Creative Writing Curriculum

This 3-unit creative writing curriculum is designed to engage students in the power and joy of writing. It covers poetry, fiction, and drama (plays and screenplays). Each four-week unit guides students through writing with a different purpose each week: to explore, to reflect, to relate, and to create. This document contains a calendar, weekly schedules, daily lessons, and all necessary handouts for each unit.

A note about weekly schedules: Each week consists of three writing days (Monday through Wednesday), a revision day (Thursday) and a Share-Out day (Friday). Writing days typically introduce students to a writing concept (i.e., a type of poem, a foundational element, a story component) through a mini lesson and then allows time for students to practice writing around that concept. Revision days incorporate a mentor text and focus students on using a specific revision strategy to revisit their writing from the week. Share-Out days are opportunities for students to celebrate their writing and workshop with their peers. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this schedule to best meet the needs of their students and their school schedules.

A note about navigating this document: Below, we have provided a Table of Contents. If you are viewing this document using Google Docs, we suggest you enable the sidebar table of contents by clicking the “show document outline” icon near the top left of the page.

A note about student handouts: All handouts are incorporated and linked within this document. To print individual pages, you may click file>print and select the specific pages you would like to print.

For questions about this creative writing curriculum, please contact BreakFree at initiatives@breakfree-ed.org

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Creative Writing Course

Poetry Unit

4-Week Calendar

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Week 3 ***Relate***	Neighborhood Poem	Animal Poem	Historical Found Poem	Mentor Text & Revise	Share Out
Week 4 ***Create***	Shape Poem	Sound Haikus	Poems for Two Voices	Mentor Text & Revise	Share Out

Week 1 Schedule

Week 1 Purpose: Explore

This week, students will explore fundamental elements to writing poetry and experiment with them.

- **MONDAY: The Five Senses**
- **TUESDAY: Personification**
- **WEDNESDAY: Tone**
- **THURSDAY: How to Revise Poetry**
- **FRIDAY: Share Out**

THE FIVE SENSES

Students will learn to incorporate images, textures, sounds, tastes and scents into their writing.

**This lesson adapted from The Alabama Writers' Forum Writing Our Stories curriculum*

What students will produce

- A poem incorporating the five senses

Materials

- The Magnificent Bull Poem Handout

Activity

- Suggest to students that writers tap into poetry primarily through the five senses. Ask students to name the five senses--sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell—and list these words on the board. Explain that a poem often compares one thing to another thing by appealing to sensory images–words that appeal to the five senses.

- Ask a student to call out a color. Then, walk through the senses using that color: What does [blue] look like? What does [blue] sound like? What does [blue] taste like? What does [blue] feel like? What does [blue] smell like? Write student responses below each sense on the board.
    - Example: Blue is as bright as the sky; blue is like raindrops hitting the ground; blue is as salty as the ocean; blue is a cold winter night; blue smells like lavender

- Repeat the exercise with additional words (for example a food, a holiday, an animal, etc) as time allows. Explain to students that they are making comparisons by using similes and metaphors and that they have now gained one writer's tool with which to work. Explain that similes and concrete imagery help their poems become more real to the reader.

- Read the poem "The Magnificent Bull" and ask students to underline or highlight the portions that connect to the five senses. Discuss how those comparisons make the poem stronger.

- Ask students to work on their own poem by responding to one of the following prompts. Remind them to connect to all five senses within their poem.
    - Prompts: Write a poem about…
        - the first day of school
        - going to the movie theater
        - a favorite memory
        - your favorite place in the world
    - If students need more assistance getting started, have them draw lines or fold a piece of paper into five sections. Once they've chosen a prompt, they can brainstorm the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures within each section. Then, review what they have and circle ones that have the most emotional pull for them. Combine those into a poem!

The Magnificent Bull

My bull is white like the silver fish in the river
White like the shimmering crane bird on the river bank
White like fresh milk!
His roar is like the thunder to the Turkish cannon on the steep shore.
My bull is dark like the raincloud in the storm.
He is like summer and winter
Half of him is dark like the storm cloud,
Half of him is light like sunshine.
His back shines like the morning star.
His brow is red like the beak of the hornbill.
His forehead is like a flag, calling the people from a distance,
He resembles the rainbow.

I will water him at the river,
With my spear I shall drive my enemies.
Let them water their herds at the well;
The river belongs to me and my bull.
Drink, my bull, from the river; I am here
To guard you with my spear.

-Dinka people of Africa

PERSONIFICATION

Students will learn how personification gives human characteristics and actions to an abstract feeling or object, and will write a poem that describes a feeling as an object

**Lesson adapted from The Alabama Writers' Forum Writing Our Stories curriculum*

What students will produce

- A poem incorporating imagery and personification

Materials

- The Necklace of Anger poem handout

Activity

- Write "personification" on the board and circle the "person" in "personification." Define personification as giving ideas, animals, or inanimate objects human characteristics.
    - Write "A heart beats" on the board. This sentence simply makes a statement of fact, and facts do not necessarily make poetry. Write "My heart jumps" on the board. Explain that hearts don't really jump. Who jumps? People. This sentence personifies the heart.
    - Additional Examples: "The tree has branches high in the sky" vs. "The tree lifts its arms to the sky, begging for rain."

- Read "The Necklace of Anger" and ask students to call out images that appeal to the five senses. Prompt them by asking, "Where is an image that appeals to the sense of sight?.. the sense of taste?"
    - Look at the images of teeth: "large chewers," etc. Suggest to students that one may compare a person's smile-which *shows* teeth—with an animal's growl—which *bares* teeth. Ask them to look for images of what the teeth actually do, for example, bite, chew, etc. Point out that Shore uses teeth–an object– to represent anger--a feeling– and gives those teeth human characteristics–personification.

- Draw a vertical line down the center of the board. To the left write "objects" and to the right write "emotions." Make a list of ordinary objects, for example, pieces of furniture or sports equipment or school supplies. List at least 20 objects. Then, make a list of feelings. Prompt students by asking, "What are some ways people might feel?"

- Begin to randomly connect the objects and feelings. For example, circle the object shoe and the feeling happiness and draw a line to connect them. Make the connection, for example, the shoe of happiness. Make at least five connections so students get the idea that this random process creates interesting pairings. Students should see odd connections result in phrases such as "The Necklace of Anger."

- Ask the students to describe these newly created objects. For example, "What would the shoe of happiness look like? Smell like? Where would the owner of it walk? How would you feel if you wore it? What might the shoe be doing on a Saturday?"

- For their individual work, ask students to pick one of these combinations from the board or invent one of their own and write a poem that describes the object, using images that appeal to the five senses. Remind the students to use personification and show what the object looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels like– they can brainstorm these things before drafting the poem. The students should model their poems' titles on the phrase "The Necklace of Anger."

The Necklace of Anger
By Jane Shore (from *Eye Level*, 1977)

If I could wear my anger around my neck,
that ugly jewelry clinking, clinking,
it'd be strung with teeth: strong chewers
of mukluks, teeth that twist off
bottletops, shark and tiger teeth, sets
of chattering false teeth, the funny ones
you wind up to mow the lawn.

When I'd walk,
I'd walk with a terrible loudness.
I'd ask the dentist to fill each tooth
with a silver microphone. My sensitive
necklace would pick up all the sounds
in my head. You'd hear great cyclones
of breath and the motes that slide
across my eyes like continents.

And still I think I might scare myself
with the noise I make. Something quieter,
a blizzard inside a glass paperweight,
offends no one. Facing you when I am angriest,
I wouldn't need to be articulate or move
an inch. There I'd sit, wearing my necklace
around my throat, a string
of covered wagons when you attack.

TONE

Students will learn how poets use word choice to convey tone and spark a particular mood within the reader, which ultimately allows the reader to draw meaning from the poem

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What students will produce

- A poem with a central tone that conveys a mood

Materials

- Langston Hughes poems handout

Activity

- Explain to students that tone and mood play a large role in poetry and can be understood from our everyday life experiences. For example, people understand the tone of voice when a dad is yelling at his teenage daughter, and the mood she is in because of the yelling (students have probably heard the saying, "it's not what you say, it's how you say it"). Poets write with a certain tone, and through that tone hope to create a mood in both the piece of writing and the reader.

- In poetry, tone is the author's attitude toward his or her work or a character in the poem. Poets convey tone through word choice, so readers have to pay careful attention to the author's use of language to correctly identify the tone.
    - Examples of tone include sincere, sarcastic, humorous, cheerful, hopeful, solemn, or enthusiastic. Sometimes, poets shift the tone throughout the piece of writing to reflect a natural progression from one emotion to another.

- Mood is the emotional impact on the reader produced by the author's choice of language and device. In poetry, it is conveyed with words and phrases, imagery, figurative language, rhyme and rhythm.
    - No one word describes mood-- it can be a feeling of doom, fear, pride, chaos, peace, or love, gloomy, imaginary, optimistic, pessimistic, silly, thought-provoking, sadness, courage…

- Write the word "scary" on the board. Ask students how they might convey a scary tone. Prompt them by asking: What words are scary? What colors are scary? What sounds are scary? What images are scary? What smells are scary? Write their answers on the board–you can keep them separated by colors, sounds, etc., or combine them into one large word cloud. Explain this is a good starting point when writing a poem, in order to set the right tone and try to pull out the intended mood from the reader.

- Read the sample poems and ask students to discuss the tone and mood of each poem. What clues led to their understanding?
    - "One Way Ticket" by Langston Hughes
        - Possible tones: serious to hopeful
        - Possible mood: Feeling like you want to run away, feeling frustrated, feeling disappointed or pushed away, feeling hurt or sad; feeling a desire to start anew
    - "Madam and the Rent Man" by Langston Hughes
        - Possible tones: ironic, sarcasm, serious (toward the end), humorous

        - Possible mood: empowered, worried, angry that the landlord is trying to collect rent for such a broken-down home

- For individual work, use the below prompts and steps to help students create poems with different tones and moods.
    - Ask students to choose one of the following settings (you may want to have pictures of the options to help students envision it)
        - A forest
        - A beach
        - An amusement park
        - A busy city street
    - Ask students to write a short poem describing the setting through the eyes of a young child
        - If helpful, they can narrow their approach by attaching an emotion to the young child (perhaps they are happy, afraid, or surprised)
        - Remind students to use as many of the senses as they can
    - Now ask students to write a short poem describing the setting through the eyes of someone who recently lost a loved one. (Note: if you want to avoid the topic of death, you can change the prompt to be through the eyes of someone who's had a bad day or is angry about something)
        - Prompt students to think about what that character might notice in the setting that resonates with them.
    - When their poems are finished, ask students how the tone and mood of their poems shifted from one to the other.
    - Suggested parameters for each poem
        - Minimum six lines
        - Include sensory details (especially sound, smell, taste, and touch)
        - At least one example of figurative language: metaphor or simile
        - At least one example of personification
        - Clearly convey tone

One Way Ticket
By Langston Hughes

I pick up my life
And take it with me
And I put it down in
Chicago, Detroit,
Buffalo, Scranton,
Any place that is North and East—
And not Dixie.

I pick up my life
And take it on the train
To Los Angeles, Bakersfield,
Seattle, Oakland, Salt Lake,
Any place that is
North and West—
And not South.

I am fed up
With Jim Crow laws,
People who are cruel
And afraid,
Who lynch and run,
Who are scared of me
And me of them.

I pick up my life
And take it away
On a one-way ticket—
Gone up North,
Gone out West,
Gone!

Madam And The Rent
By Langston Hughes

The rent man knocked.
He said, Howdy-do?
I said, What
Can I do for you?
He said, You know
Your rent is due.

I said, Listen,
Before I'd pay
I'd go to Hades
And rot away!

The sink is broke,
The water don't run,
And you ain't done a thing
You promised to've done.

Back window's cracked,
Kitchen floor squeaks,
There's rats in the cellar,
And the attic leaks.

He said, Madam,
It's not up to me.
I'm just the agent,
Don't you see?

I said, Naturally,
You pass the buck.
If it's money you want
You're out of luck.

He said, Madam,
I ain't pleased!
I said, Neither am I.
So we agrees!

HOW TO REVISE POETRY

Students will learn different approaches to revising poetry and apply those techniques to the poems they drafted earlier in the week

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What students will produce

- A revised version of their poem

Materials

- Approaches to Poetry Revision handout

Activity

- Explain to students that revision is a tool we should value as highly as drafting, if not more so—revision is our chance to get our poems closer to the ideal we imagine, to communicate more perfectly with our readers.

- Walk through different steps poets can take to revise their poems:
    - Experiment with cutting out words that are unnecessary or clutter the poem
    - Experiment with identifying strengths: Go through the poem and find the strong lines—those that sound good and/or are built around strong, precise images. Keep only the strong lines, build the poem around them. Or keep the strong lines and revise/refine the other lines until they are of equal quality.
    - Experiment with line breaks: If long lines are broken at the phrase, try short lines broken against the phrase (and vice versa).
        - It was snowing this morning → Snow this morning
    - Experiment with flip-flopping ideas:
        - There are a lot of cardinals at our bird feeder →
        - Our bird feeder
          Red with cardinals

- If students need practice before jumping into revising their own poems, help them understand the process of revision by working through the following activity with song lyrics.
    - Ask students to write down four lines of their favorite song. Then ask them to eliminate half of the words from those lyrics. Once they've done that, ask them to eliminate half of the words they have left. Then, they will title their "new" poems, but not the same title as the original song.
    - Use the sample activity if needed.

- Pass out the Poetry Revision handout and ask students to work through it using one (or more) of their poems from earlier in the week

Sample Activity - Song Lyrics to Poems

Ain’t No Mountain High Enough
'Cause baby, there ain't no mountain high enough
Ain't no valley low enough
ain't no river wide enough
To keep me from getting to you, baby *(26 words)*
–
no mountain high
no valley low
no river wide
keep me from you *(13 words)*
–
Nothing Can Keep Me
no mountain
valley
river
from you *(6 words)*

Poetry Revision

STEP 1 – "DRAW INSPIRATION" – Reading other people's poems can help you see what others are doing, and may give you some ideas for what you want to add to your poem. Find AT LEAST three people's poems to read. As you read, look for phrases, words, or things they did in their poem that you liked. Tell them what you liked about it!

Poem I read:	What I liked about it:
1.	
2.	
3.	

STEP 2 – "PROVE IT!" - IMPROVING YOUR ADJECTIVES.

An adjective is a word that describes another word. Go through your poem and UNDERLINE all of your adjectives that may be vague or need improvement. (Here are some vague adjectives that aren't very specific: Huge, Hot, Awesome, Good, Pretty, Smart, Small, etc.) Find AT LEAST three, then move onto the next instruction.

Vague Adjectives that need improving:

1._____	2. _____	3. _____

Now in the space below your adjective, write an additional line or two that PROVES IT. For example, if you wrote: "The witch is ugly." You might underline the word, "ugly" as a vague adjective, because it isn't very specific. It doesn't create a picture for the reader. You could then write some additional descriptions "proving" how ugly the witch is. For example, you might write: *The witch is ugly. Her stringy hair looks like the wet, dirty mop propped against the wall in my garage. Her snaggletooth grimace reveals a thin slimy green film and several missing teeth. She has a huge carbuncle on her left cheek with a long gray hair growing out of it. Her chin is pointy and hairy, her nose is bumpy and snotty, and her neck looks like limp crepe paper.*

Now consider, do any of these descriptions work to enhance your writing? Could you select one or two of those descriptions and replace your vague adjective? You may end up adding some lines like this:

Her stringy hair a wet dirty mop
Her cheek covered with a carbuncle and a long protruding gray hair
Her chin pointy and hairy
Her nose bumpy and snotty
Her neck like limp crepe paper

STEP 3 - "SHOW; DON'T TELL." – IMPROVING YOUR VERBS.

Verbs are action words. Some of the most bland and boring action words are called "to be" verbs, or "state of being" verbs. There are 8 "to be" verbs: am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been. If you use one of these as a verb in your sentence, odds are you are TELLING instead of SHOWING. Go through your poem and circle every "to be verb." Find AT LEAST three.

Phrases that use "To Be" verbs that need improving:

1. _____

Revision: _____

2. _____

Revision: _____

3. _____

Revision: _____

Once you've written the phrase above that uses a "to be" verb, rewrite the phrase using a more active verb. For example: Don't *tell* the reader "I *was* hungry"… instead, SHOW the reader how "My stomach pounded and wrenched, screaming for sustenance."

STEP 4 - MAKE EVERY WORD COUNT

Remove the adjectives/adverbs. These kinds of words are notorious for clogging a poem. If you can eliminate them and the meaning of the poem doesn't change, you don't need them. Add something that matters. Make every word count.

POETRY SHARE OUT #1

Students will share their poetic works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Mirror, Mirror

In pairs, students will read their writing out loud to each other. Alternatively, teachers could work with a group of students and read each piece aloud. Students who are listening will be a “mirror” for the writer by reflecting on the piece using the following sentence starters:

- “I heard...”
- “I pictured...”
- “I felt...”
- “I wondered...”

Week 2 Schedule

Week 2 Purpose: Reflect

This week, students will explore poetry prompts that will allow them to reflect on who they are and where they are from.

- **MONDAY: Name Poem**
- **TUESDAY: Where I'm From Poem**
- **WEDNESDAY: Memory Poem**
- **THURSDAY: Mentor Text and Revision**
- **FRIDAY: Share Out**

NAME POEM

Students will analyze a poem for its literary techniques and use what they learn to inspire their own writing.

**Lesson adapted from 826 Digital Choosing My Name*

What students will produce

- A name poem that reflects different aspects of their identity

Materials

- Choosing My Name poem and Name Poem Handout

Activity

- Explain to students that names carry a massive amount of weight: they are what we call ourselves, and how others identify us. Names can have history, bring us joy, and trigger sadness. They are one of the strongest markers we have for our own identities.

- Introduce Hawaiian author Puanani Burgess' poem, "Choosing My Name." In this poem she explores her identity as a multi-racial, young woman growing up in Hawaii. She incorporates Hawaiian language into the poem to portray an image of her connection both to the land and her Hawaiian heritage.

- Pass out the handout and encourage students to read along and take notes as you (or a student) reads aloud the poem. Read the poem twice, allowing another student to read it aloud. Discuss the following questions in partners or as a class:
    - How does she feel about each name?
    - Which words indicate her feelings?
    - What is the cultural conflict in her family?
    - How does she feel about being multicultural?
    - What is the difference between her given names and the name she claims?

- Walk students through the steps on the handout.
    - Students will use lines of Burgess' poem to identify different names they have and use. Students will answer the prompts listed on the chart in the blank spaces to generate ideas for their names. There is also a blank box on the handout for students to free-write about any other names they might have that don't fit into the chart.
    - Students will brainstorm any thoughts and feelings they might associate with each of their three names. Instruct them to write each name in the appropriate space on the chart, and then their ideas about each name in the lines under the prompt.
    - Students will use their brainstorm to write their name poem. Students can use the template or without using the handout, if they feel like they have a strong idea of their own direction. Remind students of the criteria.:
        - Three names that are meaningful to you
        - Three cultural words (we all have cultural words and phrases)
        - A sense of conflict or idealism attached to one of your names
        - Expression of how you feel about your names
        - Share how you got these names (Who named you? Why did they name you this?)

Choosing My Name
By Puanani Burgess

When I was born my mother gave me three names.
Christabelle, Yoshie, and Puanani.
Christabelle was my “English” name.
My social security name,
My school name,
the name I gave when teachers asked me
For my “real” name, a safe name.
Yoshie was my home name,
My everyday name,
the name that reminded my father’s family
that I was Japanese, even though
my nose, hips, and feet were wide,
the name that made me acceptable to them
who called my Hawaiian mother kuroi,
a saving name.
Puanani is my chosen name,
My piko name connecting me to the ‘aina
and the kai and the po’e kahiko
my blessing; my burden,
my amulet, my spear.

Hawaiian Word Definitions

- kuroi = black
- ‘aina = land
- piko = belly button
- kai = ocean
- po’e kahiko = ancestors

Name Poem Handout

STEP 1: Use Puanani Burgess' poem to help you think of three of your own names to write about. Answer the prompts in the blank spaces of the chart below.

"When I was born my mother gave me three names."	What is the history of a name? **Does your name have any history attached to it?**	
"My social security name, My school name"	What is a "safe" name? **Do you have a safe name?**	
"My everyday name, the name that reminded my father's family"	What is the family story behind this name? What is a home name? **Do you have a home name?**	
"Puanani is my chosen name, My piko name connecting me to the 'aina"	What is a chosen name? How can she choose it, if her mom gave it to her? **What is your chosen name?**	

Do you have a name that doesn't fit into any of the categories above? You can free-write about it in this box.

STEP 2: Now that you've identified three names that you have, use the chart below to brainstorm words and feelings that come to mind when you think of each name.

NAME 1	NAME 2	NAME 3
What words and feelings come up when you think about Name 1?	What words and feelings come up when you think about Name 2?	What words and feelings come up when you think about Name 3?

STEP 3: Now that you've completed your brainstorm, follow the prompts on the left side of the chart, and write the lines of each stanza in the blank spaces.

Stanza 1 Write an opening line that includes the names you are going to write about. (3 Lines)	
Stanza 2 Write about the name you would say is your "safe" name. What is the story of that name? Try and use a simile to describe this name. (6 Lines)	
Stanza 3 Fill it out with your second name-usually your middle or nickname? Who calls you this second name and why? (6 Lines)	
Stanza 4 End with the name that you love the most, that makes you who you are. Tell us who you are and why this is the name you prefer. This is a good place for symbolism! (6 Lines)	

WHERE I'M FROM POEM

Students will produce a memory map and a poem inspired by those details

**Lesson adapted from 826 Digital Where I'm From Poems*

What students will produce

- A memory poem

Materials

- Where I'm From Poem and Memory Map

Activity

- Share with students that, today, they will be reading a well-known poem called "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyons. They will then analyze the poem's structure and learn how to write a similar poem.

- Ask students to close their eyes, listen to you reading the poem (or you can listen to the poet herself read the poem), and visualize the images that are being shared. Encourage them to not get stuck on words or names they might not know and focus on the overall picture that's being painted.

- After students have listened to the poem, give them a moment to read through the text of the poem and ask questions about unfamiliar words (the poem can be on the board, or passed out individually). Next, ask them to share what they noticed about the poem:
    - Which people, places, and things were mentioned in the poem? Did they always know exactly how those nouns related to the writer?
    - Did they personally connect to any of the images in the poem?
    - What do students notice about the structure of the poem? Are there certain lines or words that get repeated?
    - What did they learn about the writer after hearing the poem?

- Next, students will free-write about 3 memories that they feel especially connected to. Give students 5 minutes per memory to write down whatever puts them back into that memory; they will have time in the next step to create a more concrete memory map. Encourage students to focus more on the details of the memory, during their free-write time, and less on using perfect grammar spelling.

- After students have completed their free-writes, they will create a memory map to brainstorm ideas for their own poem. They will use page 4 of the handout to build out the details of those 3 memories. Students will list a 3-word summary of their memories, the settings for their memories, other people that were present, and the sensory details that they remember. These are all elements that can be used in their final poems.

