 1930s West Virginia or during WWI, you are writing historical romance. If you are writing about a romance between a ghost and a woman, you are writing paranormal romance.

Read examples of romance novels. Get a better sense of the genre by reading romance novels that are considered successful and well done.

writing the novel:

Put your own spin on the romance formula. In romance, there is a tried and true formula: girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl gets boy. To make your romance novels stand out, put your own spin or approach on the formula so your story feels fresh and engaging. You may have the girl meet a girl, or a boy meet a boy, which would fit in the queer romance genre. Or you may have the girl meet a boy in another universe or time period. Get creative and play around with the formula.

- You could also have the girl be of a certain race or background that clashes with the boy she falls for. Or the girl could be from a family that does not get along with the boy's family.

Have a strong setting. Setting is a key element in a successful romance novel. The setting should be front and center throughout the story. It should dictate how the characters speak, how they interact, and how they see the world of the story.

- For example, you may set the novel in modern-day Savannah, Georgia, where the characters have Southern accents and the heat is unbearable in the summer. Or you may set the novel in a naval vessel in the ocean, where the characters are nauseous from seasickness and bad weather.

Create a central conflict. Romance readers love a detailed, major conflict that drives the story forward. The conflict should be believable and prevent the main character and the love interest from being together. The conflict should also be clear and easy for the reader to follow.

- For example, you may have a central conflict where the main character has to choose between a high stakes criminal case and her budding romance with her next-door neighbor. Or you may have a conflict where the main character's illness gets in the way of uniting with her true love.

Consider including sex scenes. Not all romance novels need to have sex scenes. If you do decide to include sex scenes in your novel, make them emotional and vivid. Avoid graphic detail or mechanical descriptions of sex, unless that best describes it.

- For example, you may describe the setting of the sex scenes using sensory detail, such as how it smells, feels, sounds, or looks. Providing context for the sex scene can make it more emotional for the reader.

Avoid cliches. Romance writing is populated by many cliches, which are phrases that are so common they have lost meaning. If a phrase or line feels familiar to you, it's likely a cliché and to be avoided. Create unique descriptions instead that feel specific to your characters.

- For example, rather than write, "he was tall, dark, and handsome," you may write, "he was good looking in a stylish professor kind of way."

Wrap up the novel with a satisfying ending. A good romance novel will end on a variation of "happily ever after." Give the reader an ending that is satisfying and happy. Ultimately, your readers want to see your main character get the love they want.

- For example, maybe your main character and her love interest finally get together. Or perhaps your main character recovers from her illness long enough to see her love interest one last time.

Example: "The Red Light Reflected in Her Eyes" by Anonymous¹²⁴

When I look into her eyes, I do not see my reflection. No one sees a reflection in her eyes. Her eyes consume all and reveal to others what they are at the core.

When I look deep into her eyes, am I really just a red light deep down? All of my soul, my essence, my body, my personality, the flaws, the perfections, the traits, the ambitions, the goals, the weak, the strong, the beautiful, and the ugly are represented not through my reflection, but through a red light.

I am not red, for I am a human being. Red is not my skin tone, red is not my name, red is not my face. Why red?

She does not tell me why, but only continues to stare at me with that gleamy, red glow. She must know what has happened to me within the past two weeks. I have fallen. There was a flight of stairs going up a mountain. I had tried my best to climb, I even had fun at certain points while doing so, but then I slipped on an ice patch and fell. I fell down to the second to last step.

¹²⁴ Discovered on the *Anonymous Authors Fandom* web site: https://anonymous-authors.fandom.com/wiki/The_Red_Light_Reflected_in_Her_Eyes
Their community content is available under CC-BY-SA unless otherwise noted.

I was still on the stairwell, but I had to nearly start all over. Not only did I have to start over, I still have to wait for the ice to melt. It is cold where I am. There isn't any chance of the ice melting soon. Red will keep me warm, but it cannot feed me, it cannot help me rest, it cannot satisfy my thirst. Red will only keep me warm in this cold patch. One may ask how I got to this cold patch and I can tell them it was actually an accident. I had been walking along my usual trail in the park, when a young girl ran up to me.

"There is a new trail opened west of here!" The girl shouted.

I had seen the child before, yet she had never spoke to me and I had never spoken to her. Before I had a chance to ask her if it was worth the trip, she had ran off, only leaving me with the curiosity and desire to hike the trail. I accepted the challenge and began my trek. At the bottom of the stairs, I realized this would be a difficult journey and not one I could do within a day nor a week. I could possibly climb every step over the course of one month--maybe two.

Now here I am. It is midnight. I am cold, waiting for the ice patch to melt so I may continue my journey to the top of the stairs. I do not know whether I am sleeping or if I am awake, but this beautiful woman appeared to me. She had gradually materialized at such a steady pace that I did not notice her as I adjusted to my surroundings. It was only when she spoke did I first notice her.

"Why do you make yourself suffer waiting for the ice to melt? Why don't you leave and come back in the summer when the ice is gone and you have the energy to move on?" She asked.

This had not occurred to me. Perhaps she was right. She moved closer towards me and I saw the reflection in her eyes. It was not me, nor the stairs. It was a red light. Then my senses came together and I had the logic I had sought after this whole time.

She is right. I shouldn't be waiting here. I am being blinded by impulses and the willpower to do what I desire most without thinking first. With that, I stand up, walk over to the woman, and kiss her. As I kiss her, she disappears.

I wake up the next morning feeling revived and healthier. The ice has not melted a single drop since last night. I stand up, grab my bag, and turn back the way I came. I head down the stairs, knowing that one day I will return. It may be weeks or months from now, but I will reach my way to the top.

| student example(s):

<Provided by student(s) someday>

questions / activities / exercises.

<Students might be assigned – as part of the final project? – to create questions and activities and exercises for chapters that do not contain those pieces quite yet.>

chapter 9.8: how to get published¹²⁵

- **Step 1:** Decide if you want an agent, whether you want to self-publish, or if you are going to start a blog and post your writing under a Creative Commons License in order to publish to the creative commons global network: <https://network.creativecommons.org/>
- **Step 2:** Do research on what has already been written in the genre you wish to publish in. Use Amazon and Google to see if your topic has been covered. Check those sites for possible titles you might use.

Editor's Note:

How did I write and publish a children's book (called Foo Foo Fancypants)? Well, I read other children's books, noticed types of words used and length of sentences and considered age group (what would they find interesting and fun?), found images to accompany story line (using Creative Commons on Flickr or could have drawn my own). I did the same with the story about my breast reduction surgery (The Big-Boobed Bridesmaid). When I was recuperating, I went to Amazon to download a book on the topic and there weren't any. So, I decided to journal about my experience and self-publish.

When it comes to finding an agent versus self-publishing or going the Creative Commons route, here are few things to consider. If it's important to you to get your writing out to a massive group of people, then finding an agent will have the biggest impact. They will probably market for you, etc. It's a harder path to take, but it's more fruitful in the long run if you can find an agent and/or publishing company who will "sell you" and your book for you.

If you want to have a lot of control over everything, the self-publishing route and/or using a Creative Commons license is your best bet. Using the Independent Publishing Service through Amazon - via createspace.com - allows a writer more royalty money and total control over the end product. Granted, your book may not get to the masses like if you were to use an agent/publishing company, but that's the "price" one pays for doing their own thing.

If you are already a blogger, and like to write a variety of things, and want your name OUT THERE more than you want money in your pocket, then the Creative Commons route is right up your alley. You could simply keep a blog, write and post an assortment of genres and lengths of literature, and then ask that if anyone comes across those items and wants to use them in their OER (open-source) textbooks or classrooms, that they use a Creative Commons license like the one you've seen in this book - you can choose to

¹²⁵ This information comes from Sybil Priebe's experiences. Text available under Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

allow the person to use your piece of writing if they give you credit, you can choose the noncommercial license so they can't make money off of it, and you can choose non-derivative, too, which means they cannot change the writing either.

agents and publishing companies:¹²⁶

There are hordes of aspiring writers out there, besides the well-established ones.

Many people believe a literary agent will help with the publishing process. It can be tricky to find the one that is right for you, but agents know about the business, have contacts in the business, would know what publishers would be most receptive of your work, and generally they can get a better contract than you would be able to negotiate yourself. Many new authors do not know how much money they should get up front, how royalties work, or many other aspects of the business. Agents take care of this for you. Writer Beware: look for agents that will disclose their satisfied clients list. If they are not willing to disclose names, they could very well be a fly-by-night agency. When in doubt, check your favorite author's books for the agency they use, or check with the A.A.R. (Association of Author's Representatives.)

It should also be noted that many of the larger publishing companies have what is called an "open call" for unpublished authors. Many of these even accept submissions from authors without agents. Be aware, however, that most of these companies have very strict guidelines of how a manuscript should look when submitted. Check with your favorite publisher's website to see if they have an open call.

tips for getting published with a publishing company:¹²⁷

- First, identify the publisher that is right for your work. Make a list of books that are similar to yours and note their publishers. If four out of five books you chose are from the same publishing house, your best bet is to start there.
- Second, consult the publisher's website for submission guidelines. Follow those instructions as carefully as possible; that will show editors you are professional and serious about your craft. Get hold of a guide for information on how to write a cover letter, query, and format your manuscript. (Note: Many publishers do not accept unsolicited manuscripts, especially novels. They may instead ask for a

¹²⁶ "Creative Writing/Novels." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 4 Mar 2011, 19:49 UTC. 16 Nov 2016, 21:26
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Novels&oldid=2064408>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

¹²⁷ "Creative Writing/Publication." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 20 Aug 2009, 22:22 UTC. 9 Nov 2016, 20:19
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing/Publication&oldid=1613374>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

query. Often publishers do not accept unsolicited queries either. If that is the case, you need an agent to submit to that house. Unfortunately, finding an agent can be as tough as finding a publisher.)