- After students have mapped out their memories, they can use the information to begin writing their poem. The poem's shape is entirely up to the students, but if they'd like to stay true to the original, they can begin with the phrase, "I am from." This phrase can also be repeated throughout. Below are 3 additional formatting suggestions if students need help getting started:

    - Each stanza is a pair of lines. The first line begins with “I am from…” and includes a concrete detail from their memory map. The second line describes that detail.
    - Each stanza acts as a list, and the different details presented all fit into specific categories.
    - Each stanza represents their memory, as it is written out on their memory map: the 3 word summary first, the location second, the people that were present third, and sensory details fourth.

- Below is an example student poem from an 826 Student. You can use this example if students need it.

“Where I’m From”
by Rockelle Rodd, Grade 11, 826NYC

I am from paint
From benjamins and sherwin
I am from the neat and modern
Never-ending, bold, and smooth
I am from Chaconia
An ornamental tree
I am from reunions and strong cheekbones
From Mama Delé and Cecilia
I’m from the endless laughter and tears of joy
From strength and determination
I’m from spirituality, intent
I’m from Brooklyn and Trinidad
Curry, crab, and dumplings
From the strength and pride of Mama Delé
The colorful clothes sewn into the perfect dress by Uncle Roy
The chest of drawers topped with captured memories in family portraits
One picture at a time sewn together to create the beautiful fabric called my family

Where I'm From
by George Ella Lyons

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride
I am from the dirt under the back porch
(Black, glistening
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from the fudge and eyeglasses,
        from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
        and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!
I'm from He restoreth my soul
        with a cottonball lamb
        and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
from the finger my grandfather lost
        to the auger
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments–
snapped before I budded–
leaf-fall from the family tree

Memory Map
Use the memory map below to list the people, places, and things; the sensory details; and the emotions that make up your most cherished memories.

	Memory 1	**Memory 2**	**Memory 3**
Three-word summary of my memory			
Where I was			
Who I was with			
Sights I remember seeing			
Sounds I remember hearing			
Textures or emotions I remember feeling			
Flavors I remember tasting			
Aromas I remember smelling			

MEMORY POEM

Students begin with the most essential details from various memories, helping them hone in on specifics without getting caught up in writer's block.

**Lesson adapted from 826 Digital Memories With Meaning*

What students will produce

- A poem about a specific memory

Materials

- Blank piece of paper

Activity

- Give each student a sheet of blank paper. Ask them to fold it in half, then in half again to make 4 boxes, then open it back up again.

- Now, explain that you'll ask questions quickly and students must answer with just one word, with one answer per box. Be clear that these don't have to be "right answers"—students shouldn't overthink this—but that they should just write what immediately comes to mind.
    - Example instructions:
        - What is your greatest strength?
        - Write down one of your personality traits
        - Finish this sentence: I feel the safest when ____
        - Name something you never want to lose.
        - Etc…

- Once you are done asking the questions, have students go back and fill in each of the squares with more ideas, details, memories, descriptions, and perhaps other answers.

- From here, students can focus on one of their squares (consider having them choose their favorite), and continue writing a longer narrative or poem.

- As a spin to this activity, you can ask questions that all connect to one subject to help students pick out key details to a larger topic (for this you could use 4 squares or even 8).
    - Example instructions:
        - What is your favorite time of year?
        - What do you look forward to the most about this time at other times of year?
        - What do you miss the most when this time is over?
        - What is a smell that comes to mind when you think of this time of year?
        - What is a sound that comes to mind when you think of this time of year?
        - What is an image that comes to mind when you think of this time of year?
        - Who is someone you think of when you think of this time of year?
        - What is one more word that comes to mind when you think of this time of year?

REVISION - Reading Out Loud

Students will learn how reading their poems out loud can help to notice its strengths and weaknesses and will use this approach to revising a selected poem

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What students will produce

- A revised version of their poem

Materials

- Poems from earlier in the week

Mentor Text

Share the poem "We Real Cool" from famous American poet Gwendolyn Brooks (you can listen to her reading it here) and then read students this quote from Brooks about revision:

> *"A poem rarely comes whole and completely dressed. As a rule, it comes in bits and pieces. You get an impression of something—you feel something, you anticipate something, and you begin, feebly, to put these impressions and feelings and anticipation or rememberings into those things which seem so common and handleable—words. And you flail and you falter and you shift and you shake, and finally, you come forth with the first draft. Then, if you're myself and if you're like many of the other poets I know, you revise, and you revise. And often the finished product is nothing like your first draft. Sometimes it is."* — Gwendolyn Brooks

Activity

- Explain to students that editing poetry is as much about revising for readability as it is for its oral quality. How does your poem sound? Listen for rhythm, flow, and the placement of breaks throughout each line. How can it be more surprising in terms of sound? Does it have a lot of repetition that builds the poem, or does it need more hard consonants or soft vowel sounds to drive the poem along or let it float down gently? As you make changes, read your edits aloud to make sure the revised poem is good on paper and pleasing to the ear.

- Partner Share: match students or have them select a partner. Each partner will take a turn reading their poem aloud.
    - Have the first person read their poem to their partner and then reflect and share on anything they noticed while reading.
    - Next, have the partner offer feedback on what they hear and notice while listening.
    - Reverse roles.
    - If time allows, let students switch partners once or twice. The more they read something aloud, the more they will notice things about their work. (note: you can allow for revision time in between partner swaps, or all up-front with revision time coming at the end of class time)
    - Remind students to take notes about changes they can make as they go through these steps

- Allow students time to sit alone with their feedback and use it to make revisions.

We Real Cool
By Gwendolyn Brooks

The Pool Players.
Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

POETRY SHARE OUT #2

Students will share their poetic works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Musical Chairs Reading Circle

If space allows, this activity works best when students can gather in a big circle, either on the floor or with their desks arranged. Students need 3 materials to start: their writing, a pencil, and 4-5 sticky notes. Tell students that they will read 4-5 pieces of writing and leave praise for their fellow writers. You will start by playing music. Students will leave their writing at their seat, then with their sticky notes, walk around the circle (or dance, hop, tip toe, etc!) until the music stops. When it does, they will stop and read the piece that is in front of them—like musical chairs, except every piece of writing stays in the circle for every round of this game. Students can respond to the writing using the sentence starters below:

- “I connect with this because...”
- “I love your choice of...”
- “I like how you tried...”

Week 3 Schedule

Week 3 Purpose: Relate

This week, students will explore with poetry prompts that allow them to relate to others and the world around them.

- **MONDAY: Neighborhood Poem**
- **TUESDAY: Animal Poem**
- **WEDNESDAY: Historical Found Poem**
- **THURSDAY: Mentor Text and Revision**
- **FRIDAY: Share Out**

NEIGHBORHOOD POEM

Students will identify imagery in a poem by Elizabeth Acevedo and write a poem about their neighborhood using rich, descriptive details..

**Lesson adapted from 826 Digital Neighborhood Poem*

What students will produce

- A poem about their neighborhood

Materials

- "Stoop Sitting" by Elizabeth Acevedo and Neighborhood Poem Brainstorm Handout

Activity

- In small groups or as a whole class, read "Stoop Sitting" by Elizabeth Acevedo. Discuss using the following questions:
    - What is this poem about?
    - What images or details stand out to you? Why?
    - Have you seen any of these images in your own neighborhood(s)?

- Students use the brainstorming handout to think about their neighborhood and the various images and sensory experiences that define that space.

- Students use their brainstorm handouts to write a draft of their poem.

- Ask students, how has this exercise changed your view of poetry? With extra time, invite volunteers to share their poems.

Stoop Sitting
by Elizabeth Acevedo, from The Poet X

The summer is made for stoop-sitting
and since it's the last week before school starts,
Harlem is opening its eyes to September.

I scope out this block I've always called home.

Watch the old church ladies, chancletas flapping
against the pavement, their mouths letting loose a train
of island Spanish as they spread, he said, she said.

Peep Papote from down the block
as he opens the fire hydrant
so the little kids have a sprinkler to run through.

Listening to honking cabs with bachata laring
from their open windows
compete with basketballs echoing from the Little Park.

Laugh at the viejos—my father not included—
finishing their dominoes tournament with hard slaps
and yells of "Capicu!"

Shake my head as even the drug dealers posted up
near the building smile more in the summer, their hard scowls
softening into glue-eyed stares in the direction

of the girls in summer dresses and short shorts:

"Ayo, Xiomara, you need to start wearing dresses like that!"
"Shit, you'd be wifed up before going back to school."
"Especially knowing you church girls are all freaks."

But I ignore their taunts, enjoy this last bit of freedom,
And wait for the long shadows to tell me
When Mami is almost home from work,

When it's time to sneak upstairs.

Neighborhood Poem Handout

Brainstorming Use the following questions to help brainstorm for your poem.

What neighborhood do you consider home?

If you close your eyes, what are three images that you think of about this neighborhood?

What does this neighborhood smell like?

What are three tastes that remind you of this place?

What is one memory you have in this neighborhood? It can be by yourself or with a family member or friend.

Drafting

Using your answers to the brainstorming questions, write a poem about your neighborhood. Like Elizabeth Acevedo, make sure to break up your lines and stanzas where you want your reader to pause.

ANIMAL POEM

Students will explore their connections to animals and write a poem inspired by an animal

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What students will produce

- A poem inspired by an animal they feel connected to

Materials

- Blank piece of paper and writing supplies and sample animal poems

Activity

- Share with students about Ada Limón. Consider putting this information on the board or printed on a handout.
    - Ada Limón is an American poet. On 12 July 2022, she was named the 24th Poet Laureate of the United States. Her recent collection of poems features animals of all kinds — groundhogs, foxes, manatees, many types of birds — and humans' connection to animals.
    - In an interview with the New England Review, here's what Ada had to say about animals:
        - It's true I'm obsessed with animals, but not just the nonhuman animal, but how *we* are animals too. A sense of interconnectedness on the planet is what encourages me to try to live each day with some sort of grace, some sort of enoughness. Animals are always reminding me that I am not the center of the story. That there is life all around me and that life will continue on without me.

          I feel increasingly fascinated about the idea that we often don't think of the animal witnessing us, but rather we are always the seer. Humans are the ones… [that] tell the story. We have the language-laden tongue and the opposable thumbs. But that still doesn't mean we are at the center. In my work… I'm interested in what it is to not always be the one witnessing, but also what it feels like to be seen, to be witnessed by someone, something else. I'm intrigued by the idea that to be witnessed is as essential as to witness. I'm also intrigued with the idea that when an animal sees the human animal, it sees the animal us, the body, the skin, the movement, the threat, the safety, without all the chaos that's steaming in our minds.

- Introduce the project to students: they will be writing a poem about an animal they feel connected to.

- Ask students to call out the names of interesting animals or ones they identify with and write these animals on the board. Prompt them by moving quickly from one student to the next. Ask the students to choose an animal from the ones listed and ask them to try to imagine what it feels like to be that animal.

- Read the sample poems as a class.

- For their brainstorm, ask students to fold a blank piece of paper into eight squares. Ask them the following questions and have them jot down their answers in a square for each question (give 2-3 minutes between asking each question)
    - What does the animal see? Hear? Taste?
    - What does its voice sound like?
    - What does it understand?
    - What questions does it have?
    - What is the animal's goal?
    - What does the animal teach you?
    - How are you connected to this animal?
    - How are you and the animal similar?

- For independent work, ask students to write a poem about the animal they chose based on the ideas they generated in their brainstorm.
    - Tell students they may “become” the animal and write from the point of view of a bear or a sloth, for example.
    - Tell students to make it personal: Connect something about the animal’s life to something in your own story.

Sample Animal Poems

Ecosystems
by Sarah Dickenson Snyder

A googly-eyed rock goby
is a fish that lives

in small pools nestled
in rocks near the breach

of waves––little worlds
contained, protected.

Do they wish to leave
their measured realm

so close to an infinite sea?
Do they know how much

spins outside their boundary?
How much will we never know

about what lives outside of us.
I have been with him

for thirty years––
we swirl––

the two of us
in a hot tub,

untrembling, a billion trillion
specks of light beyond our reach.

Gaea
By J.P. (from Open the Door II, 1999)

The silver moon grins maddeningly at me.
I howl praises in response.
We are her chosen.
The cold of the forest affects all other creatures,
but my fur keeps me warm enough to hunt.
That, added with the blood of my prey,
is all I need to survive.

The Eagle
By Alfred Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

The Fly
By William Blake

Little fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance
And drink and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength and breath,
And the want
Of thought is death,

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.

HISTORICAL FOUND POEM

Students will use nonfiction reading sources to create their own found poetry to convey a personal point of view on the Japanese American Internment Camps during WWII.

What students will produce

- A found poem

Materials

- Writing paper and pencil, notecards (optional)

Activity

- Introduce the concept of found poems to students. A found poem is one that is created using only words that have been copied and rearranged from another text. To create found poems, one chooses language that is particularly meaningful or interesting to them and organizes the language around a theme or message. A typical process is to read a piece of writing, pick out descriptive words, phrases and lines, and rearrange those lines into a poem. This is the task for today.

- Explain to students that they will be looking at historical, first-person accounts from survivors of the Japanese Internment Camps during WWII. If students need more information on this moment in history, consider showing this TedEx video. You can also access the article from which the testimony in the student handout came from, which offers a series of photos from the camps as well.

- Pass out the Japanese Internment Camp Survivors: In Their Own Words handout. First, read the testimony out loud as a class, moving from one student to another to read the different quotes. Have students solely focus on reading and understanding the quotes. Read through the testimonies at least once more (out loud again, independently, or both) and ask students to underline/highlight/circle words or phrases that they find memorable or powerful.

- Next, instruct students to copy down those words or phrases and arrange them into a poem. It may help to pass out notecards for students to write those phrases on and allow them to easily rearrange them (note: this can also be done by tearing or cutting up paper into strips).
    - Encourage students to try and arrange the words in a way that captures what they think is the essence of the testimony, as well as their experience of hearing it.
    - Remind students:
        - You DON'T have to use all of the words and phrases you chose.
        - You CAN repeat words or phrases.
        - You CAN'T add other words besides those you copied from the testimony.
        - Your poem DOESN'T have to rhyme.

Japanese Internment Camp Survivors: In Their Own Words
Source: https://www.biography.com/news/japanese-internment-survivors-stories-75th-anniversary-photos

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the lives of Japanese Americans would change forever. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt would authorize the evacuation of over 110,000 people of Japanese descent along the Pacific Coast and incarcerate them into relocation camps. Over 60 percent of these people were U.S. citizens. It would take four years for the last of these camps to close. It would take another four-plus decades for the U.S. government to condemn its own actions as racist and xenophobic and offer reparations to those Japanese American families whose lives were upended by the incarceration.

In remembrance of this dark stain in U.S. history, we highlight some of the survivors' experiences in their own words.

"*As far as I'm concerned, I was born here, and according to the Constitution that I studied in school, that I had the Bill of Rights that should have backed me up. And until the very minute I got onto the evacuation train, I says, 'It can't be'. I says, "How can they do that to an American citizen?"*
– Robert Kashiwagi

"I remembered some people who lived across the street from our home as we were being taken away. When I was a teenager, I had many after-dinner conversations with my father about our internment. He told me that after we were taken away, they came to our house and took everything. We were literally stripped clean."
- George Takei

"We saw all these people behind the fence, looking out, hanging onto the wire, and looking out because they were anxious to know who was coming in. But I will never forget the shocking feeling that human beings were behind this fence like animals [crying]. And we were going to also lose our freedom and walk inside of that gate and find ourselves…cooped up there…when the gates were shut, we knew that we had lost something that was very precious; that we were no longer free."
- Mary Tsukamoto

"Sometime the train stopped, you know, fifteen to twenty minutes to take fresh air — suppertime and in the desert, in middle of state. Already before we get out of train, army machine guns lined up towards us — not toward other side to protect us, but like enemy, pointed machine guns toward us."
- Henry Sugimoto

"It was a prison indeed . . .There was barbed wire along the top [of the fence] and because the soldiers in the guard towers had machine guns, one would be foolish to try to escape."
- Mary Matsuda Gruenewald

"The stall was about ten by twenty feet and empty except for three folded army cots on the floor. Dust, dirt, and wood shavings covered the linoleum that had been laid over manure-covered boards, the smell of horses hung in the air, and the whitened corpses of many insects still clung to the hastily white-washed walls."
- Yoshiko Uchida

"As we were pulling into the camp, [an] ambulance was taking my father to the hospital. So I grabbed my daughter and went to see him. And that was the one and only time he got to see her because he died sometime after that."
- Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga

"Finally getting out of the camps was a great day. It felt so good to get out of the gates, and just know that you were going home . . .finally. Home wasn't where I left it though. Getting back, I was just shocked to see what had happened, our home being bought by a different family, different decorations in the windows; it was our house, but it wasn't anymore. It hurt not being able to return home, but moving into a new home helped me I believe. I think it helped me to bury the past a little, to, you know, move on from what had happened."
- Aya Nakamura

"My own family and thousands of other Japanese Americans were interned during World War II. It took our nation over 40 years to apologize."
- Mike Honda

REVISION - Thinking Like A Reader

Students will learn how thinking like a reader can help them notice the strengths and weaknesses of their work and will use this approach to revising a selected poem

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What students will produce

- A revised version of their poem

Materials

- Poems from earlier in the week

Mentor Text

Share the mentor text and quote from famous author and writer Roald Dahl

> Mentor Text
> **The Three Little Pigs**
> *By Roald Dahl*
>
> The animal I really dig,
> Above all others is the pig.
> Pigs are noble. Pigs are clever,
> Pigs are courteous. However,
> Now and then, to break this rule,
> One meets a pig who is a fool.
>
> *"By the time I am nearing the end of a story, the first part will have been reread and altered and corrected at least one hundred and fifty times. I am suspicious of both facility and speed. Good writing is essentially rewriting. I am positive of this."* —Roald Dahl

Activity

- Tell students that sometimes the best way to approach revising your poems is to think of your reader. Explain that today, students will review their whole poem and think like a reader.
    - First you can simply read the poem in its entirety. When you're done, jot down the first thoughts that come to your mind, like any words or lines that feel off. Think of the reader's experience with this poem. What would they come away with? Did your theme come across? Is your writing clear? Whether you wrote in a particular poetic form—like a rhyming pattern or free verse—determine whether the poetic structure worked or if you want to rewrite your poem in a different form altogether.
    - Once you've dissected your work, go back to it and make actual edits. Read it again and see if or how the message or experience of the poem has been changed for the reader. Continue with this process.
    - If students struggle to be able to think like a reader, have them work with a reader! Partner students to have them work through this process together

POETRY SHARE OUT #3

Students will share their poetic works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Gallery Walk

In this activity, students will have the opportunity to share their poetry and receive feedback, while also commenting on their peers' work. Ask students to select 1-3 poems they want feedback on. Students will then tape their poems onto the wall or lay them out on a table or desk–this activity works best if each student's work is separated a distance from other students' work. Tell students that they will travel around the room from one student's station to the next. At each station, there will be a stack of sticky notes or note cards. Instruct students to write constructive feedback for the poets. Remind students this is an opportunity to encourage one another and learn from each other.

Students can be prompted for the type of feedback they leave by the following:

- Write your favorite part of the poem
- Share an idea of how the poem might be improved
- Is there a particular word choice that you enjoyed?
- How did this poem make you feel?

Week 4 Schedule

Week 4 Purpose: Create

This week, students will explore with poetry prompts that allow them to relate to others and the world around them.

- **MONDAY: Shape Poetry**
- **TUESDAY: Sound Haikus**
- **WEDNESDAY: A Poem for Two Voices**
- **THURSDAY: Mentor Text and Revision**
- **FRIDAY: Share Out**

SHAPE POETRY

Students will create a poem connecting the theme or subject of the poem to a particular shape.

What students will produce

- A shape poem

Materials

- Writing paper and pencil

Activity

- Begin by asking students what poetry looks like. They may respond by saying poetry is in stanzas, or short lines. If they haven't said poetry can take the shape of the subject of the poem, introduce the concept of shape, or concrete, poetry.
    - A shape poem is a poem that takes on the shape of the thing you're writing about. So, if you wanted to write a poem about an apple, you could write it inside of the outline of an apple, or you could write a short poem and make the words the outline of the apple.

- Look at the examples and share them via handout or projected on the board. Before reading them, ask students what the shapes look like. Then read the poems and discuss how the shape relates to the content of the poem.

- For their individual work, students will create a shape poem. They can approach this task one of two ways:
    - They can decide on a shape (perhaps their favorite thing or food), brainstorm words associated with that shape, and then write a poem that speaks to the shape and uses those words
    - They can write a poem on any topic, reflect on the poem and determine a shape or symbol that would represent the poem, and then reformat the poem into that shape.

Shape Poetry Examples

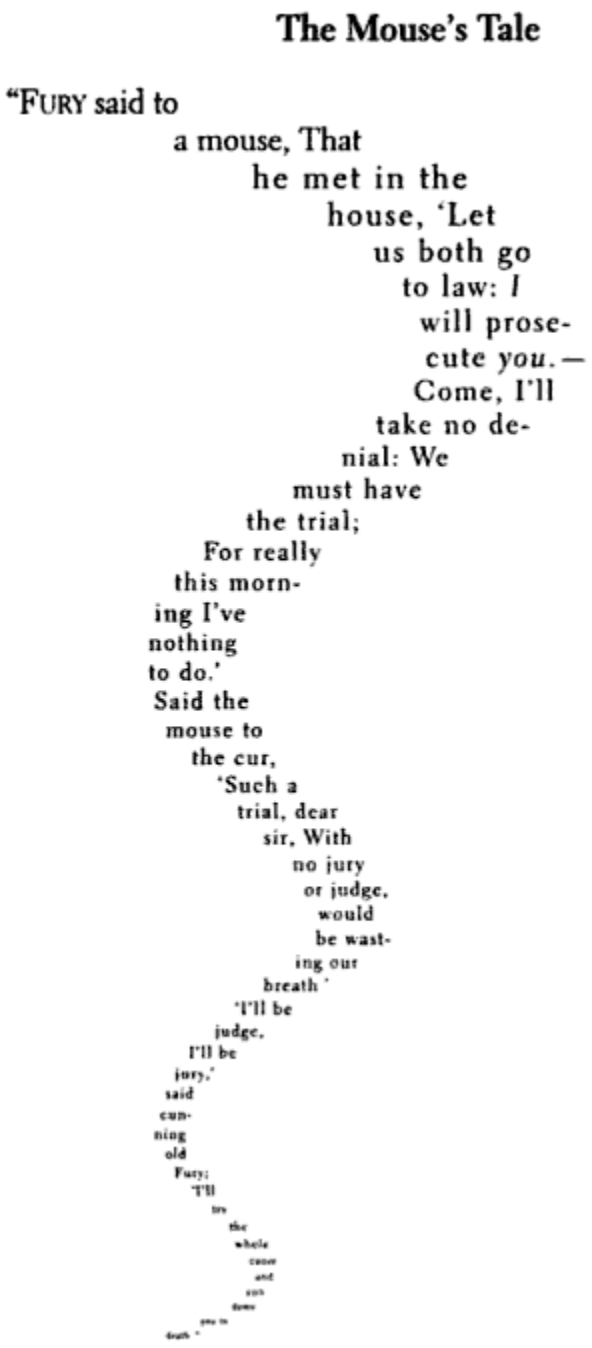
ODE TO THE DORITO

Joseph

O Dorito! You are as yellow as Homer Simson. Your blue
and green speckles are like dots on a dalmation. You
are my favorite food. You are not in the shape
of regular chips, and this, Dorito, is what
makes you so unique. You are the
most fashionable chip. When I
eat you I hear the crunch,
crunch, then crinkle,
crinkle of the bag.
I always wish
there were
just one
more
do-
ri-
to.