- Third, wait. This step can be one of the most frustrating to the author and the urge to submit to multiple publishing houses may arise but be careful. When you consult the publisher's website pay attention to their policy on simultaneous and exclusive submissions. Not doing so can be harmful to your long future with a publishing house. Fortunately, publishers are becoming more accepting of simultaneous submissions as they realize it can take six months or longer for them to respond to an author. Publishing houses that do accept simultaneous submissions are a blessing to authors and should not be abused. Do not submit to anywhere that your work is not appropriate. Doing so is a waste of your money and it encourages publishers to not accept simultaneous or unsolicited submissions.
- Fourth, you will most likely get rejected. It's part of being a writer and should be viewed as an accomplishment and opportunity to refine your work. (Note: Most rejected submissions receive a form letter. If an editor takes the time to comment specifically on your submission, that is a major accomplishment.)
- Fifth, don't give up.

tips for getting published without a publishing company:

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- Sign up for a service that offers independent publishing, like Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) = https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/ It's the service used by Sybil to publish this textbook on paper.
 - Since this book is OER, she doesn't take royalties, but KDP offers 30-70% royalties.
- Use their templates and cover makers once you have a final draft you want published.
- Price your book and link a banking account to KDP in order to receive your royalty "checks."
- Market on your own using social media, etc. Sybil has a Facebook page for her books, both OER and non-OER ones.
- Reach out to others who self-publish (like Sybil) for advice.
- Keep writing!

"Creativity itself doesn't care at all about results - the only thing it craves is the process. Learn to love the process and let whatever happens next happen, without fussing too

¹²⁸ More information from Sybil's brain.

much about it. Work like a monk, or a mule, or some other representative metaphor for diligence. Love the work. Destiny will do what it wants with you, regardless.” – Elizabeth Gilbert

"Someone who wants to write should make an effort to write a little something every day. Writing in this sense is the same as athletes who practice a sport every day to keep their skills honed."

---Anita Desai



chapter 10: assignment and project ideas

Note to students:¹²⁹ Your teacher(s) may not use any of the following projects and assignments, so just pay attention in class as to which of these may be assigned to you.

chapter 10.1: more practice

There are already PRACTICE PROJECTS listed at the end of each chapter, and those are pretty awesome, as is, BUT if those projects don't float the boat of whoever is teaching the course, this list might help.

poetry projects.

- Write a very, very silly poem about love. Or hate. Rhyme a lot.
- Create a list of as many new clichés as you can. “Give her the onion,” “quiet like a chipmunk,” “work like hens,” etc. Then, create a poem using the cliché form as your structure.
- Write a poem that makes the audience cry.

flash fiction projects.

¹²⁹ Another note to whom it may concern: These exercises, and any assignments found in this textbook, are all about fulfilling the goal of practicing writing anything in order to challenge ourselves AND to see what we excel in, too.

- Pulling Over for a Siren. Compose a 250-word flash fiction piece in which you describe a lake, a tree, or a living room from the perspective of one of the following people:
 - Someone who has just committed a violent crime.
 - Someone who has just been told he or she has one year to live.
 - Someone who has just been unfaithful to his or her lover.
 - Describe the lake or tree or room almost exclusively in concrete language; do not allow the narrator to talk about how he or she feels, or what he or she thinks about the scene.
 - And: DO NOT MENTION THE BAD NEWS, THE CRIME, OR THE INFIDELITY.
- The Most Amazing Thing Was the Cheese. Write a story whose first line is: “The most amazing thing was the cheese.”
- Write a short story which is one sentence long, but at least 200 words in length.
- Write a story that doesn’t have one sentence over 10 words in length.
- Write a story about how the world began whether you believe in creationism or evolution, but it has to be 200-250 words in length.

fiction projects.

- Write a story with a plot that runs backward in time.
- Write a story which takes place in a single location, has almost no action, and which involves, at most, four characters. You might position your characters around a table, in a bed, in two chairs, at a window, etc. From a third-person/omniscient point-of-view, create a plot and resolution, etc. Do not use dialogue.
- In the Unendurable Snow. Make a list of people you strongly dislike. These can be people you personally know very well, or mere acquaintances. Choose one person from your list and then do the following:
 - Write a short story in which the person you’ve just described is the protagonist-and a sympathetic character. (You can use third or first person point-of-view.) There can be (and probably should be) some ambiguity in this character, but he/she should be mostly sympathetic. You should also make this character believable, complex, and distinct. (Note: a “sympathetic character” in fiction is one whom the reader regards favorable; one that evokes sympathy, admiration, or at least empathetic understanding.)
- Paws. Imagine that you’re a particular animal. Taking the perspective of this creature, and assuming that it is capable of writing, compose a short story in which you describe the world around you. You will be experiencing your environment in an entirely sensory way, and your writing should therefore be full of striking physical detail and

metaphor. (For instance, from the point of view of a deer, a hunter's rifle would be "a branch that barks"?)

- Write a story about yourself as a fictional character. Change things about yourself if you'd like and make up new characteristics for your friends and life up to this point. Maybe you wanted to grow up in the 70s?

drama projects.

- Write a 10min play where every character has a secret, but they never say what it is. The readers have to speculate.
- Write a 10 min play where every character is secretly evil, but they come across as good people.
- Write an inner monologue you have had.
- Write the inner monologue of someone who you don't know but have seen recently on campus or around town.
- Create the dialogue of a fake news cast. Be hilarious or be serious or be both.
- Create dialogue between two friends where each one wants something from the other, but never says so. Maybe Person A wants to buy a necklace and the clerk, Person B, wants to ask Person A out?

nonfiction projects.

- Write a story with a plot that runs backward in time.
- Write a short story with yourself as the main character. Use the third person point-of-view.
- The Child is Father to the Man: Think back to your childhood and recall some object you were fond of or intrigued by: some new shoes, your mother's jewelry, a Ferris wheel, and abandoned house, a neighbor's hostile cat, your father's buzzsaw, etc. etc.
 - Now write a short prose piece about this object from the perspective of yourself when you were a child. Describe and reflect upon the object just as you did years before, and try not to let your adult perceptions, inhibitions, and embarrassments intrude. Allow yourself to say odd, even nonsensical things. AVOID CUTENESS AND CLICHÉ COMMENTS OR COMPARISONS.
- Write a fake gossip column about real celebrities.
- Show and Tell: Write three different stories about the same person in your life. These stories should show us the type of person they are.

alternative style.

- Hyperactive: Explore some hypertext literary sites and works on the web. Read some hypertext stories and poems, and explore around also for theory about, and criticism of, such works. Then write your own

hypertext poem or story, using resources unique to electronic environments (especially hypertext links, though you might also explore use of moving text, graphics, and sound.) Try any and all programs, software, or skills you might have, including ability to use straight HTML.

- Creative Slides: Create a PowerPoint or Google Slides that tells a story but only uses punctuation.
- Go Prezi Crazy! Create a funky Prezi (prezi.com) that reads like a fractured story.
- Grammar B: Write a story (fiction or nonfiction) that uses small words - six (6) letters or less. Then write that same story using larger words. Beyond “a,” and “the,” words must be 6 letters or more. You can go back and translate a story you’ve already written for the course into these two stories.
- Write anything that breaks rules. Before you begin, list the rules you will break.

multi-modal, multi-genre, multi-vocal projects.

- Multimodal: Take any mini-project you’ve completed for this class and add a **visual** component as well as an **audio** component. We can discuss in-class how this may be accomplished.
- Multi-Genre: Take any mini-project you’ve completed for this class and add two more genres to it, to emphasize any part of it. We can discuss in class how this may be accomplished.
- Another Multi-Genre: Take one of the non-drama mini-projects you’ve written and make it into a play and then create an ad and poster for the play, as if it was going to be produced on campus.
- Multi-Vocal: Grab a classmate. Pick a topic to write on. Write separately, and then piece your work together with headers or connecting parts that use “we” etc.
- Photo Essay. Text plus visual = multimodal. People to look up are Walker Evans and James Agee (compare a photo depicting “his lunchtime” versus “my lunchtime, for example).

chapter 10.2: 30 reading response activities

These are activities that could be assigned after students have had to read something... they are useful for writing classes beyond creative writing.

OPTION 1: Flickr/Pixlr Image Creation

Idea: This activity visualizes the reading. You will find an image that connects to the quote/statement you find most interesting in the chapter you just read. Using the Creative Commons area of Flickr.com or Unsplash, you'll save the image and add text (or a quote) by using Pixlr.com. From there, you could upload the image to an LMS or insert it into a document to be handed in. Or, hell, maybe you'll just email it to whoever needs to see it.

OPTION 2: Facebook Status(es)

Idea: You will create a Facebook status of the topic or person in the reading. Perhaps there will be comments to that status by other people in the reading.

OPTION 3: Top Ten

Idea: You would rank something in the reading for class. If the chapter is about blogs, maybe you would rank the top ten blogs you might read.

OPTION 4: Twitter Sitter

Idea: In 280 characters or less, you will sum up what you read.

OPTION 5: Text Type-Up

Idea: You might learn the best through repetition, and yet don't want to mark up your paper textbooks. So, this activity asks you to type (or write) up a piece of the reading you'd like to respond to. After typing or writing up the piece, you can then circle things you don't understand or really find interesting.