Source: Within These Gates Poetry Anthology from the Maya Angelou Academy

The Mouse's Tale
By Lewis Carrol



Sound Haikus

Students will practice listening to the sounds they hear around them and will write a haiku about a sound

Lesson adapted from the University of Arizona Poetry Center, Finding Inspiration Through Sound

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What students will produce

- A haiku poem

Materials

- Writing paper and pencil, notecards (optional)

Activity

- Begin by asking students which of the five senses they think humans rely on the most. Share that for many humans, sight is the dominant sense–humans are very much visual creatures. If blind, however, we learn to strengthen our perception through other senses. How would our perception of the world change if our dominant sense was smell or sound? What would we notice in our everyday lives? In this lesson, we'll close our eyes and switch our dominant mode of sensing to hearing.

- Invite students to close their eyes. Encourage everyone to be totally silent for this activity, so that they can hear even the smallest of sounds. The low murmur of an AC unit, the breathing of their peers, a car starting in the parking lot outside the window. At first, they should only listen and not write. After 2-3 minutes of solid listening, ask students to write a list of sounds they observed. Even if they don't know the source of the sound, they can write a description, make a guess as to what it might be, or use a simile to compare the sound to something else (i.e., continuous low groaning like a snoring dragon).
    - Note: This is a great activity to do outside if possible

- Explain that today students will be writing a poem about sounds in the form of a haiku. Explain that a haiku is a Japanese poem that typically focuses on counting syllables, but for today they will be counting words. Today their poems will take a simple structure: 3 lines--with 5 words, 7 words, and 5 words.
    - Practice by creating a poem as a class. Invite students to share some of the words they wrote down through the listening exercise. Form those into a poem on the board.

- Play a series of sound clips of your choice from Spotify, YouTube, or some other platform you are familiar with. You can even make the noise yourself using instruments or household items. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine a scenario in which they might hear this sound. What's going on in the sound clips? Who or what is making the sound? When? Where? Who else is around? For each sound, they should write a short poem. Allow 5 minutes for each poem. If time allows and they are engaged in the exercises, you can add more sound clips and extend the time.

Sample Student Sound Haikus

El tigre
Running fast through the forest
I see him
Red eyes and big teeth

Water
A lake in the forest
Close your eyes
Take a swim, you think?

Untitled
I’ve been lost for hours
Found my way
The croaking guides me home

A POEM FOR TWO VOICES

Students will create a poem with two distinct perspectives by creating a poem for two voices.

What students will produce

- A poem for two voices

Materials

- Writing paper and pencil, Sample Poem handouts

Activity

- Tell students: You are going to create a Poem for Two Voices. These poems place two distinct perspectives or opposing points of view in dialogue with one another. Two-voice poetry is written for two people to perform. Within the poem each voice speaks individually and then the two voices speak together. When speaking together, the voices comment on something over which they agree or disagree. In the end the two sides do not have to agree.

- Hand out and read the sample poems
    - Point out to students that the poetry has two columns—one for each person who is reading the poem. Each person reading the poem reads the text in one of the columns. Sometimes, the poet wants the two readers to say something at the same time; so the poet writes the words on the same line in each column. These poems often sound like a dialogue between two people.

- Once your students are familiar with the form, have them pair up or work individually to write and recite an original poem for two voices. The following steps should help students:
    - Choose two items, objects or people that have a relationship. For example:
        - Book characters (Charlotte & Wilbur)
        - Family members (brother & sister)
        - Animals (cat & dog)
        - Seasons (winter & spring)
        - Flowers (tulip & daffodil)
    - Brainstorm some words, ideas or phrases for each of the items. Think about how the items are similar and different from one another. It might be helpful to use a graphic organizer (two-column chart or Venn diagram) to get your ideas in order.
    - Begin writing your poem, in two separate columns, so that each item has a distinct voice. Consider whether or not your two voices will speak together at certain points in your poem. If so, try writing those lines in the center of the page.
    - Practice reading your poem. When you feel ready, perform your poem in front of others!

- The idea is to get students thinking about conversations that might happen — between the hockey stick and the puck, the chicken and the egg, the pro-choice and the pro-life advocats, the opposing soldiers, etc. Anything and everything!

Sample Poems for Two Voices

“Opposites Attract”

Batman	Both Say This	Joker
I am Batman.		
		I am the Joker.
I am a hero.		
		I am a villain.
	I have secrets.	
Every day I fight crime caused by the Joker.		
		Every day I perpetrate crimes which are solved by Batman.
	We are total opposites.	
I am humble.		
		I crave attention.
People admire me for my work.		
		People fear me for my work.
I have a loyal sidekick.		
		I wish I had a sidekick.
Without the Joker . . .		
		Without Batman . . .
	I AM NOTHING!	

Worlds Apart

Popular Girl

The morning starts as I strut my stuff down the hallway.

I say “hey” and smile.

School’s a bore. I can’t take it anymore.

I love my hair and wardrobe.

I count down the minutes till cheer practice.

At lunch I’m surrounded by people who adore me.

Uh-oh! Here come the math test grades from last week.

Ugh! Another D-

The bell rings!
I say bye to all my friends.

On my way out, I bumped into this sad girl who could really use a makeover.

When I leave I go unlock my car.

As I pull out I see the buses go past

and wonder what that would be like.
To be a geek

Geek Girl

My morning starts as people trip me down the hallway.

I say “sorry” and clutch my books.

School’s so much fun when the bullies are done.

I love my overalls and books.

I count down the minutes till chess club!

At lunch I’m surrounded by
people who adore books.

YES! Here come the math test grades from last week.

Aced the test...again!
The bell rings!

I say goodbye to all my teachers.

On my way out, I bumped into a girl who was way too pretty, and knew it!

When I leave I run so I won’t miss my bus.

As we pull out I watch the popular girls speed off in their cars
and wonder what that would be like

To be popular

REVISION - Show, Don't Tell

Students will dig deeper into "showing not telling" and will use this approach to revising a selected poem

---

What students will produce

- A revised version of their poem

Materials

- Poems from earlier in the week

Mentor Text

Share with students this quote from Russian playwright and short story writer Anton Chekhov:

> *"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass."*
> – Anton Chekhov

Activity

- Tell students that as a creative writer, their job is to show, rather than tell. What's the difference? In telling something, you don't give the reader the room to imagine or picture things on their own; you tell them what they should see and how they should feel about it. In showing, you create imagery from which the reader can interpret their own meaning.
    - You can tell your readers that: Joe was tired,
        - or you can show that: Joe rubbed his eyes and willed himself to keep them open.
    - You can tell your readers: It is early spring,
        - or you can show that: New buds are pushing through the late frost while the birds are hastily reinforcing their nests.

- Good writers "show", rather than "tell". When you show, you are being an artist, painting with words! You describe the scenes and actions. You use clear, specific details to create vivid pictures in our minds. You use imagery to help us to see, hear, feel, smell, and sometimes even taste.

- Write the following on the board as ways to ensure you show, don't tell:
    - Use specific details.
    - Use strong action verbs. Enhance them with creatively applied adverbs.
    - Use interesting nouns. Describe them with tantalizing adjectives!
    - Use imagery to create a picture.

- As a class or individually, ask students to work through a couple examples by changing the following "telling" sentences into "showing" sentences:
    - The dog was thirsty.
    - My room was a mess.
    - The crash damaged the car.

- Instruct students to turn to their poems and find areas where they can show more. Ask them to revise their poems with this goal in mind.

POETRY SHARE OUT #4

Students will share their poetic works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Loud + Proud

- Students will pick one piece they wrote over the course of the entire unit and read it, loud and proud, to a small group (or class!). Remind students that as their classmates read, be sure to listen very closely—the same way you want to be listened to. Don't forget to give snaps, a round of applause, etc. when they're done! After, students will draw or write what it felt like to share their piece.

- Consider turning this event into a poetry cafe. Create invitations and encourage other teachers or facility staff to attend, set the scene by putting table cloths over desks, place battery-operated candles around the room to set the mood, offer special food or drink, make it fun and special!

Creative Writing Course

Plays/Drama Unit

4-Week Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 ***Explore***	Piecing Together a Play	Character Development	Monologues	Revision Sharpening and Shortening	Share Out Partner + Share
Week 2 ***Reflect***	7 Types of Conflict & Character in Conflict	Conflict & Dialogue	The Arc of a Story	Revision Practicing Out Loud	Share Out Dramatic Readings
Week 3 ***Relate***	10-Minute Play Introduction	10-Minute Play Drafting	10-Minute Play Drafting	Revision Thinking Through Backstory	Share Out Readers Theater
Week 4 ***Create***	10-Minute Play Drafting	10-Minute Play Drafting	10-Minute Play Drafting	Revision Final Revisions	Share Out Dress Rehearsal

**Note for weeks 3 and 4 drafting: students can work independently or in small groups. It may make sense to have students work in a group with the same number of students as characters in the play, so they may act it out themselves.*

Week 1 Schedule

Week 1 Purpose: Explore

This week, students will explore fundamental elements to writing drama and experiment with them.

- **MONDAY: Piecing Together A Play**
- **TUESDAY: Character Development**
- **WEDNESDAY: Monologues**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Sharpening & Shortening**
- **FRIDAY: Share Out**

PIECING TOGETHER A PLAY

Students will learn how to construct a play, while simultaneously learning about the components of a play!

**This lesson adapted from The Alabama Writers' Forum Writing Our Stories curriculum*

What students will produce

- A story

Materials

- Character Brainstorm, Setting Brainstorm, and Conflict Brainstorm handouts

Activity

- Introduce students to the playwriting unit and explain that they will be learning about telling stories. Tell the students that they will be creating their own play over the course of the unit. Explain that today they will be learning about the key elements to any story: Character, Setting, Conflict, and Resolution
    - Show the definitions of the key words on the board or tell them to students:
        - **Character**: Characters are the people who appear in the Play. They should be given names, descriptions, and motivations. The character's actions and words must be believable and consistent. Characters must behave like real people in real situations.
        - **Setting**: The setting is the Play's time, place, and physical environment. The setting should not be confused with the characters or storyline. A setting does not have to be realistic, but it must provide the necessary backdrop for the action.
        - **Conflict/Problem**: Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external – between characters or between characters and their environment.
        - **Resolution**: How everything ends; the final result. This is when we find out how the play is resolved -- whether the main character succeeds or fails and how they (as well as other characters) are affected

- Divide students into small groups so that you have at least three groups. Assign each group a topic: characters, setting, or conflict/problem. If needed, assign duplicates. The activity will work to have two groups working on characters or two groups working on setting.

- Handout the respective brainstorming handout to each group and allow time for the groups to work through the sheet. Each group should brainstorm at least 5 different versions of either characters, settings, and conflicts.

- Bring the class back together and tell them that you will be developing the story for a play as an entire class by combining the different pieces that each group worked on. Invite members of each group to share their ideas, starting with "characters", then "setting," then "conflict." After each group shares their five brainstormed ideas, vote as a class to select which one(s) you'll use in your story.
    - For characters: select TWO and determine which is the main character and which is the secondary character
        - Ask students why they are making the selection they are. Is it because these two characters were the most thought out? Because these characters seem the most opposite? The most compatible?
        - Tell students that when developing characters for a story, it's important to think about

the dynamic between them and how they will relate within the story.
    - For setting: select ONE
        - Again, ask students why they selected the setting they did. Explain that a setting can do a lot for a story: it can set the stone, it can contribute to the conflict, it can tell us something about our characters (why would they choose to be there, for example) and more!
        - Note: Maybe students selected a beach setting because one of the characters they had chosen was a lifeguard or a surfer. It's important to remember that a setting should feel accurate and logical for a character. And if it doesn't, that better be part of the story–placing a professional basketball player on Mars needs to be explained through the story!
    - For conflict: select ONE
        - Again ask students why they selected the conflict. Help them to see that a conflict is enhanced by the characters and the setting and perhaps they already arrived at this conclusion by selecting a conflict that best fit with their other choices!

- Now it's time to build a story around these pieces! Briefly model for the students how you might take a character, a setting, and a conflict, combine them with a resolution, and end up with a full story that can then become a play.
    - For example: Say you have a waitress and a lost four-year-old; they are at a movie theater; and the problem is that the waitress doesn't have money to wash her clothes at the laundromat. The story could be that the waitress finds the lost boy at the theater and helps him go to the front desk where they make an announcement trying to find the boy's parents. When the parents retrieve the boy, they are so grateful that they give the waitress a $20 bill as a thank you. Now the waitress has money for her laundry!

- Lead the students in constructing a sample story (It will likely be silly since the groups were not aware of what the other groups were working on when they gathered ideas). Remember, that they haven't selected a resolution to their conflict yet, so that should be part of the story development. Encourage students to come up with details that tie in the setting.
    - Note: If there's time and students are interested, they can act out the play!
    - Note: Students can also work independently to develop their own stories and they could share out at the end. This is a great way to display students' creativity and how there can be many different stories created with the same elements.

- End by explaining to students that this story development is the first step in creating and brainstorming a play. As they continue through this unit, students will build off of what they practiced today.

Character Brainstorm

Every story involves people–called characters! Use the graphic organizer below to brainstorm five unique characters that could be used in a story. These characters can be boring, strange, energetic, young, old, human or alien. Have fun! And remember to be specific!

Character 1	Name:
Age:	Where are they from?
What do they do? (profession, student, etc.)	What are their hobbies?
Any additional unique characteristics about them?	

Character 2	Name:
Age:	Where are they from?
What do they do? (profession, student, etc.)	What are their hobbies?
Any additional unique characteristics about them?	

Character 3	Name:
Age:	Where are they from?
What do they do? (profession, student, etc.)	What are their hobbies?
Any additional unique characteristics about them?	

Character 4	Name:
Age:	Where are they from?
What do they do? (profession, student, etc.)	What are their hobbies?
Any additional unique characteristics about them?	

Character 5	Name:
Age:	Where are they from?
What do they do? (profession, student, etc.)	What are their hobbies?
Any additional unique characteristics about them?	

Setting Brainstorm

Every story takes place somewhere–called the setting. Use the graphic organizer below to brainstorm five unique settings where a story could take place. Be specific and use your imagination!

Setting 1	Name:
Location: (city, state, country, universe, etc) Time:	Who is present?
What does it look like?	What does it smell like?
What does it feel like?	What sounds do you hear there?

Setting 2	Name:
Location: (city, state, country, universe, etc) Time:	Who is present?
What does it look like?	What does it smell like?
What does it feel like?	What sounds do you hear there?

Setting 3	Name:
Location: (city, state, country, universe, etc) Time:	Who is present?
What does it look like?	What does it smell like?
What does it feel like?	What sounds do you hear there?

Setting 4	Name:
Location: (city, state, country, universe, etc) Time:	Who is present?
What does it look like?	What does it smell like?
What does it feel like?	What sounds do you hear there?

Setting 5	Name:
Location: (city, state, country, universe, etc) Time:	Who is present?
What does it look like?	What does it smell like?
What does it feel like?	What sounds do you hear there?

Problem/Conflict Brainstorm

Every story involves a problem or conflict for the main character(s). Use the graphic organizer below to brainstorm five unique problems that could happen in a story. These can be everyday challenges or huge obstacles. Be creative!

Example Problem	Name: *Forgotten Lunch*
What does the main character want? *To eat lunch and satisfy their hunger*	
What obstacles are keeping the main character from getting what they want? *They forgot their lunch at home and don't have any money to buy lunch. They also don't have anyone at home that can bring their lunch to them.*	
What are the stakes? (What will the main character lose or miss out on if they don't get what they want?) *If they don't get their lunch, they will continue to be hungry and will lose energy for getting through the rest of the day. They won't be able to focus for the rest of the day, which could get them in trouble.*	

Problem 1	Name:
What does the main character want?	
What obstacles are keeping the main character from getting what they want?	
What are the stakes? (What will the main character lose or miss out on if they don't get what they want?)	

Problem 2	Name:
What does the main character want?	
What obstacles are keeping the main character from getting what they want?	
What are the stakes? (What will the main character lose or miss out on if they don't get what they want?)	

Problem 3	Name:
What does the main character want?	
What obstacles are keeping the main character from getting what they want?	
What are the stakes? (What will the main character lose or miss out on if they don't get what they want?)	

Problem 4	Name:
What does the main character want?	
What obstacles are keeping the main character from getting what they want?	
What are the stakes? (What will the main character lose or miss out on if they don't get what they want?)	

Problem 5	Name:
What does the main character want?	
What obstacles are keeping the main character from getting what they want?	
What are the stakes? (What will the main character lose or miss out on if they don't get what they want?)	

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Students will learn the importance of character development, specifically characters' desires, and use those desires to create a mini-play or scene of a play.

**This lesson adapted from 826 Digital Magic 8 Ball: Character Desires*

What students will produce

- A mini play centered around a character and their desires

Materials

- A magic 8 Ball (digital version available here)

Activity

- First, students take turns asking questions (out loud) of a magic eight ball. If you have a large class, ask for at least 10 volunteers to come up and pose a question to the ball. This portion of the activity can be as serious, silly, or fantastical as you'd like it to be. You could kick this off by asking a personal question to the magic eight ball, then asking students to write down three questions they're grappling with before posing one to the magic eight ball. Or, you could also write questions in advance and ask for volunteers to choose a question out of a hat. However you choose to do it, ask for a student volunteer to record all questions and replies on the board.

- Now, here's where the real magic happens: each couplet is a possible foundation for a play! For example, if a student were to choose the question and answer below, they'd write a short play centered around a character who is trying to break a personal record on their bike:
    - Q: Will I ever set the record for highest air on a bike?
    - A: Outlook not so good.

- Ask each student to take one of the couplets as the first two lines of a mini play (no more than 2-3 pages). The main character of the play is the questioner, and the core of this play is the question. It represents something a character really wants. Will he/she/they get it? Or get closer to it in some way? Or will he/she/they totally fail? Write the scene to find out.

- The second character, or "magic eight ball" character, might be the main character's friend, enemy, rival, or even a surreal character who IS a magic eight ball. The objective of this exercise is to introduce the idea that plays are about a character's desires. Another way to describe the main action of any play is to describe what the main character wants. For example:
    - Hamlet wants to kill his uncle and avenge his father.
    - Juliet wants to marry Romeo.

- Tell students that when you create a character in a play, it's important to know what that character desires. That's the sun at the center of your play's solar system. In other words, what would he/she ask the magic eight ball?

- Tell students the characters in your play must be fully developed, as close to real people as you can make them. The keys to creating believable characters are details and specificity. If you know your characters as well as you know your best friends, you're more likely to know what they will do under the circumstances of your play. And if you know what they desire, that's the root to everything else!

MONOLOGUES

Students will learn to create dramatic monologues.

What students will produce

- A dramatic monologue

Materials

- Monologue examples and Monologue handout

Activity

- Begin by explaining to students what a monologue is:
    - In the strictest terms, a monologue is a piece of theater that features only one character speaking. The character might be alone and talking to himself or directly to the audience, or the character might be speaking to another character or characters. Monologues serve a specific purpose in storytelling—to give the audience more details about a character or about the plot. Used carefully, they are a great way to share the internal thoughts or backstory of a character or to give more specific details about the plot.

- Show students the monologue examples via handout or projector. Ask for a student volunteer to read each. You can also show students the monologue "There's no bathroom for me" from the movie Hidden Figures, available here: https://youtu.be/hNK8FCFpmm4
    - Ask students, what did these monologues have in common (if anything)? Tell students that all good monologues have six things in common:
        - Speaker - the person doing the talking
        - Listener/audience - whoever the speaker is talking to
        - Want - something that the speaker wants or desires (note: you can relate this to last class on character development)
        - Problem - an obstacle that is preventing the speaker from getting what they want
        - Urgency - a sense of tension, a reason the speaker is talking in this exact moment
        - A Turn - a moment where things shift from the beginning of the monologue (likely towards a resolution or a plan for next steps in obtaining the "want")

- Students will now have the opportunity to practice writing a monologue. First they will choose a prompt from below, then they will brainstorm and draft their monologue.

- Give students the following three prompts and ask them to choose one that interests them the most or gets their brain churning ideas.
    - Ever since I was young, I've known things I wasn't supposed to know. Like when ____
    - People say they understand me, but that's not true. Nobody can understand why I ____
    - You forgot it? Of course you did! Now how will I ___?
    - Alternatively: Students can continue with the character and their desires from the previous lesson

- Pass out the monologue handout and ask students to spend 5-10 minutes completing the brainstorm graphic organizer.

- Once students have finished their brainstorm, it's time to write. Instruct them to draft a 1-2 page monologue given their chosen prompt and brainstorm ideas.

Monologue Examples

“Dream Girl” by Elmer Rice: Georgina’s morning monologue

Georgina, the title character in this play, wakes up and performs her morning ritual in front of a mirror before going to work. It is charming, funny, and very, very true.

All right, mother! I’m practically dressed! Maybe your mother is right, Georgina. Maybe it’s time you cut out the daydreaming—time you stopped mooning around and imagining yourself to be this extraordinary creature with a strange and fascinating psychological life. Still, to be honest, compared to the average girl you meet, I’m really quite complex. Intelligent and well-informed, too. And a good conversationalist. Well, for heaven’s sake! Honestly, some people! And my looks are nothing to be ashamed of, either. I have a neat little figure and my legs are really very nice. Of course, my nose is sort of funny. but my face definitely has character—not just one of those magazine-cover deadpans. If I could only stop lying awake for hours, dreaming up all the exciting things that could happen but never do. Well, maybe this is the day when things really will begin to happen to me. Maybe Wentworth and Jones will accept my novel. Wouldn’t that be wonderful! With a published novel, I’d really be somebody. Reviews in all the book sections royalty checks coming in; women nudging each other at Barney’s and whispering: ‘Don’t look now, but that girl over there—the one with the smart hat—that’s Georgina Allerton, the novelist.’ Gee, that would be thrilling! To feel that I’d accomplished something, to feel that I had a purpose in life!! Only it wouldn’t make up for Jim. Fifty novels wouldn’t make up for Jim. If Miriam only appreciated him. But she doesn’t. She doesn’t understand him. What to do? What to do? Here I am, 23 years old—no, let’s face it—24 next month! And that’s practically thirty! Thirty years old—and nothing to show for it. Suppose nothing ever does happen to me. That’s a frightening thought! Just to go on and on like this, on through middle age, on to senility, never experiencing anything. What a prospect!

What I Will Tell You By Isabel Mehta
From The Philadelphia Young Playwrights

(Mia lies in bed scrolling through Instagram on her phone. The only light is from her phone screen, everything else is dark. She stops on one image.)