OPTION 6: Animoto Video Trailer

Idea: Just like how movies have previews, maybe discussions should too? This activity asks you to create a trailer or preview of the upcoming discussion by reading and then putting related images and text into Animoto.com. Their 30-second videos are free and easy to use. From there, you could upload the URL to an LMS to be viewed in class. {Animoto.com}

OPTION 7: Prezi/PPT

Idea: In order for you to prep for the upcoming discussion of the reading, you should create parts of the possible discussion by putting together a

piece such as a PowerPoint slide (or slides) or Prezi presentation. You could then upload those Prezis/PPTs to a specific area in the LMS in order for the instructor to pop them up on the big screen in class.

OPTION 8: Visual Definition

Idea: Many of us naturally increase our vocabulary by reading, so this activity asks you to pick a specific number of words from the chapter to create visual definitions of. Each slide = new word made visual with images, stories, quotes from the reading, definitions, etc.

OPTION 9: Create a Quiz

Idea: In order to create a quality quiz, you need to know the material. So, you should create quizzes from everything you read (if you have time); the quiz or quizzes could contain multiple-choice questions, T/F, and even short answer questions. The quizzes, then, could be exchanged with classmates?

OPTION 10: The Crossword Puzzle

Idea: You would use an online crossword puzzle-making site to create a crossword related to the reading material. {<http://puzzle-maker.com/>¹³⁰ or some other web site?}

OPTION 11: (Fake) Interview

Idea: You could either interview someone about what you've just read, or you could create a document which shows a fake interview with the author about the piece. Sometimes, creating fake content is just as difficult as "real" content.

OPTION 12: Survey the Masses

Idea: After you read, you could conduct a survey of those around you (f2f or email or Facebook) about the topic(s) covered in the piece.

OPTION 13: Weird Poetry

Idea: After reading, you could reconstruct parts of the text into chunks. Slices of the text, fragments, put into poetic bite size bits.

OPTION 14: Dear Author

Idea: You could write an actual letter to the author of the piece.

OPTION 15: Jeopardy

Idea: While reading, create Jeopardy questions or maybe a whole game with points assigned (200 level questions versus 400 level questions). You could play the game with classmate in or out of class together.

OPTION 16: Do you know your ABCs?

¹³⁰ In existence as of November 2021.

Idea: Use all 26 letters to find things in the reading that pertain to each letter. (There may be an example of this at the end of this section?)

OPTION 17: The 5x5

Idea: Whatever you are reading, find 5 quotes and then 5 terms and create a story out of them.

OPTION 18: Mad Libs

Idea: You could create a mad lib, or a few, (Google that term if you've never used a Mad Lib before) based on the reading.

OPTION 19: The Kevin Bacon-ator

Idea: Connect two unlike things (genres, chapters, topics, authors, etc.) with the 6 (or is it 7) Steps to Kevin Bacon idea.

OPTION 20: Fake Book Citations

Idea: While reading, you could create fake book citations for books that would relate to the material in a serious or fun way.

OPTION 21: Factoid/Something Cool

Idea: Search the text for someone or something. From there, you could find something cool or some factoid about that topic. Ex: If you are reading about World War II, you could look online for something interesting about the fashions of the time or what people drove (if you are into fashion/cars, for example).

OPTION 22: Artistic Summary/Pictionary

Idea: Draw out what happened in the reading. It could lead into a game of Pictionary with classmates.

OPTION 23: Multi-Genre

Idea: Find multiple genres that connect to the topic(s)/theme(s) in the reading or chapter. Ex: Finding a cartoon and poem and meme about BLOGS.

OPTION 24: The Comic Strip

Idea: Using www.makebeliefscomix.com¹³¹ (or paper & pen), you could create a comic strip based on a theme or some dialogue that occurs in the reading. This will add a bit of humor to any subject.

OPTION 25: Dear Abby Advice

Idea: Mimic a "Dear Abby" column that is related to the piece that you just read.

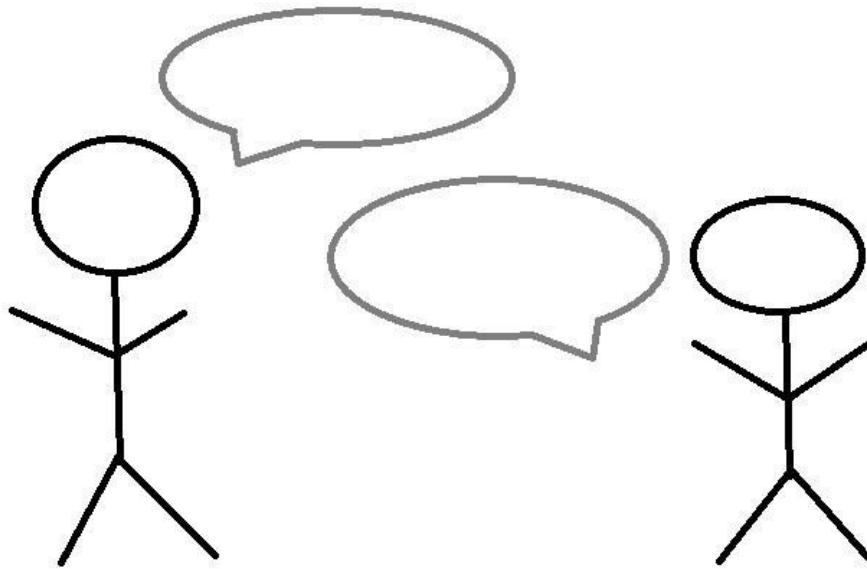
OPTION 26: Translation Nation

¹³¹ In existence as of November 2021.

Idea: Take a paragraph from the reading. Translate it into how a politician would say it. THEN translate it into how a child or elderly person would say it.

OPTION 27: Teeny Tiny Talk

Idea: Find an image on Flickr.com of two or more people. Add bubbles for conversation using Pixlr.com. Connect what you read for class to the conversation. There is a low-tech sample image below. If you can draw, recreate this on paper with pen/pencil.



OPTION 28: Activity Exchange

Idea: Create your own post-reading activity. Exchange it with a classmate and complete theirs.

OPTION 29: Fake Ad

Idea: Create an ad for something sold in the chapter or reading.

OPTION 30: Timeline

Idea: Create a timeline of the reading.

option 16 example:

What if, as humans, we are the things being “read.” What nuggets would a person take away from reading me (Sybil/creator of this book)?

“SYBIL: AN ALPHABETICAL JOURNEY TO THE PERSON I HAVE BECOME.”

A = Aquarius. “While Aquarians are generally sympathetic and compassionate, they like it when things go their own quirky way. Some might call their behavior eccentric (and they would be right), but when you consider that the Aquarian's heart is truly in the right place, a few oddities should be overlooked.” [www.astrology.com]

B = Beck. Blasphemy. Bicycles.

C = Classes Taught. Classes taught: (middle-school) student-taught 8th grade English at the West Fargo Middle School; (high school) taught Freshmen English, Junior English, Senior English, and Publications (yearbook/newspaper) at Battle Lake High School; (university) taught College Composition I: English 110 & College Composition II: English 120 at NDSU; (community colleges) taught Professional Communications and Fundamentals of English at Aakers Business College; taught College Composition I: English 110 at Northwest Tech in Detroit Lakes; (currently) Technical Communications: English 105, College Composition I: English 110, College Composition II: English 120, World Masterpieces: English 240, and Intro to Creative Writing: English 211.

D = Drafting and Design. “D’oh!” – Homer Simpson.

E = Ellen DeGeneres. “Today I’d like to talk about librarians. I don’t know how many of them watch my show. If they do, they probably watch my show while reading or working on the Dewey Decimal System. They probably don’t watch much TV at all. They just wait for the transcripts. If they do watch the show, they probably keep the sound turned down and put their fingers up to their mouths and say, “Shhhhhhhh” every time the audience laughs.”

F = *Fahrenheit 451*. The f-bomb.

G = “Growth-seeking individual.”¹³²

H = Hell. I joke about probably ending up in hell. “If you are going through hell, keep going.” Winston Churchill said that.

I = Intolerant of lactose.

¹³² The best compliment I’ve received from a colleague.

J = Joyce. It's the best "old lady name" ever. My sister and I use it as an expletive. Jeep.

K = Karma. "The total effect of a person's actions and conduct during the successive phases of the person's existence, regarded as determining the person's destiny." [Dictionary.com]

L = Lexicography. Lady Gaga.

M = Mark, my dad. Magazines. Marathons.

N = Numbers. 7. 3. 33. 47. First off, when I go places, and a tip is needed to be figured in, I like to round up to odd numbers. I love spending \$17, for example. I feel like it's good luck. Fourteen dollars? Na.

O = I am an optimist, and I am the oldest of four.

P = Priebe. Project Runway. Paddleboarding. *Parks & Rec*.

Q = Quit. Quit worrying about my weight. Quit this. Quit that.

R = Raining days are the best. I love clouds and not having to squint. Plus, the smell is a bonus.

S = Shopping, *Sex & The City*, Sarah Jessica Parker, Shoes. Sushi. Sadie.

T = I used to be a tomboy, and I loved the sport of tennis.

U = Ungrading.

V = Volleyball. And Volkswagen.

W = Weblog. "Be the Blog: Myself as a Test Subject." Since throwing myself into the "blogosphere" in 2002, I've been blogging privately and publicly as well as used class blogs in my Composition/Literature courses. I've researched the pros and cons of blogging; dissecting student blogging has become my odd passion. I've happily annoyed other academics (and, yes, even non-academics) with my blogging knowledge/experience for quite some time, so why stop now? As an eternal optimist, I have a few recommendations for why students and teachers should jump on the blogging wagon.