It’s been a long time since we’ve smiled so brightly like that.

I could never tell you how yellow school buses made me feel so small. I could never tell you about my early mornings listening to Taylor Swift and staring out the window pretending my life was a movie. I had to pretend to want to sit alone on the bus because pretending was easier than admitting I would be alone anyway. My eyelashes were long and sleek like my should-be shaven legs and the tears slid off and drip drip dripped onto the cracked leather seats. People stared.

I could never tell you what it felt like to watch you leave me slowly. We wrote stories and braided each other’s hair and read fantasy novels like a sport, but soon your shirts were tighter and cut lower and you hair was straighter and you blended in with all of the other girls. And all of the boys stared. Boooobs. They never stared at me.

I could never tell you how I existed in your shadow. You always walked two steps ahead, you never let me synch up to your rhythm. Your words oozed jealousy like how your makeup bottles oozed foundation.

I could never tell you how disappointed I was that you stopped reading books. You stopped using big words. You made me feel ashamed to be drowning in the world of Hogwarts instead of drowning at a house party on Saturday night. You were the girl that reminded me of what I wasn’t, and I reminded you of what you used to be, so we fit together like puzzle pieces. I thought we filled each other’s voids.

I could never tell you how it made my heart hurt to see you prance around with all of those girls so happily. I

remember that night so clearly. Clutching an iPhone alone in one's room on a Friday night is only followed by catastrophic consequences, I have learned. Did my feelings ever cross your mind as your were editing and filtering that

picture? Did you realize how much you hurt me by clicking "share"? I thought you said you couldn't hang because you were sick. I guess not. My eyelashes were heavy that day with thick syrupy tears. I never understood how I was so kind to you and you stepped on me like a doormat that read "Welcome" in big, bold letters.

After that you just became another face in the halls, faded, gliding, floating. I was lucky to get split-second eye contact or a soft smile. I think it's possible you felt a little sorry for me.
(Smiles) But I also could never tell you thank you. Thank you thank you god bless you thank you. My battle scars were once fresh and clean cut but since then they've scabbed and peeled making room for new skin beneath. And that skin is thicker, tougher, my copper shield. Because even though you made me question myself over and over and over again, I think you also taught me how to love, properly.

I want to tell you, and I will tell you, someday, that I no longer try to hug icicles like you. I hug people that are warm and kind and don't melt between my fingertips. I treat my new friends like the kings and queens they are so we don't fall apart at the seams. And I have a new best friend, but she doesn't remind me of us, not in the slightest. She makes me smile when I'm alone while you made my lips thinner and my smile weaker. She puts my heart on a pedestal and I put hers on one even higher. And together we laugh in all of those bitches' faces with the fire of a thousand suns and our eyelashes drip drip drip tears of gold. That's what I will tell you.

Drafting your Monologue

Step 1: Use this graphic organizer to help brainstorm and draft your monologu!

Chosen Prompt:
Who is the speaker? *Use this space to brainstorm details about your speaker. Make sure you answer their name, age, where they're from, where and with whom they live, profession, hobbies, and more!*
Who is the listener?
What does the speaker want?
What is the problem? *What obstacle is in the speaker's way?*
What is the urgency? *Urgency in your speaker's problem is what makes an audience feel the tension that makes them invest in your speaker very quickly. Why must these words be spoken right NOW?*
Where do things turn? *What will change throughout the course of the monologue getting us from the beginning to the end?*

Step 2: On a separate piece of paper, begin writing your monologu. Use the words of your chosen prompt as the first line in your monologue.

REVISION: SHARPENING & SHORTENING

Students will learn the importance of being both efficient and effective in the words they choose when telling a story by sharpening and shortening the monologue they have written.

What students will produce

- A condensed monologue

Materials

- Previously written monologues

Activity

- Begin by telling students they will be revising their monologues from the previous class. By doing so, they will uncover what's important in a monologue and cut out flowery filler. A monologue doesn't have to be a five minute emotional sob fest. Long does not always equal good.

- Instruct students to rewrite their monologue by cutting it in half. What can they remove and still have their character share their experience?

- Next, they will rewrite their monologue by cutting out three additional sentences. At this point the monologue will be very lean. How can they make sure they say what they need to in the space they have?

- Last, they will rewrite the monologue so that it is only one sentence long. What is the heart of this monologue? What is at the core of the character? They should be able to distill this into one sentence.

- As students finish, remind them that shortening monologues, and scenes, in plays and movies helps to sharpen the focus of the overall story. Doing so helps to keep an audience engaged and on the edge of their seats, eagerly waiting to hear every word the character says. This exercise hopefully helped students to discover how to clearly express their character's want.

- If time allows, encourage students to revisit their monologue one more time to make it the best possible. This time it doesn't have to be one sentence or even half of its original length. They simply need to use what they've learned from this exercise to improve their monologue.

PLAYWRITING SHARE OUT #1

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Partner + Share

- Have students partner with a neighbor. Student A briefly provides context and pertinent backstory, then reads their monologue to Student B. After A finishes, B comments, mentions details that stood out and asks questions if anything was unclear. Then it is B's turn.

- While this is going on, walk around the room and skim a few monologues that aren't currently being read aloud to look for potential examples to share with the rest of the class.

- Afterwards, ask for volunteers to share their monologue with everybody. If you don't get any volunteers, read a few monologues that stood out to you while you walked around. But usually, there are volunteers.

Week 2 Schedule

Week 2 Purpose: Reflect

This week, students will reflect on what makes a story good and practice implementing those principles.

- **MONDAY: Seven Types of Conflict**
- **TUESDAY: Conflict & Dialogue**
- **WEDNESDAY: The Arc of a Story**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Practicing Out Loud**
- **FRIDAY: Share Out**

SEVEN TYPES OF CONFLICT

Students will learn about the seven types of conflict and build a story around one of them

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What students will produce

- A detailed brainstorm around a character and their conflict

Materials

- Character in Conflict Handout and Conflict Photos

Activity

- Begin by asking students to define conflict. Students may answer by saying conflict is an argument or a disagreement. Push them more: Does a conflict need to involve more than one PERSON? Can a person have a conflict with themselves? Define conflict for the purposes of this class:
    - Conflict is any struggle that characters must overcome to achieve their goal. It can be a 'real world' obstacle or antagonist (external conflict) or some inner turmoil that our heroes must confront before getting what they want or need (internal conflict).
    - Tell students that all good stories are driven by conflict. By understanding what stands between characters and their goals, we can begin to grasp what their stories are about.

- Tell students there are seven types of conflict in literature and drama. Review the following types of conflict and come up with examples for each as a class.
    - 1. Character vs. Character(s)
    - 2. Character vs. Society
    - 3. Character vs. Nature
    - 4. Character vs. Technology
    - 5. Character vs. Supernatural
    - 6. Character vs. Fate
    - 7. Character vs. Self
        - Note: this blog offers further explanation of each type of conflict

- Use the conflict photos, which include an image associated with each type of conflict, and have students randomly select one (you can project the photos on the board and students draw associated numbers, or print the photos and face them downwards while students draw one from the pile).

- Students will use the character in conflict worksheet to develop a conflict, and therefore a story, about the characters they will invent based on their selected conflict photo.

- If students finish their worksheet early, they can begin to draft out the story!

Character in Conflict Handout

1. What type of conflict do you have?

2. Who are your character(s)? (Create their name, age, sex, family profile, employment/non-employment and home)

3. What is the relationship between your characters? (note: if your photo has only one person, what is your character's relationship to the other "thing", i.e. technology, nature, themselves or fate?)

4. What is your character's objective? What do they want?

5. How does each character plan on getting what they want?

6. What are their obstacles? What stands in their way?

7. What is your character's greatest fear or regret?

8. What is the most important aspect of your character's life?

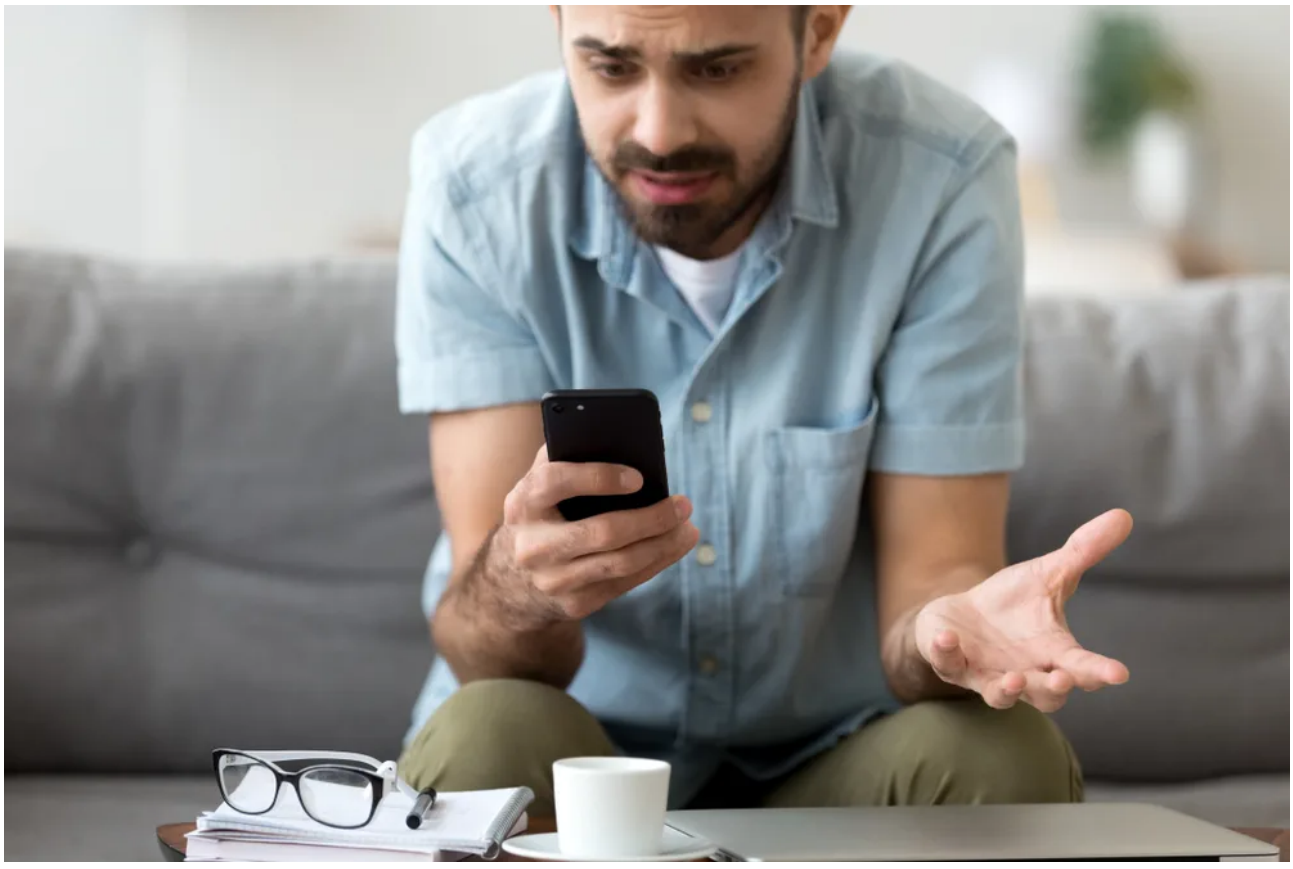
Conflict Photos

1. Character vs. Character(s)

2. Character vs. Society

3. Character vs. Nature

4. Character vs. Technology



5. Character vs. Supernatural

6. Character vs. Fate

7. Character vs. Self

CONFLICT & DIALOGUE

Students will learn to incorporate dialogue in a story's conflict.

**This lesson adapted from 826 Digital, Screenwriting with Spike Jonze*

What students will produce

- A scene with dialogue centered around a conflict

Materials

- Dialogue from A Raisin in the Sun

Activity

- Pass out a strip of paper with a line of dialogue on it to each student. Note: you can use the dialogue provided here, or you can pull dialogue from a scene of any play or movie.

- Tell students that they will have three minutes to put the dialogue together. They must line up in the order their piece of dialogue fits within the overall scene. Once students are in order, have them read aloud the dialogue.
    - Twist: if you have enough students, you can divide them in teams and see which team can finish first. Another twist is to tell students they cannot talk during this activity.

- Explain that dialogue is the conversation between the characters. Dialogue should be specific, and the words should be clear. Dialogue must be consistent with the character's personality and actions. Have students reflect on how they were able to put the dialogue in the correct order in the earlier activity.

- Tell students that they will now work on writing a scene with dialogue that centers around a conflict. Here is the prompt:
    - Write a scene where two characters are in conflict with each other. But there's a catch: you can only use dialogue. How can you show what the characters feel or think without getting in their head or describing what they're doing? Use only what they say to show your audience what the problem is. What happens at the end—do they resolve their conflict or not?
    - Remind students to not take sides. As the writer, they should equally fight for both characters' main objectives. Use their best tactics to play for both teams and see where it leads them.

- Once students have written the dialogue of their scene, it's time to add the context! Have students insert the setting into this scene. Are the characters in a public place—outside on the street, a coffee shop, etc? Are they in private—sitting on the couch, at the dinner table, etc? How are the characters interacting with the setting and how does it affect their actions and emotions?
    - For example, an argument happening in someone's home is very different from one in the mall.

- Next, ask students to think about the action of the scene; what are the characters doing while they're talking. Are they eating something? Going somewhere?

- Tell students to add the setting and action to their dialogue so that a director and actors can create their scene for an audience.

Sample Dialogue from A Raisin in the Sun

Something the matter with you this morning?

No I'm just sleepy as the devil. What kind of eggs you want?

Not scrambled. Paper come? Set off another bomb yesterday.

Did they?

What's the matter with you?

Ain't nothing the matter with me. And don't keep asking me that this morning.

Ain't nobody bothering you. Say Colonel McCormick is sick.

Is he now? Poor thing.

Oh, me. Now what is that boy doing in that bathroom all this time? He just going to have to start getting up earlier. I can't be being late to work on account of him fooling around in there.

Oh, no he ain't going to be getting up no earlier no such thing! It ain't his fault that he can't get to bed no earlier nights 'cause he got a bunch of crazy good-for-nothing clowns sitting up running their mouths in what is supposed to be his bedroom after ten o'clock at night . . .

That's what you mad about, ain't it? The things I want to talk about with my friends just couldn't be

important in your mind, could they?

Why you always got to smoke before you eat in the morning?

Just look at 'em down there. . . Running and racing to work . . . You look young this morning, baby.

Yeah?

Just for a second stirring them eggs. Just for a second it was you looked real young again. It's gone now you look like yourself again!

Man, if you don't shut up and leave me alone.

THE ARC OF A STORY

Students will learn about story arcs and apply it by outlining a mini drama.

What students will produce

- A story arc outline for a mini drama

Materials

- Freytag's Pyramid Plot Organizer Handout

Activity

- Begin class by asking students for an example of a story everyone knows (this may be a book, a movie, etc., but try to make sure the majority of students are familiar with the story). Then ask students to briefly share some of the main things that happen from beginning to end of the story. After assess, as a class, on whether students spoke about the conflict of the story, the characters, how the story is concluded or resolved,

- Explain to students that the best stories are ones that follow an arc. A story arc graphs the typical way that a character meets and solves dilemmas and then emerges from a plot as a more developed individual. You can use the story arc as a general framework upon which to base your creative writing and a guide for instilling your plot with the momentum that makes it compelling to your audience.

- Show students Freytag's Pyramid and introduce it as the classic story arc outline. Review each of the components and use the Lion King Example if need be:
    - **Exposition** most often occurs during the outset of the story but comes back into play throughout the plot. During the beginning phase, you set the scene, introduce characters and provide hints that foreshadow the action ahead.
    - The **conflict** or incident that follows the initial exposition sets the plot into motion. This incident challenges the ideas, emotions or lifestyle of the main character.
    - **Rising action** is the uphill portion of the story arc. Once the inciting incident occurs, the main character becomes caught up in the momentum of the plot. This may mean learning new things that broaden his or her perspective, or it may be the discovery of an uncomfortable truth.
    - The **climax** occurs at the highest point of the story arc. It is the moment where the protagonist moves beyond the point of no return, no longer able to justify inaction, and takes steps that change his or her fate.
    - After the climax, the story arc swings downward. The plot follows the protagonist as he or she works through the results of a climactic decision. Your readers learn whether the main character triumphs and how the future is likely to change. The **falling action** of your plot often calls for more exposition that helps your readers understand the new order of things.
    - Finally, at the end of the story arc, you describe the **resolution** to the plot. Whatever you decide as the writer, your main consideration should be providing a satisfactory resolution to the story that your readers will buy into.

- Explain that in today's activity, students will be filling out an arc organizer for their own short story. First, however, students need to brainstorm what their story will be about. To do so, students will carry out a brainstorm activity by reflecting on their life experiences.
    - In the next [5 or 10] minutes, write a list of everything you remember from your life from beginning to end. The day you lost your toy at the beach when you were 2. The day your first grade teacher wouldn't let you go to the bathroom and you peed your pants in class. The day

you lost your first tooth.
    - Next, students will choose one of those events to write a story about. Tell students, it is helpful if this event is meaningful to you. It might be because it reminds you of good memories or people you love. It might be because you learned something important that day. But figure out why these memories stand out to you and use that to inspire your stories! It doesn't have to be about YOU but you can draw inspiration from this real life event and maybe place other characters in a similar situation or use that story in the plot of the larger story you tell.

- Once students have chosen an event to write about. It's time to draft up a story arc! Distribute the handout and allow them time to work through it. If after today's brainstorm, students are more inspired to continue with a story or character they brainstormed in a previous class, encourage them to do so! It's all about following where your creative brain takes you.

Story Title: The Lion King

Climax
Scar and Simba fight over Pride Rock and being king of the Pride Lands.

Simba meets new friends and forgets about the responsibility of being king

Simba finds Mufasa; Scar makes Simba think he killed Mufasa; Simba runs away

Mufasa is killed by Scar when saving Simba from the stampede

Scar plans the stampede to kill Simba and Mufasa

Simba is presented as future king

Rising Action

Conflict
Scar wants to be king but he is third in line after Mufasa and Simba.

Falling Action

When confronted by Simba, Scar said the hyenas were the enemy

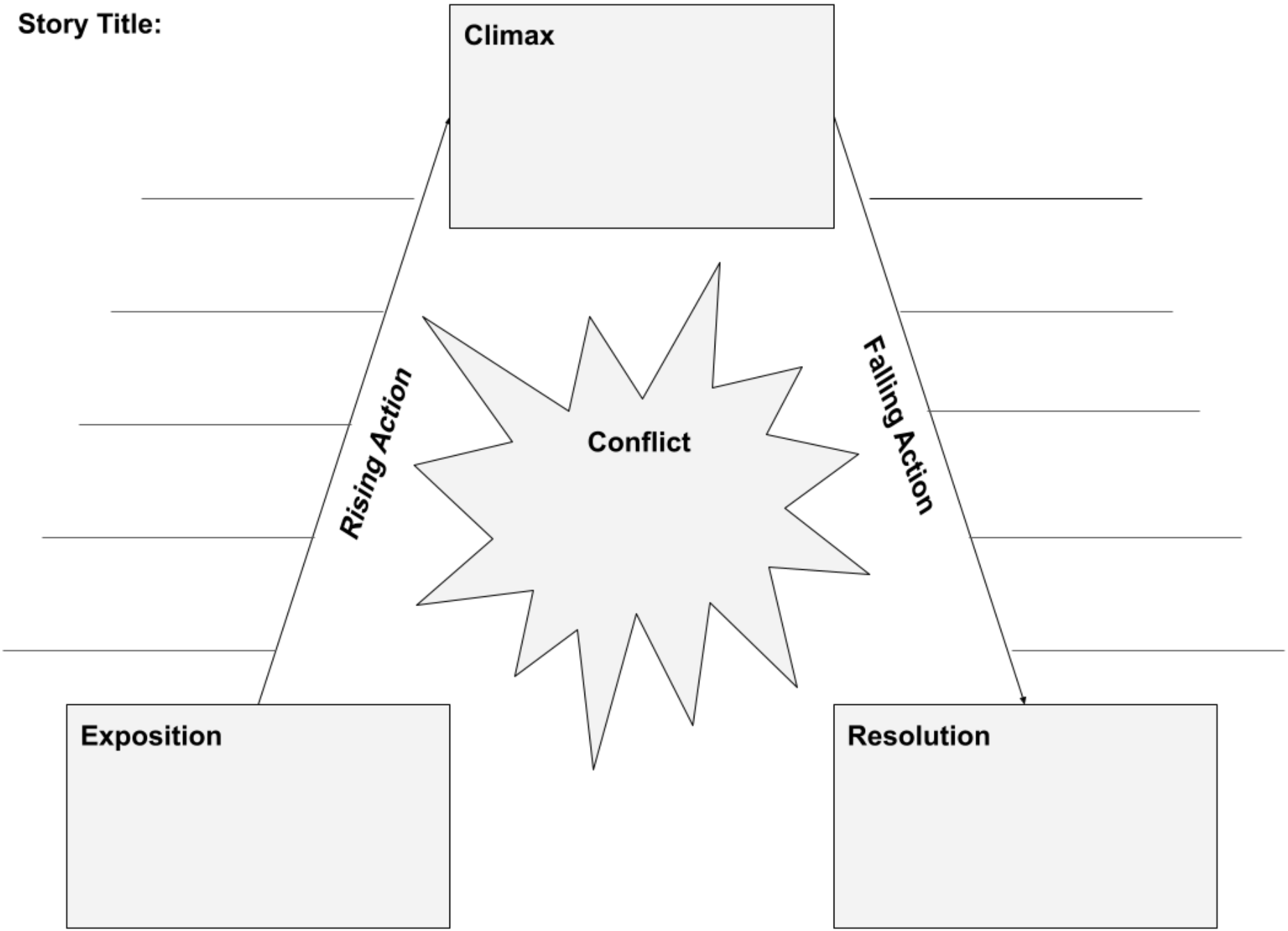
Simba offered Scar the opportunity to leave and he didn't take it, instead he attacked Simba.

Exposition
Pride lands, Simba (the prince) was born and presented to the animals of the African savannah. Warm, pretty, sunlight off the water, morning

Resolution
Scar fell and was betrayed by his friends and was no longer king, Scar dies and Simba reclaims his rightful spot as king.

Freytag's Pyramid Plot Organizer Handout

Story Title:



REVISION: PRACTICING OUT LOUD

Students will learn to incorporate images, textures, sounds, tastes and scents into their writing.

What students will produce

- A revised version of their conflict dialogue

Materials

- Conventions for Dialogue Formatting in Drama Handout

Activity

- Group students into pairs or small groups. Tell them they will take terms having their group members or partners read their dialogue piece out loud.

- As they listen to their piece being read, instruct students to pay close attention to how the other person reads the dialogue. What words, sentences, or specific parts of the arguments were given the most emphasis when spoken?

- Now instruct students to go back to their pieces and consider the following questions:
    - How can you express your characters' emotion through words?
    - How is your character feeling during their argument? Tense? Calm?
    - How can you add bolder words, pauses, and body language to your scene?