X = Check mark. I like to make lists and check items off one at a time.

Y = Yoda.

Z = Zephyr, which is the western wind. I've been fascinated by meteorology for a long time. Looking at doppler radars and figuring out what will come to us from the west, from the Rockies.

chapter 10.3: potential course design

Week	Read	Create
1	Intro & Chapter Zero	Activities & Exercises?
2	Chapter 1: Intro	Activities & Exercises?
3	Chapter 2: Review of Elements	Activities & Exercises?
4	Chapter 3: Poetry	Activities & Exercises & Practice
5	Chapter 4: Flash Fiction	Activities & Exercises & Practice
6	Chapter 5: Fiction	Activities & Exercises & Practice
7	Chapter 6: Drama	Activities & Exercises & Practice
8	Chapter 7: Nonfiction	Activities & Exercises & Practice
9	Chapter 8: Experimental	Activities & Exercises & Practice
10	Chapter 9: Final Chapter	
11	Chapter 9: Final Chapter	
12	Plan Final Project	Plan and Outline and Draft and Write
13	Final Project	Write
14	Final Project	Write
15	Final Project	Write
16	Final Project	Write
F	Wrap Up	Submit and Redo Anything

the final project planning document:

You might spend some bits of the semester working on a final project. This planning document will give you the tools you need to guide your work.

END PRODUCT

Place a checkmark next to the option you'd like to complete. You can change your mind at any point, but that does put more stress on yourself, so keep that in mind.

__Option 1: One Novella, 17,500 to 39,999 words long	__Option 2: One Mini-Novella (5,000-10,000 words) + one item from Option 3	__Option 3: Choose three items to create from the list below: • Textbook tweak • Portfolio • All 30 reading responses (Chapter 10.2) • 2 projects from each category in Chapter 10.1
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		• TBA
__Option 4: 10-15 flash fiction stories within any of the Final Chapter specialties	__Option 5: 5-10 mediums-sized stories within any of the Final Chapter specialties	__Option 6: Propose something radical to Sybil and get it okayed by Week 13

BRIEF PROPOSED TIMELINE

Fill out this proposed timeline outlining your plans for this final project:

- ____<date>____ - Phase 1 of Writing Process (Brainstorming & Outline) completed; I will _____.
- ____<date>____ - Phase 2 of Writing Process (Draft and Revision) completed. I will _____.
- ____<date>____ - Phases 3 and 4 (Proofreading/Editing/Submission) completed. I will _____.
- Please consider using a tutor or Grammarly/Hemingway App or a nerdy classmate.

PEER REVIEW/WORKSHOP

On ____<date>____, you will share a draft of your work [online]. My draft will include _____. I will offer WWW/TAG feedback to my peers. And, of course, I will chat with Sybil via email or over the phone/Zoom if I want to chat and get additional feedback at any point.

SHARING YOUR WORK

You should consider publishing your work to the web or in a future edition of this book. The audience for your work shouldn't just be Sybil or the members of our class, but rather the public, your friends, and your family.

I PROMISE

I promise to trust myself, my classmates, and to do as best I can on this project. I am capable, creative, and willing to engage with the material necessary to complete this project. Initial here: _____

textbook tweak:

Goal: Imagine a textbook written by students and for students! What if we threw out any textbook for this class! What could the textbook look like

with total student control? Create a chapter for that sort of textbook that doesn't exist yet.

Create a video, slide presentation, or infographic (or choose another medium) in which you create a student-friendly chapter for an imaginary textbook. At a minimum, the project will include:

- A new chapter.
- An accompanied visual aid.
- Facts.

STEPS:

Step 1: Brainstorm what you either think is missing from the current textbook for this class and compose that chapter OR ask yourself what current chapter needs to be completely tweaked and revise that one heavily.

- Feel free to be silly or cuss or use stories to talk about the genre.

Step 2: Compose the chapter with at least one visual aid (chart, meme, picture) that is openly licensed (possible sites to check out: Unsplash, Shutterstock, Getty Images, Pexels, Freepik, etc.).

Step 3: Double-check all facts and information you use. Cite information that doesn't come from your head (and/or use footnotes).

Step 4: Submit a final draft before the deadline and self-assess your project.

More brainstorming...

- Should there be histories in each chapter of each genre?
- Should there be a chapter on note-taking?
- Are ALL the genres and strategies for creative writing covered? What about MYSTERY?

portfolio:

You will create a portfolio¹³³ with the following pieces:

THE BEGINNING:

- Cover Letter to Reader of what to expect in the portfolio.
 - Write a letter to the reader of your portfolio in which you provide a constructive analysis of your progress since the beginning of the semester. This reflective letter should address the following questions at some point:
 - In what area(s) have you progressed the most this semester?
 - Which piece of work this semester means the most to you & why?
 - Which piece of work challenged you the most & why?