- You can also introduce the Conventions for Dialogue Formatting in Drama Handout. Instruct them to edit their dialogue scene to follow the rules.

Conventions for Dialogue Formatting in Drama

There are a number of different ways you can format a script. As long as there is a clear differentiation between stage directions and dialogue, and the script is easy to read and carefully proofread, it may well be acceptable. The examples below are standard formatting.

Playwriting Example

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

Stage directions are usually given in italics. Some writers put them in UPPER CASE ITALICS. OTHERS JUST PUT THEM IN UPPER CASE. The main idea is to differentiate them clearly from the dialogue.

CHARACTER 1 Dialogue is written in sentence case. Character names are given in upper case – again to differentiate them clearly from the spoken dialogue.

CHARACTER 2 It's a good idea to set a second-line tab so that dialogue always begins on the same vertical line. This makes it clearer and easier for actors to read.

CHARACTER 1 Dialogue is usually double-spaced between each character's speech, but single-spaced within a character's speech. This again makes it easier for the actors to differentiate between characters.

CHARACTER 2 Left align everything. Don't right hand justify the document.

CHARACTER 1 Use a font like Times New Roman or Arial. Fonts like Courier New and Arial Narrow are hard to read, and fancy fonts are just a nuisance. Remember that this is a working document and must be easy for actors and directors to use.

Pause

CHARACTER 2 If you need to write in a pause, it should go in italics or upper case, the same as other stage directions.

CHARACTER 1 *(to herself)* Brief stage directions that specifically apply to one character can be put in the dialogue like this.

Screenplay Example

There are four important written elements to a screenplay. They are the **slugline**, **action text**, **character name**, and **dialogue**.They help to separate ***scenes***(parts of a story that happen in one setting), ***shots***(divisions of a scene that are seen from one camera angle), and ***lines*** (pieces of dialogue spoken by a single character.) You will also learn about **spacing**.

(1) Slugline

The **slugline**is also known as the "scene heading" and appears at the beginning of every scene. It describes what the camera is looking at when the scene begins. A slugline answers three questions, and is written in ALL CAPS:

- Is the scene an interior "INT." or exterior "EXT."?
- What location is the scene taking place?
- At what time is the scene taking place?

Example of a slugline:

EXT. BOAT LATE NIGHT

(2) Action Text

The **action text** concisely describes what is happening visually, before, after, or in between dialog blocks. It should include any action that the camera sees or hears. Action text is different from creative writing. It is short and to the point. Descriptive words should only be used if they help the film's director to know what should be seen on screen.

Example of action text setting the scene:

Jeb is an expert fisherman. Kitty is his daughter. Jeb is trying to teach Kitty to fish, but she seems distracted.

Example of action text describing events in the scene:

Jeb stands up. The boat rocks and he falls out of it. Fireflies scatter everywhere.

(3) Character Name

The **character name** tells the film's director who is talking. It can be the character's name, or if they don't have a name, it can be their occupation or just a description. Sometimes it will be generic, and may need to be numbered, like MAN #1 and MAN #2. The character name is always ALL CAPS.

Example of a basic character name line:

JEB

(4) Dialogue

Dialogueis a segment of text that the character named on the previous line is speaking. These are the exact words that the character will say in the final film. Unlike creative writing, the dialogue does not have quotation marks around it, because it is separated by character name lines.

Example of dialogue:

JEB
What are you lookin' at?

Sometimes, screenwriters will include a parenthetical description. This is a word or phrase included to help convey the emotion with which the character is speaking. It comes between the the character name line and the dialogue. Most lines do not have parentheticals; only use them when the tone cannot be assumed from context.

Example of parenthetical:

KITTY
(hypnotically)
There's a light on the water.

EXT. BOAT LATE NIGHT

Jeb is an expert fisherman. Kitty is his daughter. Jeb is trying to teach Kitty to fish, but she seems distracted.

JEB (to KITTY)
What are you lookin' at?

KITTY
(hypnotically)
There's a light on the water.

JEB
Tarnation! Someone's trying to steal
our fishing spot!

Jeb stands up. The boat rocks and he falls out of it. Fireflies Scatter everywhere.

PLAYWRITING SHARE OUT #2

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Dramatic Readings

- Have students sit in a circle. Briefly explain that we are doing a dramatic reading. We will only get through about 5 scripts today. If you are excited to share your script, be patient, and know that we will be working with your scripts in the future. Ask for a handful of volunteers to share their script.
- Volunteer writers may assign characters to read parts and readers can use emotion and vocal variation. But they do not need to act out elaborate scenes or get up. Writers should also assign someone to read stage directions if they are important or lengthy.
- After all the dramatic readings, have students reflect on at least two scripts they heard today. Have them write about what they liked and what they did not like and WHY. What about their beliefs or personal preferences have they learned?
- Have students gather in a semi-circle around you. Ask them to turn to a peer and take a couple minutes to talk about what they wrote. Have a few students share by raising their hand and offering feedback to the volunteer writers.

Week 3 Schedule

Week 3 Purpose: Relate

This week, students will relate what they've learned about writing drama to select and craft their play or screenplay, especially focusing on the story's conflict.

**Note for weeks 3 and 4 drafting: students can work independently or in small groups. It may make sense to have students work in a group with the same number of students as characters in the play, so they may act it out themselves.*

- **MONDAY: 10-Minute Plays Introduction (developing a plot)**
- **TUESDAY: 10-Minute Plays Drafting (choosing a plot)**
- **WEDNESDAY: 10-Minute Plays Drafting (focusing on the conflict)**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Thinking Through Backstory**
- **FRIDAY: Playwriting Share Out #3**

10-MINUTE PLAYS INTRODUCTION

Students will develop a handful of plot summaries/story treatments to consider for their 10-minute play.

What students will produce

- 2-3 story treatments

Materials

- Paper and pencil for starting activity, and journal or pen and paper for independent writing

Activity

- To begin class, instruct students to sit in a circle with a piece of paper and something to write with. Tell them not to write their name on the paper and not to think too hard during this activity. Take approximately thirty seconds to walk students through each of the following steps.
    - Write a main idea or theme at the top of the paper. Fold the part of the paper that has been written on over so that the theme cannot be seen. Pass the paper to your left.
    - Write a profession on the paper. Fold it again so what you wrote can't be seen. Pass the paper to your left.
    - Write a Place. Fold the paper, pass to your left.
    - Write two nouns. Any nouns. It can be a food, an article of clothing, a person, an animal, etc.
    - Fold the paper. Pass to your left. Now pause.

- Ask students, who can tell me what a plot summary is? Then ask students to unfold the paper in their hands. They will now need to spend the next ~5 minutes writing the plot summary of a story that includes the elements on their piece of paper. How can the different things written on the paper come together into an interesting story that focuses on the main idea or theme written at the top?Tell students to have fun. There aren't any rules to how you do this. Just DO IT.

- Once students have completed the activity, introduce students to the final project for this unit: creating a 10-minute play or screenplay. Students will be able to create their own story (including characters, setting, conflict, and resolution) and develop into a script. Assist students by giving them some parameters for their play (suggestions below).
    - Limit the cast to no more than four characters
    - Be sure to pick a theme and stick to it. Ask a question and answer it through your story.
    - Keep exposition to a minimum. Focus on the dialogue.
    - Typically, 10 minutes on stage/screen translates to 10 pages. So students should aim to write 10 pages.

- For the remainder of the class, students should come up with plot summaries/story treatment for at least two different story ideas that they might use for their final 10-minute plays/screenplays. A story treatment consists of all the elements they have been learning about, plus a brief summary. Students can use the plot summary handout to help organize their treatments (print out so they have a couple to complete, one for each story idea).

Plot Summary

Story Title:_____

Characters *(describe who is in the story)* 1. 2. 3. 4.	**Setting** *(describe where the story take place)*

Conflict *(what is the ultimate conflict in the story? What does your main character want and what's getting in their way?)*

Plot Summary *(In a few sentences, summarize the arc of the story: how does it begin, what happens in the middle, and how does it end?)*

One-Liner *(if you had to describe your story in just one sentence, what would that sentence be?)*

10-MINUTE PLAYS DRAFTING

Students will select their story and begin to draft their 10-minute play.

What students will produce

- Draft of their 10-minute play

Materials

- Journal or pen and paper for drafting play

Activity

- Start the class off by having students sit in a circle. One person will start by saying aloud a sentence to start a story. It can be about anything and the class must continue telling the story. Go around the circle and let each student continue the story, contributing only one sentence each. Instruct students beforehand to be aware of where they sit in the story (if they're in the middle, they might want to begin resolving conflicts and working toward a climax. if they are close to the end, they will need to begin wrapping the story up).:

- After the students tell their story, remain in a circle and have a brief class discussion.
    - Was it frustrating to not be able to take the story where you wanted it to go?
    - Did you feel limited being able to only say one sentence or to only be able to do one thing like conclude the story?
    - Those of you in particular points like the middle and the end had a little more pressure on you to find the high and low points of the story. What did you change about your sentence as the story evolved and then finally got to you? Why did you have to change your idea? (because of time constraints, because of the requirement to wrap up the story, etc.)

- Instruct students that as we write any play, but particularly a ten minute play, we need to be aware of our restrictions. Time is a restriction. Our play can't be five hours long. The medium of theater is a restriction. We cannot describe everything in great detail or narrate what characters are feeling, instead we have to SHOW our audience where we are and actors need to SHOW the audience what characters are feeling. We have to limit how much we change scenes or do montages like you see a lot in movies.

- Have students get into groups of 3 and share a brief summary of their 2-3 story ideas. They will get feedback from their peers on the following questions.
    - Does the story have each of the plot elements?
    - Can the story be told in ten minutes? What can be added or cut to fit the criteria?
    - Does it have a strong start?
    - Do the character actions and relationships interest you? Does the audience care about them?
    - Does it have a strong ending?

- Have students make revisions to their plot summaries/story ideas individually. After 3-4 minutes, instruct students to begin writing their ten minute plays on their own. Have them pick one of the story ideas they came up with and just start writing everything that comes to mind. Go around and help students as necessary, guiding them to make bold choices and helping them feel confident in an idea or to revise their ideas.

- For the remainder of class, have students continue working on their scripts individually.

10-MINUTE PLAYS DRAFTING

Students will continue to draft their 10-minute play, focusing on their conflict

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What students will produce

- Draft of their 10-minute play

Materials

- Journal or pen and paper for drafting play

Activity

- Start the day off with a 5-minute free write to help students' creativity flow. Select one of the following prompts or allow students to select one:
    - Imagine your couch is angry. Write a monologue that show why it is angry and who it is angry at
    - Two siblings just had an argument and now their mom walks into their room. Describe the scene. (what does the room look like? What are people wearing? What emotions are circling in the room?)
    - Two best friends disagree about the type of cake they should bake. Write how they will make a decision.

- Tell students that today they will be focusing on the conflict within their 10-minute plays. Allow students ~15 minutes to work independently on writing the dialogue surrounding their conflict.

- After their writing time, have students say their written lines of dialogue out loud. Ask them to think about how the line sounds–if it feels true to life hearing it out loud.

- After about two minutes, ask students to make necessary revisions and then get with a partner. Instruct partners to swap scripts and read lines of dialogue from their partner's script aloud. They will give feedback to their peers on how easy the lines are to say aloud, how they sound, and if they feel true to life. Tell students to take notes on the feedback they receive and allow a few minutes for immediate revisions.

- Next, students will think about the resolution to their conflict. Instruct students to turn to a blank piece of paper. On the top of the paper, ask them to write "resolutions." Tell them they will have 5 minutes to brainstorm as many possible resolutions to the conflict in their story as possible. These can be wild and crazy solutions or practical solutions. For example, if the conflict is that Miguel wants to be an Olympic trackstar, possible resolutions could include: practicing for 10 hours a day, eating magical beans that make him fast, realizing that his dream isn't attainable and instead just trying to be the best runner he can be, or traveling back in time to meet a famous olympian who will coach him. The point is to not feel limited by the options, and instead come up with as many ideas as possible.

- At the end of 5 minutes, instruct students to circle their top 4 favorite resolutions. Tell students that in the next class, they will workshop their possible resolutions!

REVISION: THINKING THROUGH BACKSTORY

What students will produce

- A revised version of their draft

Materials

- Conflict resolution brainstorm from last class

Activity

- Tell students that before they jump into working on their 10-minute play drafts, we will be doing an improv exercise. Introduce improv as an activity designed around participants acting or role-playing a scene spontaneously and without a script. Ask for a volunteer to share the conflict in their story. Then ask for 2-4 "player" volunteers, depending on how many characters are involved in the story's conflict.
    - On the first go-around, the players can come up with their own resolution to the conflict and act it out.
    - On the second go-around (with the same players or new ones) ask the story creator to share one of the resolutions they brainstormed in the previous class and have the players act out that resolution.
    - Each round should be approximately 3 minutes. Repeat with new story volunteers as many times as there are volunteers. The idea of the exercise is to help writers see different directions they're story can go. It may also help them to identify authentic dialogue that they can add to their scripts!

- For the remainder of the class, students will revise the conflict in their stories by taking a deeper look at the backstory of their characters. Pose the following prompt to students and allow them the rest of class to revise their scripts accordingly.
    - Imagine the backstory of one or all of your characters; how they grew up, what they were taught, positive or negative memories. How does their story affect why they believe in their argument? Do they have specific lived experiences they use to strengthen their argument? Revise your conflict scene by either adding in this backstory or by using it to inform the dialogue and conflict.

PLAYWRITING SHARE OUT #3

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Readers Theater

- Have students work in groups of four. They will take turns reading and acting out the draft-version of each group member's play/screenplay. If a script only has two characters, the extra group member can read aloud the stage notes or exposition. Allow at 10-15 minutes for each turn.
- After each turn, encourage students to use any extra time to offer feedback, ask questions and help the writer brainstorm ways to make their story stronger.

Week 4 Schedule

Week 4 Purpose: Create

This week, students will create their 10-minute plays/screenplays.

**Note for weeks 3 and 4 drafting: students can work independently or in small groups. It may make sense to have students work in a group with the same number of students as characters in the play, so they may act it out themselves.*

- **MONDAY: 10-Minute Plays Drafting**
- **TUESDAY: 10-Minute Plays Drafting**
- **WEDNESDAY: 10-Minute Plays Drafting**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Final Revisions**
- **FRIDAY: Playwriting Share Out #4**

10-MINUTE PLAYS DRAFTING

Students will continue to draft their 10-minute play.

What students will produce

- A draft of their play

Materials

- Paper and pencil for starting activity, and journal or pen and paper for independent writing

Activity

- Begin class with a free write prompt and activity to get students thinking creatively.
    - Write a dialogue between Jessie and Blake. You must write 16 lines of dialogue – 8 lines each. In this scene, Bob and Sarah have had some sort of connection in the past but now they are ending that connection–you decide what their relationship is and how you're going to show that relationship. You have two minutes. Just write!
    - Ask one student to share by casting their Jessie and Blake and having the actors act out the dialogue. Ask another student to share whose relationship was totally different than the first example. What changed in their dialogue? How did we know what the relationships were in each?
    - Next, instruct students to write the scene again. Same situation, same people, but now you can only use 10 words of dialogue. You can change small details and you might need to write stage directions for your actors.
    - First have one of the original Blake and Jessie scenes share with the same actors. Ask, "If we hadn't known the story from before, would we understand what was going on?" (probably not). So what could we have Blake and Jessie DO but not necessarily SAY to establish their relationship and the expository information we need to understand the scene? Students will suggest different movements, perhaps showing Blake and Jessie holding hands and then having Blake pull their hand away, etc.
    - Ask the students to re-perform the scene. Ask: Which version of the scene was more powerful to you? There is no right answer. How would we write those actions for the second version we just saw into the script?

- For the remainder of the class, students should work on drafting their plays. Encourage them to try and approach their writing with their takeaways from the exercise above: Look at your dialogue and decide, what can be cut and where stage directions may need to be added.
    - Introduce a challenge for students to incorporate into their draft, they can choose one of the following, but it must go into their play!
        - an unexpected source of light
        - the sound of an alarm
        - a character using a dictionary

10-MINUTE PLAYS DRAFTING

Students will continue to draft their 10-minute play.

What students will produce

- Draft of their 10-minute play

Materials

- Journal or pen and paper for drafting play

Activity

- Start the class off with a free write activity and challenge:
    - Character free write activity: Choose a character from your story. What are three things this character would carry around in their pocket? Draw the items or write a list. Then go around the room as a show and tell, allowing students to share out. As they share the items, have the student and the rest of the class reflect on what these items tell us about who the character is.
    - Writing challenge: As you work on your play today, add a time when one character cuts another one off in dialogue.

- For the remainder of the class, students should work on drafting their plays. Remind them to be sure to incorporate today's challenge into their script.

10-MINUTE PLAYS DRAFTING

Students will continue to draft their 10-minute play.

What students will produce

- Draft of their 10-minute play

Materials

- Journal or pen and paper for drafting play

Activity

- Start the class off with a creative activity and challenge:
    - Creative activity: Draw the cover of a playbill for your play! Tell students that a playbill is essentially a poster announcing a theatrical performance. It should include the play title and imagery to represent the play. If students are working on a screenplay for film, they can draw a movie poster!
    - Writing challenge: Choose one of the following props and add it to your play.
        - A photograph
        - A plant that needs watering
        - Dirty laundry

- For the remainder of the class, students should work on drafting their plays. Remind them to be sure to incorporate today's challenge into their script.

REVISION: FINAL REVISIONS

What students will produce

- A revised and final version of their play

Materials

- Final Revision Handout

Activity

- Tell students that today they are wrapping up final revisions on their play or screenplay. Pass out the Final Revision handout and walk through the five key steps to revising.

- For the remainder of the class, students will revise their drafts, using the handout as a guide and being sure to go through each step.

Final Revision Guide

STEP 1: **Add What's Missing.**
Now that you've finished your play, you know the full story arc and what you are trying to say. Now you can add all the elements that support that arc and theme, that you may not have been aware of when you started writing. Go back and make sure that the resolution is set up, enrich the arcs of characters, and make sure the audience will take away the message you want them to.

STEP 2: **Take Away What You Don't Need.**
Again, now that you've arrived at the end, you know what your story is trying to say, so you can remove those sections or lines of dialogue that might have been necessary explorations in the first draft, but don't move the story forward now. Be merciless. Take away the unnecessary bits! It's a lot of cutting and probably the most important step.

STEP 3: **Ensure Conflict on Every Page.**
In a play, conflict is what keeps the audience watching. As soon as the conflict relaxes, you have about a minute before the audience's attention wanders, perhaps for good. That's why it's called a "happy ending;" when the characters are happy, the play is over. But conflict is not just bad stuff happening. Conflict is two forces in opposition to each other; the pursuit of a want, running into obstacles, and overcoming them. Conflict is active. Make sure your characters are acting toward something in every scene!

STEP 4: **Ensure Character Voice is Unique & Consistent.**
Read through the whole script, out loud, only reading one character's lines. This will give you a sense of the quality and consistency of that character's voice. Do it for each character, one at a time, making fixes as you go, and you'll bring them all into focus. Ideally, you should be able to cover the character names and still know who is speaking, and this has nothing to do with funny accents or the like. It's because each character is different, and therefore expresses themself differently. Character voice is the most powerful tool you have for revealing character to the audience, because it is shown to them every time a character speaks. Their status, background, interests, and relationships are all reflected in the way they speak, and that is the most elegant way of sharing that with the audience.

STEP 5: **Edit!**
Spellcheck, grammar, mechanics, all of that, is as important in playwriting as anywhere else.

PLAYWRITING SHARE OUT #4

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Dress Rehearsal

- A dress rehearsal is a full rehearsal in costume and with stage properties shortly before a first performance. Now is the time for you to bring your acting A-game and run through the play, beginning to end!
    - Students should be given the opportunity to use props, set designs, and costumes.
- Note: students may still need to use scripts when speaking their lines, but help students to continue practicing so they no longer need this aid.
- Note: Ultimately, this is practice for an overall showcase at your school/site, where students will be able to put on their play to a live audience.

Creative Writing Course

Fiction Unit

4-Week Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 ***Explore***	Intro & Where do stories come from?	Story Plot	Creating Characters	Revision Making peace w/ inner critic	Share Out Character Interviews
Week 2 ***Reflect***	POV & Description	Building Conflict	Outlining Plot	Revision Show don't tell	Share Out Partner Feedback
Week 3 ***Relate***	Exploring Setting	Great Dialogue	Tone	Revision Word Choice & Synonyms	Share Out Writing Conferences
Week 4 ***Create***	Writing Day	Writing Day	Writing Day	Revision Perspective	Share Out Loud + Proud

Week 1 Schedule

Week 1 Purpose: Explore

This week, students will explore fundamental elements to writing fiction and experiment with them.

- **MONDAY: Introduction & Where Do Stories Come From**
- **TUESDAY: Story Plot**
- **WEDNESDAY: Creating Characters**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Making Peace with Your Inner Critic**
- **FRIDAY: Fiction Share Out #1**

INTRODUCTION & WHERE DO STORIES COME FROM

Students will learn about the different types of fiction writing and discover where stories come from.

**Idea generating activities adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- A brainstorm of story ideas

Materials

- List of Interests, Borrow a Character, News You Can Use, A Whole New World handouts

Activity

- Introduce students to fiction writing. Share that fiction writing is writing that is created in the author's imagination. Unlike nonfiction, where the events and people are real, fiction stories bring to life a made-up character, setting, and plot. There are many types of fiction writing, such as short stories, novellas, and novels. And within those types, there are genres, like fantasy, sci-fi, romance, contemporary, mystery and historical fiction. Tell students that over the next few weeks they will be learning about the principles of fiction writing and will write one (or several!) short stories.

- Tell students that the world needs stories. People need stories. Ask students why they think this might be true. After calling on a few volunteers, introduce the idea that we learn from stories. Ask students for examples of what they've learned from books. Have they learned anything about themselves through books? Suggest that because we learn from books, we learn about ourselves through books, it's important that different types of people–with different perspectives and experiences–write stories.
    - Watch the TED video on The Danger of A Single Story and take a few minutes to discuss it.

- Now, transition to asking students where stories come from. How do writers decide what they're going to write about? Tell students that there are endless ways to generate ideas for stories. You might be sparked by something you see while riding the metro home; maybe you had a strange dream that you want to explore more; or maybe you read a story that you loved and are inspired to play with its plot by switching things up. The point is, authors find sparks to their imagination everywhere!

- Transition into the following activities to generate ideas. Pass out the corresponding handout for each activity. You can do as many as possible with the remaining class time. Encourage students that if they get bored with an idea, to try a different one! This is their chance to experiment before they pick a direction for their story.
    - List of Interests: Students will spend 3 minutes making a list of as many things they find interesting as possible. Then, they will circle nine of those things and randomly write those nine items onto rows of three. They'll then brainstorm a plot that incorporates the three things from each row. The idea is that we often enjoy writing about things we enjoy!
    - Borrow a Character: Students will think about a person that they've come across, but don't know. They'll invent a history or a future for that person and then brainstorm a story to tell about them.
    - News You Can Use: Students will think of a news event that has stuck with them and use it to develop a story idea.
    - A Whole New World: For this activity, students will need access to images (either on a personal device or a classroom projector). Students will look over the following images and build a story

around the setting.

- https://www.boredpanda.com/abandoned-places
- https://www.roughguides.com/gallery/20-seriously-weird-places-around-the-world
- https://traveltriangle.com/blog/50-weirdest-places-across-the-world

List of Interests

STEP 1: Make a list of places and things that make you feel excited, inspired, or curious. *Some examples are: dreams, ghosts, sibling relationships, road trips, dogs, elephants, mysteries, music, reality TV shows, basketball, and cooking. Try to write at least 20!*

STEP 2: What you're drawn to in life is probably what you'll enjoy writing about. So, **circle nine things above you'd be excited to include in your story**. Then, write each thing you circled on one of the lines below.

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

STEP 3: Let your imagination go wild! Think of each column of words above as a story idea. Combine the three items in that column and explore how you can build a story around them. Choose one of the columns and spend 5 minutes to freewrite and explore the idea. Use sentences like "I wonder..." and "What if..." and "It would be interesting/cool/super weird if..."

More space for idea exploration freewrite!

Borrow A Character

Invent a history or future for someone! Maybe it's a friend you lost touch with, a teacher you had, a family member you've heard stories about, or just someone you've seen in photos or on the bus.

Who is the person that intrigues you?	What was their greatest desire?
What was their childhood like?	What obstacles did they face?
What did they dream of?	What was their greatest triumph?

Now, find the story! What part of that imagined life has the most drama, the most ups and downs? A moment of adventure or possibility or danger, when things changed? Remember, you're INVENTING this person, so feel free to go wild.

News You Can Use

Pick an event from the news. Imagine how different people might view the story–the different people involved or the people from miles away learning about it. For example, a story about an injured basketball player that beats the odds by recovering and getting drafted into the NBA might include the player, a doctor, a friend or family member that supported him, or a neighborhood youth who encouraged him. Feel free to use the basics of the news story for inspiration, but make up your own details - change the place, the time, the specifics of the people involved (age, gender identity, personality).

What news stories have stuck with you? List 2-3.

Choose one of those stories. What kind of people might be involved? What are their lives like? How did they end up in that situation? What will they have to do to get out of it? What might have happened years before or what might happen years after?

A Whole New World

Scroll through the photos until you find one (or more!) that sparks something for you, then pause and write your questions, wonderings, and ideas.

What kind of place is this?

How did it get this way?

Who might live or travel through it? How do they feel? What is it like for them there? What challenges do they face?

STORY PLOT

Students will learn about story plot and practice by analyzing a short story for its plot points as well as creating their own plot for a story.

What students will produce

- A sample plot for a story

Materials

- Plot Structure, The Aged Mother handouts

Activity

- Introduce students to plot structure. Plot is the literary element that describes the structure of a story. A plot diagram is an organizational tool, which is used to map the significant events in a story. By placing the most significant events from a story on the plot diagram, you can visualize the key features of the story. Distribute the plot structure handout and walk students through the components.
    - **Exposition**: The mood and conditions existing at the beginning of the story. The setting is identified. The main characters with their positions, circumstances and relationships to one another are established. The exciting force or initial conflict is introduced. Sometimes called the "Inciting Incident" this begins the conflict that continues throughout the story.
    - **Rising Action**: The series of events, conflicts, and crises in the story that lead up to the climax, providing the progressive intensity, and complicate the conflict.
    - **Climax**: The turning point of the story. A crucial event takes place and from this point forward, the protagonist moves toward his inevitable end. The event may be either an action or a mental decision that the protagonist makes.
    - **Falling Action**: The events occurring from the time of the climax to the end of the story. The main character may encounter more conflicts in this part of the story, but the end is inevitable.
    - **Resolution**: The tying up of loose ends and all of the threads in the story. The conclusion. The hero character either emerges triumphant or is defeated at this point.
    - *Note that conflict is also an essential component to plot, however we will be digging into conflict in a later class.

- As a class, think together about the plot of a classic story (for example, The Lion King, or Little Red Riding Hood). Talk through each of the plot elements while referring to the handout.
    - The Lion King: Exposition (beginning of movie, Simba is presented as prince, circle of life); Rising action (stampede where Mufasa protects Simba, Scar kills Mufasa but makes Simba feel like it's his fault, Simba leaves and makes new friends); Climax (Simba returns to battle with Scar); Falling Action (Scar tries to say it was the hyenas' fault); Resolution (Scar dies and Simba takes his rightful throne).

- As a class, read the short story "The Aged Mother" by Matsuo Basho (or short story of choice).

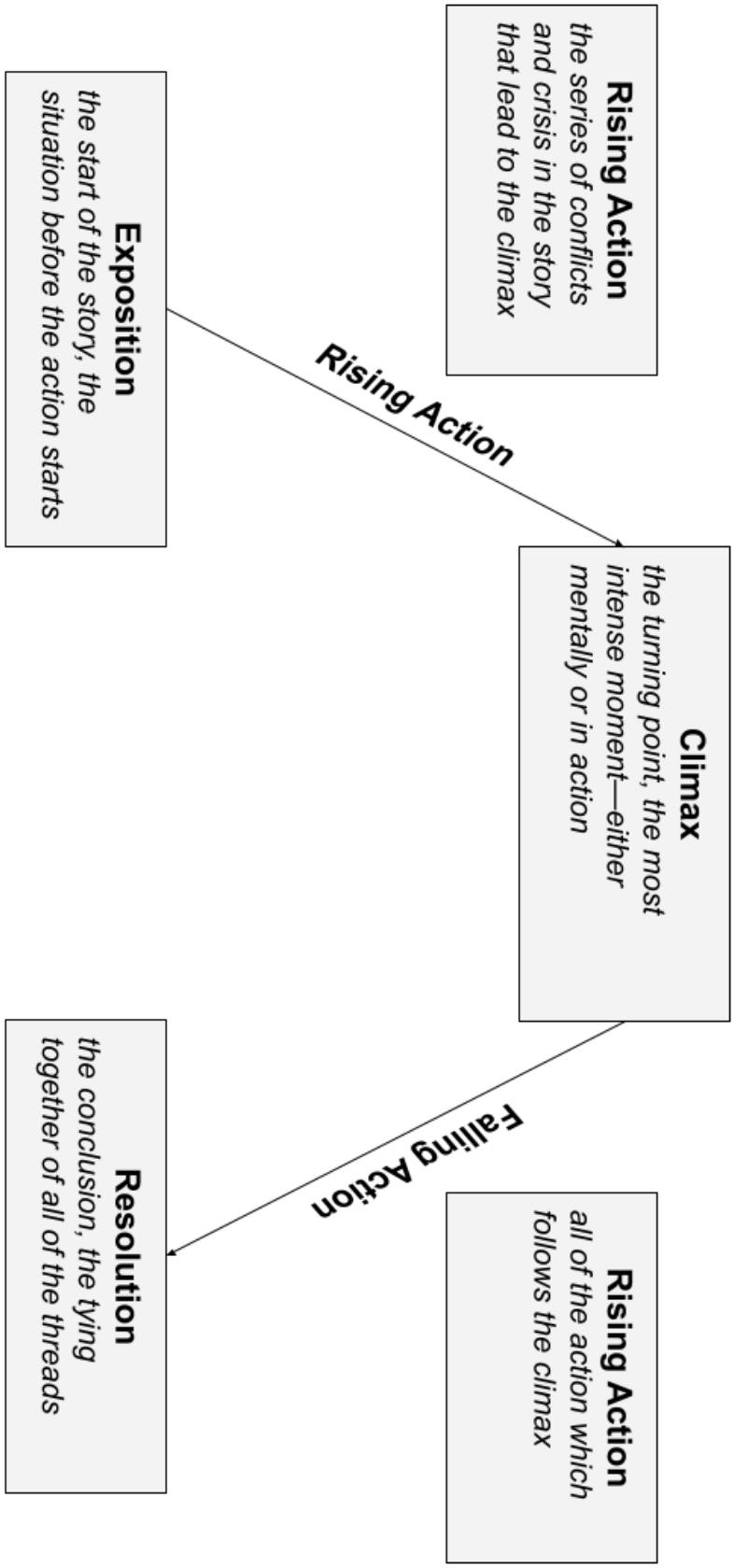
- Ask students to brainstorm the significant events in the story. As students make suggestions, write the events on the board. When students finish making suggestions, review the list. Ask students to look for

any items which have been omitted or items that should be combined. Work as a class, or in small groups, to structure the events into the specific plot structures.

- Next, walk students through the following activity to develop their own plots! Divide students into groups of five and have them conduct a Write-Around. On a sheet of lined paper (or using a shared device), one student writes an introduction to a story and then passes the paper to the next student, who will write the rising action. This continues for the climax, falling action, and resolution.

- Once finished, allow students time to revise their stories without changing the major plot points. They may choose to rewrite the story with a consistent voice, add clarifying details, improve transitions, etc. Students may workshop their stories with classmates.

Plot Structure Handout



The Aged Mother
by Matsuo Basho

Also known as The Story of the Aged Mother, this Japanese folktale tells the story of an unkind ruler who issues cruel orders, including one demand that all old folks are to be abandoned and left to die. Basho tells a poignant story about a mother and her son and their love for one another.
Long, long ago there lived at the foot of the mountain a poor farmer and his aged, widowed mother. They owned a bit of land which supplied them with food, and they were humble, peaceful, and happy.

Shining was governed by a despotic leader who though a warrior, had a great and cowardly shrinking from anything suggestive of failing health and strength. This caused him to send out a cruel proclamation. The entire province was given strict orders to immediately put to death all aged people. Those were barbarous days, and the custom of abandoning old people to die was not uncommon. The poor farmer loved his aged mother with tender reverence, and the order filled his heart with sorrow. But no one ever thought twice about obeying the mandate of the governor, so with many deep and hopeless sighs, the youth prepared for what at that time was considered the kindest mode of death.

Just at sundown, when his day's work was ended, he took a quantity of unwhitened rice which was the principal food for the poor, and he cooked, dried it, and tied it in a square cloth, which he swung in a bundle around his neck along with a gourd filled with cool, sweet water. Then he lifted his helpless old mother to his back and started on his painful journey up the mountain. The road was long and steep; the narrow road was crossed and re-crossed by many paths made by the hunters and woodcutters. In some place, he was lost and confused, but he gave no heed. One path or another, it mattered not. On he went, climbing blindly upward -- ever upward towards the high bare summit of what is known as Obatsuyama, the mountain of the "abandoning of the aged."

The eyes of the old mother were not so dim but that they noted the reckless hastening from one path to another, and her loving heart grew anxious. Her son did not know the mountain's many paths and his return might be one of danger, so she stretched forth her hand and snapping the twigs from brushes as they passed, she quietly dropped a handful every few steps of the way so that as they climbed, the narrow path behind them was dotted at frequent intervals with tiny piles of twigs. At last the summit was reached. Weary and heart sick, the youth gently released his burden and silently prepared a place of comfort as his last duty to the loved one. Gathering fallen pine needles, he made a soft cushion and tenderly lifted his old mother onto it. He wrapped her padded coat more closely about the stooping shoulders and with tearful eyes and an aching heart he said farewell.

The trembling mother's voice was full of unselfish love as she gave her last injunction. "Let not thine eyes be blinded, my son." She said, "The mountain road is full of dangers. LOOK carefully and follow the path which holds the piles of twigs. They will guide you to the familiar path farther down." The son's surprised eyes looked back over the path, then at the poor old, shriveled hands all scratched and soiled by their work of love. His heart broke within and bowing to the ground, he cried aloud: "oh, Honorable mother, your kindness breaks my heart! I will not leave you. Together we will follow the path of twigs, and together we will die!"

Once more he shouldered his burden (how light it seemed now) and hastened down the path, through the shadows and the moonlight, to the little hut in the valley. Beneath the kitchen floor was a walled closet for food, which was covered and hidden from view. There the son hid his mother, supplying her with everything she

needed, continually watching and fearing she would be discovered. Time passed, and he was beginning to feel safe when again the governor sent forth heralds bearing an unreasonable order, seemingly as a boast of his power. His demand was that his subjects should present him with a rope of ashes.
The entire province trembled with dread. The order must be obeyed yet who in all Shining could make a rope of ashes? One night, in great distress, the son whispered the news to his hidden mother. “Wait!” she said. “I will think. I will think” On the second day she told him what to do. “Make rope of twisted straw,” she said. “Then stretch it upon a row of flat stones and burn it on a windless night.” He called the people together and did as she said and when the blaze died down, there upon the stones, with every twist and fiber showing perfectly, lay a rope of ashes.

The governor was pleased at the wit of the youth and praised greatly, but he demanded to know where he had obtained his wisdom. “Alas! Alas!” cried the farmer, “the truth must be told!” and with deep bows he related his story. The governor listened and then meditated in silence. Finally he lifted his head. “Shining needs more than strength of youth,” he said gravely. “Ah, that I should have forgotten the well-known saying, “with the crown of snow, there cometh wisdom!” That very hour the cruel law was abolished, and custom drifted into as far a past that only legends remain.

CREATING CHARACTERS

Students will learn about the different types of fiction writing and discover where stories come from.

**Character questionnaires adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- A completed character questionnaire

Materials

- List of Interests, Borrow a Character, News You Can Use, A Whole New World handouts

Activity

- Begin class by asking students to share some of their favorite fictional characters. What makes them like those characters? Do they identify with them? How are those characters unique from others? What would have made you dislike those characters had they been different?

- Students have already learned about plot, so suggest to them that characters drive the plot within stories. The plot depends on the characters' situations and how they respond to it. The actions that occur in the plot are only believable if the character is believable. Because character is so important to plot and fiction, it's important for the writer to understand her characters as much as possible.

- Suggest to students that what truly makes a story memorable is its characters. When characters feel real to us, when they are alive within the pages of a book or in our mind, that is when they make a lasting impression. So how do you make characters come alive? You get to know them very well, you come to understand their complexities and what makes them interesting, BEFORE you write about them.
    - Discuss the difference between a flat and a complex character: Flat characters are boring and general. There's nothing specific or unique about them. Complex characters have hidden depths and surprises. They're fully developed people, and feel so real you could imagine meeting them in school or on the street.
    - Read the examples below and have students identify if it is a flat or complex character:
        - Flat Character: Luna is a teenage girl who lives in Los Angeles. She goes to school, hangs out with her best friend, and likes clothes.
        - Complex Character: 15-year-old Luna just moved from her childhood home in NYC to California. She is having a really hard time making friends at school. Her strange name and the beat-up, rainbow-colored van her dad drives her to school in every morning have not made it easy on her. She's only made one friend so far: Ollie, who lives down the block and has a pet snake also named Ollie. Everyone else thinks Luna's too weird, and besides, they're jealous of her shoes. She has every kind of shoe. Cute sandals, hip skate shoes, high heels wedges, boots, and bright white sneakers—she wears a new pair each day. Little do her classmates know, she makes them all herself.

- Introduce the different types of characters:

    - **The Protagonist**: The protagonist is the character with the starring role in your story. In most stories, the protagonist is on a journey to get what they want more than anything else in the world, whether it's fame, revenge, something simple like joining the high school soccer team, or something much more difficult, like overcoming injustice. (Harry Potter)
    - **The Supporting Characters**: Supporting characters are characters who have an important role in your protagonist's life. Some may be around for the protagonist's entire journey, others for only part of it. They can be friends, family members, love interests, wizards… you name it. These characters also have dreams of their own, and their adventures will add even more excitement to your story. (Hermoine, Ron, Dumbledore)
    - **The Antagonist**: The antagonist is the character who stands in the way of the protagonist getting what they want. This doesn't mean all antagonists are evil monsters, though! Some antagonists get in the way because they're jealous, or confused, or have a set of different goals than the protagonist. (Voldemort)
        - Note: antagonists can be a physical character, or they can be abstract. For example: physical antagonists may be a character whose religious beliefs oppress your protagonist, or your protagonist's evil boss. Whereas an abstract antagonist may be nature (e.g. a natural disaster or an extreme climate), a corporation, or a disease.

- It's important to get to know your characters before you begin writing! One way to do that is through questionnaires. Distribute the character questionnaire handout and allow students to complete it for the rest of the class. They can continue with characters that would fit into the ideas they generated from day one, from the plot exercise they completed yesterday, or for a new story they've brainstormed in the meantime. But encourage them to pick a story idea that they'll want to continue with in writing their full short story.

Character Questionnaire

Part One: Complete this section for your protagonist.

Name	Age
Eye, hair, and skin color	Physical appearance

What are they good at? Any special skills/abilities?

What do they love to do?

Describe their family. How does everyone get along?

Where do they live? What's it like there?

Describe their home. Describe their bedroom (including anything they're hiding):

What do they keep in their pockets, purse, backpack, or bag?

Any favorites? Music, movies, TV shows, books, food, etc:

What kinds of things make them happy?

What kinds of things annoy or upset them?

What's a secret they don't want anyone to know?

What are they most proud of?

Bonus Questions (choose any of the below to answer)
Favorite clothing style/ outfit? Special gestures/movements (i.e., curling their lip when speaking, always keeping their eyes on the ground, etc.)? Speaking style (fast, talkative, monotone, etc.)? Happiest memory? Insecurities? Negative traits? Their biggest fear? Any pets?

Part Two: Complete this for your supporting characters.

How do they know the protagonist?

What do they like about the protagonist?

Do they disagree with the protagonist about anything?

How are they similar to protagonist:

How are they different from protagonist:

Part Three: Complete this for your antagonist. If you don't have a physical antagonist, make up four other questions to answer about the challenge your hero is facing.

Why are they getting in the way of your protagonist?

How do they feel about the protagonist? Why?

Do they have any good qualities, or are they just plain evil?

Do they have any secret weaknesses?

REVISION: Making Peace with Your Inner Critic

Students will learn about the different types of fiction writing and discover where stories come from.

What students will produce

- A letter to themselves anticipating how their inner critic will interrupt their writing and how to address that

Materials

- Article: How to deal with your inner critic so you can keep writing

Mentor Text

Share with students this quote from best-selling author Margaret Atwood.

"If I waited for perfection, I would never write a word."

Activity

- Begin by asking students if they are familiar with the term “inner critic.” Ask them to brainstorm the definition of this term. Round out the conversation by telling students the inner critic is the voice that says you’re not good enough. Or compares yourself to others. Or expects nothing but perfection. The inner critic can really hamper our ability to write creatively, so we need to come to peace with this inner critic and learn to anticipate and spot the critic for what it is, and choose to keep writing anyway.
- When might the inner critic show up?
    - When you feel stuck, when you have a problem you can’t seem to figure out, when you over think, or analyze your work. The inner critic may start saying, “you don’t know what you’re doing,” or “why did you ever think you could write this story?”
    - When you feel uncreative and uninspired. The inner critic may show up and say, “I told you so… you’re just not creative enough.”

- Ask students what they can do when these situations arise? Transition to distributing the reading handout for today, How to Deal with Your Inner Critic So You Can Keep Writing, and read it as a class. Afterward, discuss the takeaways from it. Help students to see that as they write, they DON’T need to be revising constantly. Let writing drafts be an exploratory experience and there will be separate time (every Thursday in this unit) where they can focus on revising.

- Next, move to a quick activity allowing students to start and identify how their inner critic might flare up. Instruct them to envision their inner critic (what are its goals? How does it feel about their writing? Why does it feel the need to speak up?). Tell students to channel their inner critic’s voice in a letter to themselves. In the letter, the inner critic should explain:
    - Their purpose and intentions in pointing out your shortcomings
    - What they perceive as your key shortcomings as a writer
    - How they think others see your writing
    - What they think will happen if you make mistakes or fail, and
    - What they encourage you to do as a writer (e.g., avoid risks or play it safe)

- Next, instruct students to write a letter back to their inner critic. In their letter students should include:
    - What they do well, and what they enjoy about writing
    - Their capabilities as a writer
    - What they hope yet to achieve through their writing, and
    - How the inner critic can more effectively support their efforts.

- Allow students the rest of the class time to complete the activity. Encourage them to keep their letters, or keep their letters in a safe spot for them, so they can return to them whenever their inner critic might be bringing them down.

How to deal with your inner critic so you can keep writing

Adapted from:
https://internationalwriterscollective.com/how-to-deal-with-your-inner-critic-so-you-can-keep-writing/

You know that voice that crops up in your head when you're writing and tells you that you're not creative enough, not clever enough, and that your writing will never live up to your own or other people's expectations? Some people refer to that voice as their inner critic or inner censor.

The inner critic we're talking about here is not the one who helps you revise your work, but the one who wants to stop you from taking the risk that is writing. This unhelpful voice can show up at any stage of the writing process, making you feel like your work is so bad that you might as well quit now before you embarrass yourself.

Here's a secret: it's wrong.

Your inner critic is very good at voicing your deepest fears about your writing, but it doesn't have any real understanding of the writing process. It doesn't know or accept that good writing comes from lots of terrible first drafts and plenty of time and practice to learn the craft.

If you pay attention, you'll notice your inner critic usually shows up when you feel like you're not meeting your own expectations, or when you think there's a problem with your story, poem or novel but you don't know exactly what it is or how to fix it.

The more you learn and the more you practice, the less power that negative voice has over you. Unfortunately, it never completely goes away – no matter how accomplished or successful you become.

It takes effort, but you can learn to counteract the negative voice and keep writing anyway, and over time it will become easier and easier to ignore.

Below are two strategies and lots of tactics you can use to deal with your inner critics.

Give yourself time to learn and improve
This point may seem like a no-brainer, but it's amazing how many people abandon their writing dreams because their inner critic convinces them that if they're not great from the get-go, they never will be. The truth is you actually have to learn how to write and it takes time and lots of practice.

Kristen Roupenian, author of the viral short story "Cat Person", confessed, "I can't believe how mean I was to nascent writer Kristen, who was just trying to write a story and who didn't know how because she hadn't done it before. And how weirdly sure I was that I should be good at what I was doing instantly. Why did I think that? But I did. And I felt shame when I wasn't…The longer you can keep yourself doing it [writing], the more likely you are to succeed so whatever you can do to make it easier on yourself that's the right thing to do."

When you're first starting out, every idea seems precious, and every mistake feels like a failure. But the more you write, the more you realize that ideas are everywhere, and one 'failure' (or even many failures!) doesn't invalidate your writing. It actually makes it better.

Teacher Inge Lamboo likes to direct students to Ira Glass's talk on "the taste gap" – that period when you know what good writing looks like but you can't quite get there yet. Glass points out that everyone who does creative work experiences this gap and a lot of people give in to their inner critic during this period – they quit instead of working to close the gap between their taste and their abilities.

It can be demoralizing to compare ourselves to writers further along the path than we are. Just remember 1) the more you write, the better you'll get, and 2) even when you're just starting out, you can find an audience for your work who will love and appreciate it. Teacher Jennifer van der Kwast says, "For me, I know my inner critic is at its worst when I compare myself to my favorite writers and think I will never be that good. I have to remind myself there's room for everyone, that the more voices out there, the better."