¹³³ Most Intro to Creative Writing courses simply end with a portfolio, but some might not for various reasons (giving students more choice or maybe the teacher wants to attempt NaNoWriMo with the students, etc.), so that's why a portfolio project is listed here, but it's not alone as a final project.

- How would you characterize your experiences as a reader this semester, both of professional pieces and student writing? Have you improved as a reader & critic?
- What more would you have liked to accomplish in this class?
- What did you revise in the two projects that were completed earlier in the semester?
- Do you feel your Final Grade will reflect your effort and ability in this class?
- **Table of Contents.**
 - Label each piece with the date of last revision, genre, title, strength(s) of piece, and weakness(es) of the piece.

Body:

- **Low-Fat Fiction!**
 - Take one of your already completed flash fiction or fiction or nonfiction stories and shorten it by half. Please put the original and revised version in the portfolio.
- **Fiction on Steroids!**
 - Take one of your already completed flash fiction or fiction or nonfiction stories and develop it to three times its original length. Please put the original and revised version in the portfolio.
- **Jazzing Up the Juice!**
 - Choose one of your already “completed” projects and sort through the language and words you used. Switch up 30% of the words with whatever odd, wild, and surprising words that come to mind. With the help of a thesaurus, revise the words (any or all of the main nouns, verbs, and adjectives) to make it new and more vivid or imaginative. You might arbitrarily choose a single page from a thesaurus and force yourself to use words only from that page, even if they make little, at times, logical sense. You could switch “happy” words with “sad” ones and vice versa. Please put the original and new piece in the portfolio.
- **Create Something New!** Go back and choose any genre/topic you loved and create a new story/poem just for this portfolio.
- **One extra thing** that you feel completes the picture of your development this year as a creative writer.

Chapter 10.4: final exercises

exercise 1: ugly.

Create something ugly. Take a selfie with it and show it to your class/classmates/teacher. Then try to explain the ugly thing to us.

exercise 2: artist's statement.

Create an artist's statement. Use the following questions when writing about your own work throughout this semester...

- What do you want to say about your work?
- What's the most important thing you have learned? What insights have you gained into the practice and art of creative writing?
- What do you wish you had learned that you didn't?
- Have your goals as a writer changed? What would you write if you had the time and talent to write anything? Will you?
- What have you learned about your writing habits?
- Do you see yourself as part of a writing community? Do you prefer to work in isolation, focusing on the work, and reading?
- What's the most important thing you learned about getting and giving feedback about work in progress?
- What techniques, authors, or exercises have been most useful to you?
- What authors do you want to read now? Has that changed since the beginning of the semester? Why? Do you have writer role models?
- What's your best piece from the semester?

exercise 3:

What would be the most creative way to reflect upon a creative writing semester? Whatever you think that might look like, do that for this exercise.

glossary

- Alliteration: Repetition of consonants, particularly at the beginning of words. Ex: It was the sweet song of silence.
- Allusion: A reference or mention of something from history or the arts, nature, society, etc. Ex: Saying that someone's love affair was like Romeo and Juliet's.
- Anecdote: A brief story that gets the reader's interest and sheds light on a main idea.
- Assonance: Repetition of similar vowel sounds within a word rather than similar sounds at the beginning or end of a word. Ex: "I'm reminded to line the lid of my eye."
- Ballad: A story told in song form.
- Blank Verse: Unrhymed poetry, usually written in iambic pentameter.
- Connotation: A word's emotional overtones. Ex: The denotation (dictionary definition) of "cool" is about temperature, but the connotation is "awesome."
- Denotation: A word's exact meaning; it's dictionary definition.
- Fantasy: The kind of writing that cannot take place in real life.
- Foreshadowing: A stylistic device that provides clues at what happens later on in the story.
- Genre: A major literary category.
- Hyperbole: Exaggeration used for literary effect such as emphasis or humor or drama.
- Irony: Occurs when something happens that is different from what was expected.
- James Wateland: The cool friend who gave me the title for this book.
- Metaphor: A direct comparison between two things. Ex: This classroom is as stale as a hospital.
- Onomatopoeia: Words that imitate sounds like Bang! Or Meow!
- Personification: Giving humanistic characteristics to non-humans. Ex: The dog nodded in agreement.
- Plot: The arrangement of events in a work of literature.
- Prose: Written work that is not poetry, drama, or a song. Ex: Articles, autobiographies, novels, essays.
- Rhythm: a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.
- Sensory Language: Words that appeal to the five senses: Sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell.
- Simile: A comparison using "like" or "as." Ex: That classroom is like a hospital.
- Stanza: A group of lines in a poem, like a paragraph in prose.
- Style: An author's unique way of writing. Style is made up of word choice, sentence length, figures of speech, and tone.
- Symbol: A person, place, or object that represents an abstract idea.

- Theme: A literary work's main idea – a general hidden statement about life, perhaps.
- Writing: A way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose.

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the editor / author / teacher:



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