Take the pressure off your writing, particularly your initial drafts

Just as you have to give yourself time to become good, you have to give every story, poem, novel time to become good. Expecting whatever it is you're writing to be brilliant from the outset is a recipe for writer's block. This applies equally to beginners and seasoned pros: the higher your expectations for whatever you're working on, the easier it is for your inner critic to constantly point out where it's not living up.

Teacher Jennifer Gryzenhout often uses exercises to get herself to the page when her inner critic is making it hard. "I get out my journal and write, just an exercise. I tell myself that it doesn't matter, it is just an exercise. And often the writing sparks an idea, or an expression or phrase that gets me back on track and gives me a boost."

Megin Jimenez, a teacher and author of the award-winning collection Mongrel Tongue, has another way to take the pressure off: "When I'm not feeling good about what I'm working on, I give myself a very short time limit (like fifteen minutes) to write. This makes it hard to come up with an excuse to keep avoiding it ("you can handle fifteen minutes!") and usually tricks me into working on it longer and feeling better about it."

Many writers find that separating the drafting and editing process helps stave off their inner critic. As Inge Lamboo points out, "They are different skill sets, right brain vs. left brain. Drafting is creative, imaginative…Revising and editing, on the other hand, are more logical, analytical, systematic. In practice, separating these two activities means: embrace the crappy first draft."

The inner critic affects all of us at times and can show up in writers who have been writing for twenty years as well as those who are brand new to writing. However, if you remember that your inner critic doesn't really understand the writing process, which involves giving yourself permission to write badly so that you can get to something better, you can build up your resilience to it over time until it's no longer something that holds you back.

FICTION SHARE OUT #1

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

**Exercise adapted from NaNoWriMo activities*

Share out Strategy: Character Interviews

- One of the best ways to really get to know your characters is to step inside their shoes for a little while—to pretend you actually are your characters! This exercise is the perfect opportunity to do just that, because your characters have been invited to be interviewed on the local TV station.
- With a friend or in small groups, students will work together and answer the character interview questions as their characters would answer them. They will take turns interviewing each other as their characters! Encourage students to get into their characters' roles before they start: they can try closing their eyes and imagining how their characters speak and move. Maybe they can slink around the room like their protagonist would, or use a French accent if their supporting character is French!

Character Interview Questions
PROTAGONIST INTERVIEW

Host: Hello, *(protagonist's name)*, and welcome to *[TV show name]*, the best ever TV show! We're honored to have you with us today. Why don't you start by telling us a little about your journey so far? What are you trying to do, and how's it going?

Protagonist:

Host: Wow! Sounds like quite the adventure. Rumor has it that someone is out to get you, though! Can you tell us a little about your antagonist? How have you two been getting along lately? What have they been up to?

Protagonist:

Host: Oh dear, that's too bad. Here's a different question, then: Tell us about a favorite memory of yours. Something to cheer you up in these hard times.

Protagonist:

Host: How do you feel about the rest of your adventure? Is there anything you're anxious about? Anything you're looking forward to?

Protagonist:

Host: Well, we wish you the best of luck! We're confident you will succeed! Before you leave, do you have any words of wisdom (or juicy secrets!) to tell our audience?

Protagonist:

Okay, now it's time for one of your supporting characters to be interviewed! Choose your favorite supporting character, or one you want to get to know better, and take a few minutes to get into character.

SUPPORTING CHARACTER INTERVIEW

Host: Hello, *(supporting character's name)*, and welcome to the show! We just talked to your friend the protagonist, and learned all about their adventures so far. Thrilling stuff! But enough about them, let's talk about you. How did you and the protagonist first meet? What did you think about them back then?

Supporting Character:

Host: Wow, you were both just so cute and tiny back then. What about now? How are you two getting along at the moment? How have you been helping them out?

Supporting Character:

Host: They are just so lucky to have you! Which makes us wonder: Is there anything or anyone that's been a big help to you along the way?

Supporting Character:

Host: Very interesting. Hey, it looks like we've got a call coming through. Hello, you're on the best TV show ever. What's your question?

Caller: *Yes, hi. Wow, I've never called into a TV show before! Hi Mom! Anyway, my question is: If you could only eat three foods for the rest of your life, what would you choose?*

Supporting Character:

Host: Good answer. Moving on to the dramatic stuff: is there something you want to tell the protagonist but can't? Any juicy secrets you're holding back from them? Dish!

Supporting Character:

Host: Our lips are sealed! We wish you both the best of luck and look forward to hearing how things work out for you. One last thing, before you go: What do you plan on doing after this story is over?

Supporting Character:

Host: Wow! Wish I could join you! Thank you so much for your time. We hope you'll join us again soon. Up next, the character you've all been waiting for... the antagonist, just after this commercial break!

All right, now it's time to get antagonistic! Whatever you need to do, take a few minutes to get into character—then, let your antagonist take center stage.

ANTAGONIST INTERVIEW

Host: Hi, (*antagonist's name*), and welcome to the show! Why don't you tell us a little about yourself? Like, what has made you so unpleasant?

Antagonist:

Host: Jeez, no need to shout! We've just spoken to a few of your enemies, and they've told us a little about the conflict you all are having. Would you like to give your side of the story?

Antagonist:

Host: Fascinating. Is there a certain reason why you and the protagonist are enemies? Were you ever friends? Do you see yourself getting along in the future?

Antagonist:

Host: Is there anything you plan to do in the novel that you haven't done so far? Any nasty tricks up your sleeve you'd like to tell us about?

Antagonist:

Host: That is *messed* up! You really are an antagonist, in every way. Oh, it looks like we've got another call coming through! Caller, welcome to the show. What's your question?

Caller: *Yes, hello. I'm a research scientist and I'm doing a study on antagonists. I was wondering what you would change if you were writing this story about yourself. Like, how would the story be different?*

Antagonist:

Host: Fascinating. Well, it looks like we're running out of time. We hope you'll come back again and join us when the story is finished. And to all our viewers out there in TV land, be sure to join us tomorrow, when I'll be arm wrestling a ravenous koala bear, blind-folded. See you then!

Week 2 Schedule

Week 2 Purpose: Reflect

This week, students will reflect on their story ideas and character creations to more fully develop their story.

- **MONDAY: Point of View & Descriptions**
- **TUESDAY: Building Conflict**
- **WEDNESDAY: Outlining Plot**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Show Don't Tell**
- **FRIDAY: Fiction Share Out #2**

POINT OF VIEW & DESCRIPTION

Students will learn about the different types of Point of View and Writing descriptions with the 5 senses. They will then practice writing descriptions with different POV.

**Ghost prompt adapted from826 Digital, Ghost Stories with Karen Russell*

What students will produce

- A short story about a ghost

Materials

- Optional: print out of one or all of the ghost stories mentioned here.

Activity

- Introduce students to Point of View (POV): Point of view is the "eye" or narrative voice through which you tell a story. When you write a story, you must decide who is telling the story, and to whom they are telling it. The story could be told by a character who is involved in the story, or from a perspective that sees and knows all of the characters but is not one of them.

- There are three primary types of point of view:
    - **First person point of view**. In first person, one of the characters is narrating the story. ("I went to work.") First person narrative can provide intimacy and a deeper look into a character's mind, but it is also limited by the perceptive abilities of the character. They are confined to report only what they would realistically know about the story, and they are further confined by their own perspective. (Example- Hunger Games)
    - **Second person point of view.** Second person point of view is structured around the "you" pronoun, and is less common in novel-length work. ("You thought you could do it.") Second person can allow you to draw your reader into the story and make them feel like they're part of the action because the narrator is speaking directly to them.
    - **Third person point of view.** The author is narrating a story about the characters and refers to them with the third person pronouns "he/she." ("He was hungry.") This point of view is subdivided into third person omniscient and third person limited.
        - The omniscient narrator knows everything about the story and its characters. This third person narrator can enter anyone's mind, move freely through time, and give the reader their own opinions and observations as well as those of the characters.
        - The third person limited point of view is when an author sticks closely to one character but remains in third person. This style gives you the ability to be inside a character's thoughts, feelings, and sensations, which can give readers a deeper experience of character and scene.

- Now that students are familiar with the different POV's they can choose from when writing their short story, it's time to think about how they can write within that POV in an engaging way. How can they suck their readers into their story? Watch this short TEDEd video on writing descriptively.

- Discuss how the video calls out the importance of writing to the 5 senses. Ask students to imagine themselves on a busy street in NYC. How might they describe it? Go around the room and ask each student to share something that might be heard, smelled, felt, seen, and tasted. Make sure to cover each of the senses.

- Conduct a quick 3-minute freewrite. Instruct students to imagine their favorite place in the world. Then complete the sentence “When I close my eyes…” and describe their favorite places, while incorporating the five senses. When they finish, point out that this exercise used first person POV!

- For the final activity of the day, students will practice with POV and descriptions by responding to the following prompt:
    - We often think of the ghost as a malevolent force, something to exorcize or banish. But we might also think of a ghost as an opportunity—a visitor that’s appeared to give us a chance to right a wrong, to reconsider the past, or to see something that is normally invisible to us.
    - See what happens if you write from the ghost’s point of view. Is your ghost a plant, animal, or human? How long ago was your ghost alive? What forces are keeping it chained to this particular spot? What does your ghost want? Is there some violence in the past that has never been addressed? Is there a secret that the ghost must bring to light? Unfinished business, or unfulfilled potential? Or is your ghost simply lost and in need of directions? Choose a POV (First or Third person) and write a story where the ghost tells its story to a living human, and makes some request or demand of them.

BUILDING CONFLICT

Students will learn to explore the conflict of their short story.

**Idea generating activities adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- Responses to questions that will help identify the conflict in their story

Materials

- Building Conflict handout

Activity

- Before jumping to the next step in students' journey of writing their short stories (conflict), guide them through this brief writing exercise to help spark their creativity for the day.
    - Draw up a list of various emotions on the board–this can be up when students arrive or something you do as a class (examples: confident, worried, ashamed, enraged). Instruct students to choose five of the emotions and practice showing their protagonist's reactions to those emotions. What are the physical and mental reactions they will have when feeling those emotions? (example: confident– standing tall, nose in the air, breathing in deeply, relaxed shoulders). Encourage students to really dig deep and get specific with their character's facial features, bodily reactions, physical actions.
    - When they're finished, show students how they might use this approach when writing the emotions of their characters in their short story to help better engage their readers!

- Now it's time to jump into the meat of stories. Perhaps the most important element, the conflict! Tell students, now that you know who your characters are, the next step is figuring out what those characters are going to do in your story. Most stories are ultimately about the same thing: the journey a protagonist goes on to get what they want. Whether the goal is to become a movie star or to uncover a hidden treasure, their journey is never easy, and your character will encounter setbacks along the way. They're no fun for your protagonist, but these obstacles are what make your story exciting to read.
    - Imagine a character, Shay, who wants nothing more than to win a championship in the 100m sprint. Say Shay goes to the tournament, enters the race, and wins. That's a boring story. But what if Shay's mother won't let them enter the race? Or what if they recently got into a car accident and needs to relearn how to walk? That story has both an external and internal conflict.
        - The external conflict is the one between a protagonist and antagonist. (Shay vs. mom)
        - The internal conflicts are the fears and insecurities that a protagonist has to overcome in order to get what they want. (Shay v. injury)

- Students already know their characters pretty well after answering so many questions about them in their questionnaires. Now, distribute the handout so they can answer a couple more questions that will help them to identify the conflict of their story.

Building Conflict

Now it's time to answer some deeper questions about your characters' hopes and fears in order to create the conflicts that will make your story interesting.

Your Protagonist

What does your protagonist want more than anything in the world?

What are all the things that might block your protagonist from getting what they want?

Does your protagonist have any weaknesses, fears, or faults that will also get in the way of their goal?

Your Antagonist (Physical)

What does your antagonist want more than anything in the world? This can be as simple as defeating the protagonist, or something more ambitious like world domination.

What is your antagonist's issue or problem with the protagonist?

What is your antagonist afraid of? Why?

Does your antagonist have a hidden weakness or flaw? What is it?

Your Antagonist (Abstract)

The antagonist in my novel is not a living, breathing thing. It is...

How does this antagonist get in the way of your protagonist's goals and desires? How does it affect them?

How will your protagonist struggle against and/or battle this antagonist?

OUTLINING PLOT

Students will review the elements to a plot and begin to outline their story plot.

**Plot Outline handout adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- A plot outline for their short story

Materials

- Plot Outline handout

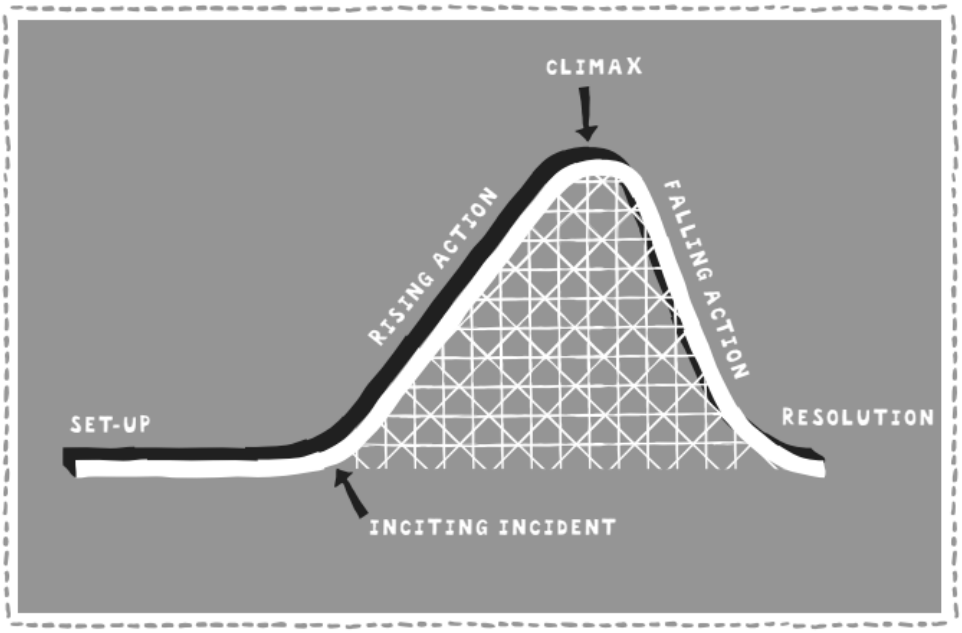
Activity

- To begin class, read the short story “Home” by Gwendolyn Brooks and discuss the following questions:
    - What is the plot of this story? Can you identify the plot points? (Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution)
    - Who is the protagonist? Antagonist? Supporting characters?
    - What are some examples of good descriptive writing that the author uses?

- Now that students have their story idea, their characters, and their conflict, it's time to take the next step and map out all the events that will happen in their story, also known as outlining your plot. Remind students that they’ve already learned about the five main components of a story plot. Today, you’re going to be introduced to one more item: the inciting incident. The inciting incident The inciting incident of a story is the event that sets the main character or characters on the journey that will occupy them throughout the narrative.
    - What was the inciting incident of “Home?” Father needing a loan and having to go to the loan office.

- Distribute the Plot Outline handout and walk students through filling it out.
    - First show them the image of the plot as a rollercoaster and point out the different elements, especially where the inciting incident takes place.
    - Next allow them time to complete the handout. As students work, go around the room and help students who may be struggling to come up with ideas.

Plot Outline Handout



Directions: Review the key parts to the plot outline roller coaster and complete each section's brainstorm.

1. The Set Up/Exposition is like the start of a roller coaster: you get hints of the exciting, scary stuff coming up ahead, but for the most part, you're just looking around and getting to know the people on the ride with you.

In one or two paragraphs, describe a few scenes that will happen at the beginning of your book to introduce your characters, setting, and main conflicts of your story. Think about showing your protagonist in their ordinary life, before everything changes.

2. The inciting incident launches your protagonist into the adventure whether they're ready or not. It can be a pretty exciting moment for your main character. Once it happens, there's no turning back.

In one paragraph, describe the event that causes your protagonist to begin their adventure. Think: "The moment everything changed was when..."

3. The rising action is made up of events, each of them building up to the most exciting part of your story: the climax. Think of the rising action as the biggest hill on the roller coaster—the higher you go, the more suspenseful it gets.

Write a list of three (or more) events that build up to the climax of your story. These are the steps that take your protagonist farther and farther away from their ordinary life, on the journey to get what they want. Keep increasing the conflict little by little. Throw obstacles in their way! Give them some hard choices to make! Add supporting characters to help!

4. The climax is the “gasp” moment at the very top of the roller coaster, right before the high-speed drop. This moment doesn’t last long, and neither does the climax in your story. It can be as short as one paragraph—just enough to make your readers hold their breath in suspense and ask, “What’s going to happen next?!”

In one paragraph, describe what will happen in the climax of your story. This is the "Oh my gosh, what will happen next?!" moment.

5. The falling action is what happens next. It is the fast-paced, action-packed part of your story. You’re finally speeding down the tracks of the rollercoaster with your hands in the air! Does the antagonist get defeated? Do the protagonist’s dreams finally come true? If so, how?

In one to two paragraphs, describe a few scenes that happen after the climax. Does your protagonist get what they want? Does the antagonist get defeated? How?

6. The resolution is how things work out in the very end, after your protagonist gets (or doesn’t get) what they want. It's also a place to show how your character and their life have changed.

In one to two paragraphs, describe the scenes that happen at the very end of your story. Try to show off how your character and their world have changed. What is normal life like for them now?

Home

By Gwendolyn Brooks

What had been wanted was this always, this always to last, the talking softly on this porch, with the snake plant in the jardinière in the southwest corner, and the obstinate slip from Aunt Eppie's magnificent Michigan fern at the left side of the friendly door. Mama, Maud Martha, and Helen rocked slowly in their rocking chairs, and looked at the late afternoon light on the lawn and at the emphatic iron of the fence and at the poplar tree. These things might soon be theirs no longer. Those shafts and pools of light, the tree, the graceful iron, might soon be viewed passively by different eyes.

Papa was to have gone that noon, during his lunch hour, to the office of the Home Owners' Loan. If he had not succeeded in getting another extension, they would be leaving this house in which they had lived for more than fourteen years. There was little hope. The Home Owners' Loan was hard. They sat, making their plans.

"We'll be moving into a nice flat somewhere," said Mama. "Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan, or in Washington Park Court. "Those flats, as the girls and Mama knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's. This was not mentioned now.

"They're much prettier than this old house," said Helen. "I have friends I'd just as soon not bring here. And I have other friends that wouldn't come down this far for anything, unless they were in a taxi."

Yesterday, Maud Martha would have attacked her. Tomorrow she might. Today she said nothing. She merely gazed at a little hopping robin in the tree, her tree, and tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

"Well, I do know," said Mama, turning her hands over and over, "that I've been getting tireder and tireder of doing that firing. From October to April, there's firing to be done."

"But lately we've been helping, Harry and I," said Maud Martha. "And sometimes in March and April and in October, and even in November, we could build a little fire in the fireplace. Sometimes the weather was just right for that."

She knew, from the way they looked at her, that this had been a mistake. They did not want to cry.

But she felt that the little line of white, sometimes ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron would never drift across any western sky except that in back of this house. The rain would drum with as sweet a dullness nowhere but here. The birds on South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those "rich" women's sun parlors.

"It's just going to kill Papa!" burst out Maud Martha. "He loves this house! He lives for this house!"

"He lives for us," said Helen. "It's us he loves. He wouldn't want the house, except for us."

"And he'll have us," added Mama, "wherever."

"You know," Helen sighed, "if you want to know the truth, this is a relief. If this hadn't come up, we would have gone on, just dragged on, hanging out here forever."

“It might,” allowed Mama, “be an act of God. God may just have reached down and picked up the reins.”

“Yes,” Maud Martha cracked in, “that’s what you always say – that God knows best.”

Her mother looked at her quickly, decided the statement was not suspect, looked away.

Helen saw Papa coming. “There’s Papa,” said Helen.

They could not tell a thing from the way Papa was walking. It was that same dear little staccato walk, one shoulder down, then the other, then repeat, and repeat. They watched his progress. He passed the Kennedys’, he passed the vacant lot, he passed Mrs. Blakemore’s. They wanted to hurl themselves over the fence, into the street, and shake the truth out of his collar. He opened his gate – the gate – and still his stride and face told them nothing.

“Hello,” he said.

Mama got up and followed him through the front door. The girls knew better than to go in too.

Presently Mama’s head emerged. Her eyes were lamps turned on.

“It’s all right,” she exclaimed. “He got it. It’s all over. Everything is all right.”

The door slammed shut. Mama’s footsteps hurried away.

“I think,” said Helen, rocking rapidly, “I think I’ll give a party. I haven’t given a party since I was eleven. I’d like some of my friends to just casually see that we’re homeowners.”

REVISION: Show Don't Tell

Students will learn about "showing not telling" and will practice using this approach

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What students will produce

- A revised version of their poem

Materials

- Poems from earlier in the week

Mentor Text

Share with students this quote from Russian playwright and short story writer Anton Chekhov:

> *"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass."*
> – Anton Chekhov

Activity

- Begin class with a very short free write. Allow students to choose one of the following prompts and write for 2 minutes:
    - How does it feel to wake up from a nightmare?
    - If you were standing in a desert, how would you feel?

- Tell students that as a creative writer, their job is to show, rather than tell. What's the difference? In telling something, you don't give the reader the room to imagine or picture things on their own; you tell them what they should see and how they should feel about it. In showing, you create imagery from which the reader can interpret their own meaning.
    - You can tell your readers that: Joe was tired,
        - or you can show that: Joe rubbed his eyes and willed himself to keep them open.
    - You can tell your readers: It is early spring,
        - or you can show that: New buds are pushing through the late frost while the birds are hastily reinforcing their nests.

- Good writers "show", rather than "tell". When you show, you are being an artist, painting with words! You describe the scenes and actions. You use clear, specific details to create vivid pictures in our minds. You use imagery to help us to see, hear, feel, smell, and sometimes even taste.

- Write the following on the board as ways to ensure you show, don't tell:
    - Use specific details.
    - Use strong action verbs. Enhance them with creatively applied adverbs.
    - Use interesting nouns. Describe them with tantalizing adjectives!
    - Use imagery to create a picture.
    - Use the five senses.

- As a class or individually, ask students to work through a couple examples by changing the following "telling" sentences into "showing" sentences:
    - The cat was tired.
    - The garden was dead.
    - The light was broken.

- Instruct students to turn to their freewrite from earlier. Revisit their description of the feeling of waking from a nightmare or being in a desert and rewrite those feelings to *show* them, rather than tell them.
    - Describe a person waking up from a nightmare without using the word “nightmare” or “dream,” so that the reader still knows what’s happening.
    - Describe the desert setting without mentioning “desert” so that the reader knows where the character is.

- For the remainder of class, students should work on their short story.

FICTION SHARE OUT #2

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Partner Feedback

- Students will partner up and share the outline to their story plot. Partners should share their initial thoughts, ask questions, and offer feedback using the conversation starters below:
    - I like how…
    - It will be engaging when…
    - I wonder…
    - The conflict feels…
    - The protagonist/antagonist seems…
    - It might be exciting if…
    - An idea for adding more drama might be…

Week 3 Schedule

Week 3 Purpose: Relate

This week, students will learn how to relate the setting and mood of their stories, along with character relationships and the dialogue of those characters, to enhance their short stories.

- **MONDAY: Exploring Setting**
- **TUESDAY: Great Dialogue**
- **WEDNESDAY: Tone**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Word Choice**
- **FRIDAY: Fiction Share Out #3**

EXPLORING SETTING

Students will learn about the importance of setting in developing story mood as well as characters.

**Setting description activity adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- Setting descriptions for their story

Materials

- Setting Description Practice handout

Activity

- Tell students, now that you have an outline of your plot, it's time to explore the setting, or settings, for your story. The setting of a story is where and when it takes place. Usually, an author decides to have one large setting (like Los Angeles in 1995), and then possibly some smaller settings (like the laundromat where the characters hang out on the weekends, or the classroom where they get in a fight). Settings do more than serve as a backdrop to the action in your story. They can also create or enhance the mood of your story.
    - Define Mood: Mood means the feeling of your story; its emotional quality. You can also think of the mood as how you want someone to feel while reading your story. Examples: playful, serious, mysterious, tense, warm, dangerous, joyous

- As a class, describe a setting that is “creepy.” Go around the class asking each student to contribute a sentence to the setting they are creating together.

- After that practice, it’s time for students to practice on their own! Distribute the Setting Descriptions handout and walk students through completing Part One.

- Bring students back together and share that another writing trick is to show things about your characters just by putting them in specific settings. Ask students, if you were writing about an adventurous person, where might you place them? (examples: in an abandoned warehouse, on the top of Mt. Everest, in a remote village in Alaska).

- Guide students in completing Part Two of the handout.

- If time allows, students should spend the remainder of class working on their short stories. They may choose to begin their short story by introducing the setting to the reader and establishing the “set-up” through the setting!

Setting Descriptions Practice

Part One

Describe the settings that would help create each of the moods listed below. Try to write two or three sentences for each mood. Include specific details about the sights, sounds, sensations (and maybe even smells) of the settings you choose!

Joyous:

Suspenseful/tense:

Now make up 2 of your own moods and describe a setting that would go along with each one.

Mood #1:

Mood #2:

Apply your new skills to your upcoming novel. Write or list details to describe a setting that will help create the right mood for each scene of your story. (Since you're writing a short story, there may only be one setting/scene, but use the additional boxes if you have more than one)

Scene/Setting #1

Scene/Setting #2

Scene/Setting #3

Part Two

For each of the following characters, try to come up with a setting that will reflect or reinforce what you imagine about them. As you write, try to be as detailed as possible. Don't forget colors, sounds, and even smells. Focus on where the character is.

The shy new kid in town:

A character from your novel:

Another character from your novel

GREAT DIALOGUE

Students will learn what makes dialogue great and practice.

**dialogue activities adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- Dialogue between their characters

Materials

- Dialogue Practice handouts and The Cranes short story

Activity

- Define dialogue as what happens when two or more characters speak to one another. We experience dialogue all the time in our everyday lives, but we usually call it a conversation. Many of our conversations are rather boring, but as writers, we want to try to fill our stories with voices, and make sure those voices have interesting, surprising, funny, dramatic, and powerful things to say.

- Dialogue in a novel should do one (or all!) of the following:
    - Move the story forward.
    - Reveal things about the characters.
    - Increase the tension.

- Distribute the dialogue practice worksheet and review the example dialogue to show how dialogue can accomplish the above three objectives. Ask for student volunteers to read aloud each example.
    - Note: be sure to point out the proper formatting for writing dialogue: the exact words the characters say are set off from the rest of the sentence using quotation marks and end punctuation like a question mark or a comma (which goes inside the quotation marks).

- Read a short story "The Cranes" by Peter Meinke and discuss the use of the dialogue.
    - What does the dialogue reveal about the characters? What do we know about them?
    - How does the dialogue increase the tension?
    - Does the dialogue move the story forward?

- Instruct students to complete the dialogue practice worksheet. Remind them that the dialogue they create can be put into their short stories!

Dialogue Practice

Dialogue in a novel should do one (or all!) of the following:

- Move the story forward.
- Reveal things about the characters.
- Increase the tension.

Dialogue that moves a story forward

The phone rang, and Terrell picked it up. "Hello?"

There was a moment of silence on the other end, then a woman's voice asked, “Is this Terrell Simmons?"

"Yeah. Who’s this?" Terrell asked.

“Terrell…” The woman paused. Terrell heard her take a deep breath. “My name is Alexis. I’m your sister.”

"I don’t have any sisters,” said Terrell, losing his patience.

“None from this dimension,” said Alexis. “But I’m not from here. I'm from… somewhere else.”

Dialogue that reveals things about the characters

Terrell slid into the restaurant booth. "So, what up, Sis?"

"I'm so sorry to surprise you like this," Alexis said. "It wasn't my intention, believe me." She played with the edge of her napkin.

A waiter appeared dressed in a white suit and tie. "Welcome," he said. "Will you young people be dining with us this splendid evening?"

"Nah, I'm good," said Terrell. "Unless you got any nachos?"

Alexis shot Terrell an angry look. “We'll start with two waters, thank you."

Dialogue that increases the tension

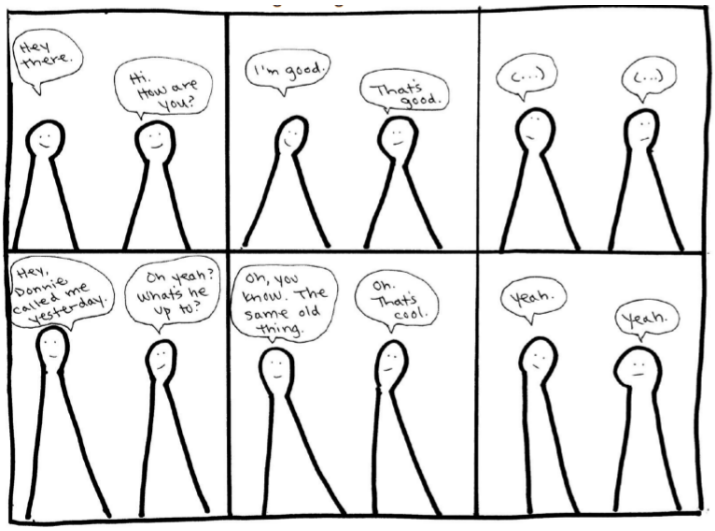
"Alexis!" Terrell shouted. "I can’t find the crystal. It’s not here!”

"Look harder.” She frowned, trying to turn off the beeping security alarms.

"We've got to go now! C'mon, we can keep looking tomorrow."

"No, we can't." Alexis sighed. "Without that crystal, your whole universe will collapse in under twelve hours."

Here's an example of boring dialogue!

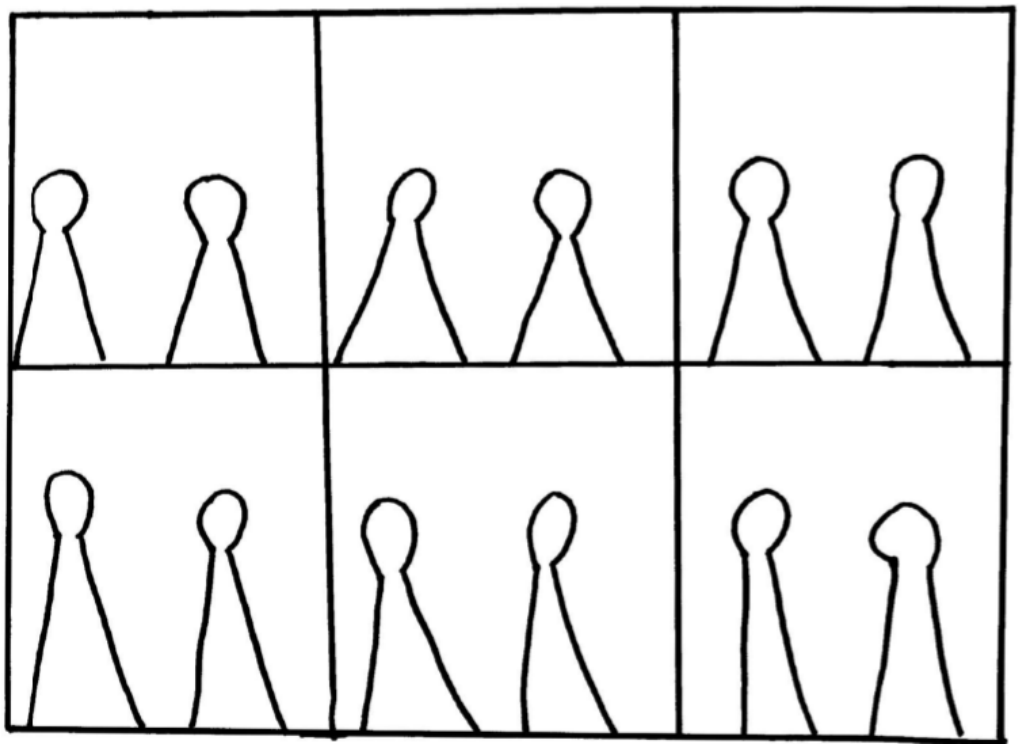


Now it's your turn to make GREAT dialogue! Pick any two characters from your novel and practice writing dialogue between them.

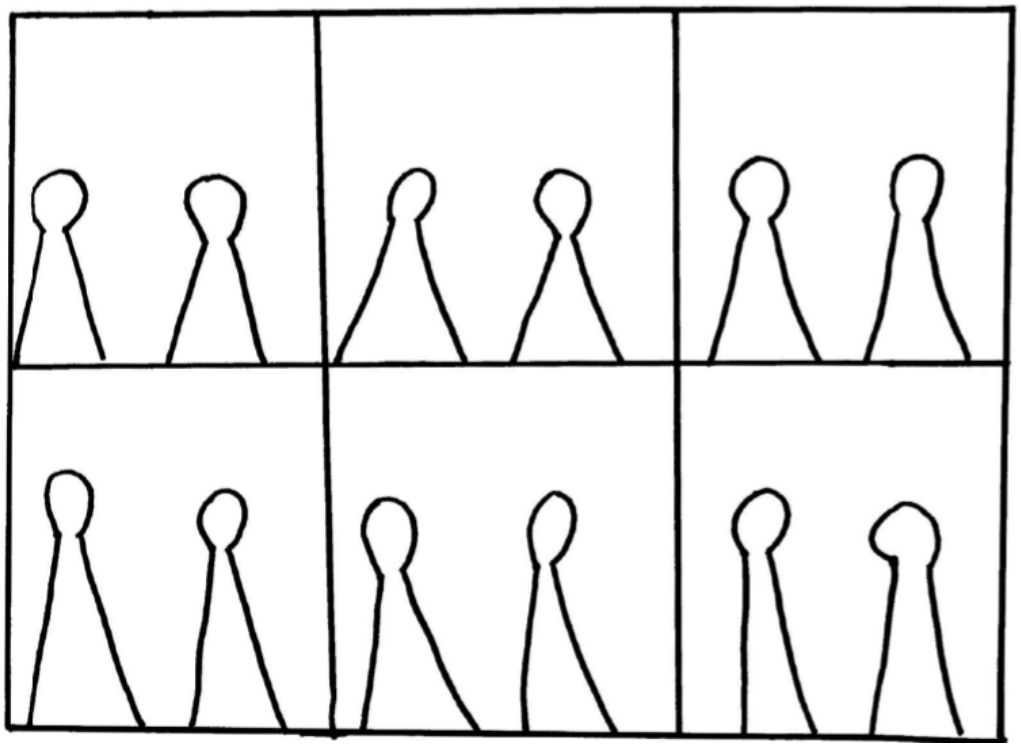
1. **In the first comic, write dialogue that moves your story forward.**
2. **In the second comic, write dialogue that helps the reader better understand your characters.**
3. **In the final comic, write dialogue that increases the tension of your story.**

Remember, you've only got six boxes to use in each comic, so you need to say a lot— that is, your characters need to say a lot—in a small space. Later, if you like what you've written, you can plop this dialogue right into your story using quotation marks and dialogue tags.

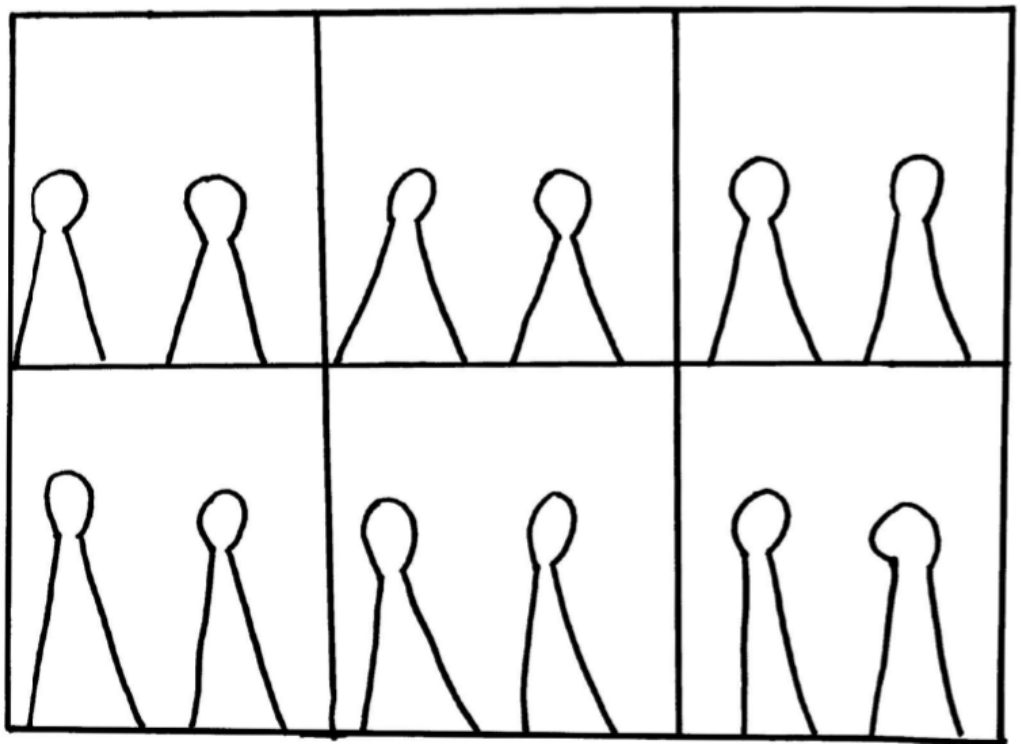
1. Dialogue that moves your story forward:



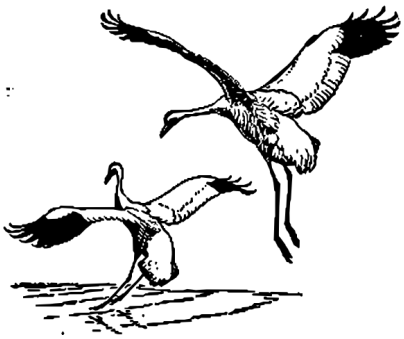
2. Dialogue that helps the reader better understand your characters:



3. Dialogue that increases the tension of your story:



“The Cranes” By Peter Meinke



Oh!" she said, "What are those, the huge white ones?" Along the marshy shore two tall and stately birds, staring motionless toward the Gulf, towered above the bobbing egrets and scurrying plovers.

"Well, I can't believe it," he said. "I've been coming here for years and never saw one. . . . "

"But what are they?" she persisted. "Don't make me guess or anything, it makes me feel dumb." They leaned forward in the car and the shower curtain spread over the front seat crackled and hissed.

"They've got to be whooping cranes, nothing else so big!" One of the birds turned gracefully, as if to acknowledge the old Dodge parked alone in the tall grasses. "See the black legs and black wingtips? Big! Why don't I have my binoculars?" He looked at his wife and smiled.

"Well," he continued after a while, "I've seen enough birds. But whooping cranes, they're rare. Not many left."

"They're lovely. They make the little birds look like clowns."

"I could use a few dozen," he said. "A few laughs never hurt anybody." "Are you all right?" She put a hand on his thin arm. "Maybe this is the wrong thing. I feel I'm responsible."

"God, no!" His voice changed. "No way. I can't smoke, can't drink martinis, no coffee, no candy. I not only can't leap buildings in a single bound, I can hardly get up the goddamn stairs'

She was smiling. "Do you remember the time you drank 13 martinis and asked that young priest to step outside and see whose side God was on?"

"What a jerk I was! How have you put up with me all this time?"

"Oh, no! I was proud of you! You were so funny, and that priest was a snot."

"Now you tell me." The cranes were moving slowly over a small hillock, wings opening and closing like bellows. "It's all right. It's enough," he said again. "How old am I anyway, 130?"

"Really," she said. "It's me. Ever since the accident it's been one thing after another. I'm just a lot of trouble to everybody."

"Let's talk about something else," he said. "Do you want to listen to the radio? How about turning on that preacher station so we can throw up?"

"No," she said, "I just want to watch the birds. And listen to you."

"You must be pretty tired of that."

She turned her head from the window and looked into his eyes. "I never got tired of listening to you. Never."

"Well, that's good," he said. "It's just that when my mouth opens, your eyes tend to close."

"They do not!" she said, and began to laugh, but the laugh turned into a cough and he had to pat her back until she stopped. They leaned back in the silence and looked toward the Gulf stretching out beyond the horizon. In the distance, the water looked like metal, still and hard.

"I wish they'd court," he said. "I wish we could see them court, the cranes. They put on a show. He bows like Nijinsky and jumps straight up in the air."

"What does she do?"

"Well, I forget. I've never seen it. But I do remember that they mate for life and live a long time. They're probably older than we are! Their feathers are falling out and their kids never write."

She was quiet again. He turned in his seat, picked up an object wrapped in a plaid towel, and placed it between them in the front.

"Here's looking at you, kid," he said.

"Do they really mate for life? I'm glad -- they're so beautiful."

"Yep. Audubon said that's why they're almost extinct: a failure of imagination." "I don't believe that," she said. "I think there'll always be whooping cranes." "Why not?" he said.

"I wish the children were more settled. I keep thinking it's my fault." "You think everything's your fault. Nicaragua. Ozone depletion. Nothing is your fault. They'll be fine, and anyway, they're not children anymore. Kids are different today, that's all. You were terrific." He paused. "You were terrific in ways I couldn't tell the kids about."

"I should hope not." She laughed and began coughing again, but held his hand when he reached over. When the cough subsided they sat quietly, looking down at their hands as if they were objects in a museum.

"I used to have pretty hands," she said.

"I remember."

"Do you? Really?"

"I remember everything," he said.

"You always forgot everything."

"Well, now I remember."

"Did you bring something for your ears?"

"No, I can hardly hear anything anyway!" But his head turned at a sudden squabble among the smaller birds. The cranes were stepping delicately away from the commotion.

"I'm tired," she said.

"Yes." He leaned over and kissed her, barely touching her lips. "Tell me," he said, "did I really drink 13 martinis?"

But she had already closed her eyes and only smiled. Outside the wind ruffled the bleached-out grasses, and the birds in the white glare seemed almost transparent. The hull of the car gleamed beetle-like -- dull and somehow sinister in its metallic isolation from the world around it.

At the shot, the two cranes plunged upward, their great wings beating the air and their long slender necks pointed like arrows toward the sun.

TONE

Students will learn about tone in short stories.

What students will produce

- A brainstorm of story ideas

Materials

- Tone handout and Tone Practice Worksheet

Activity

- Introduce and define the term “Tone,” for students: Tone is the narrator’s attitude toward their subject matter. It is created through careful word choice. A tone may be formal or informal, it may be sarcastic or angry.
    - Sometimes, it is easy to mix up tone with mood. Remember, tone is the author’s attitude toward the subject matter, and mood is what the reader feels when engaging with the text. Another way to think of it is to associate tone with the narrator’s mind, and mood with the reader’s heart.

- Distribute the tone handout and work through the examples as a class

- Distribute the Tone Practice Worksheet and allow students time to practice writing in different tones

- For the remainder of the class, allow students to work on their short stories

Tone Handout

Passage #1

We are supposed to go to the concert tomorrow, but it has been raining for three days straight. I just know that we won't be able to go.
What is the subject?
How does the narrator feel about that subject?
What words or phrases show you this tone?

Passage #2

Excerpt from The Thing They Carried by Tim O'Brien For the most part, they carried themselves with poise, a kind of dignity. Now and then, however, there were times of panic, when they squealed or wanted to squeal but couldn't, when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and said Dear Jesus and flopped around to the earth and fired their weapons blindly and cringed and sobbed and begged for the noise to stop and went wild and made supid promises to themselves and to God and to their mothers and fathers, hoping not to die.
What is the subject?
How does the narrator feel about that subject?
What words or phrases show you this tone?

Passage #3

It was very late and everyone had left the cafe except an old man who sat in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light. In the day time the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference.

Excerpt from A Clean, Well-Lighted Place by Ernest Hemmingway

What is the subject?

How does the narrator feel about that subject?

What words or phrases show you this tone?

Passage #4

Nicholas Was…

older than sin, and his beard could grow no whiter. He wanted to die.

The dwarfish natives of the Arctic caverns did not speak his language, but conversed in their own, twittering tongue, conducted incomprehensible rituals, when they were not actually working in the factories.

Once every year they forced him, sobbing and protesting, into Endless Night. During the journey he would stand near every child in the world, leave one of the dwarves' invisible gifts by its bedside. The children slept, frozen into time.

He envied Prometheus and Loki, Sisyphus and Judas. His punishment was harsher.

Ho.
Ho.
Ho.

Excerpt from Smoke & Mirrors by Neil Gaiman

What is the subject?

How does the narrator feel about that subject?

What words or phrases show you this tone?

Tone Practice Worksheet

Directions: Below are a series of different scenarios. Each will have two tone words associated with it. Describe each situation using both tones given.

Example

Scenario: Riding a roller coaster	**Excited**	Terrell stares up at the Steel Dragon, the most iconic roller coaster ever made. His friends race straight to the line and Terrell follows, running as fast as he can. He jumps in front of his friend to take the front row seat.
	Scared	I stare up at the Steel Dragon, the most horrifying roller coaster ever made. My palms grow sweaty and my stomach flips. This was a terrible idea.

Scenario: Eating Sushi	
Pleased	**Disgusted**

Scenario: Flying on an airplane for the first time	
Excited	**Nervous**

Create Your own! Choose a scenario from your story (or make up a new one) and select an attitude that your protagonist would have about that scenario. Write a scene describing that situation in your chosen tone.

Scenario:
Tone:

REVISION: Word Choice & Synonyms

Students will learn about the different types of fiction writing and discover where stories come from.

**Synonym game adapted from 826 Digital, Synonym Game*

What students will produce

- A list of synonyms

Materials

- Word Choice handout, index cards (or sticky notes) with synonyms written on them (see list of synonym examples at the bottom of this lesson)

Mentor Text

Share with students the following quote from Mark Twain:
"The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter—'tis the difference between the lightning-bug and the lightning."

Activity

- Introduce the importance of word choice when writing: Word Choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. Strong word choice creates imagery–especially sensory, show-me writing–clarifies, and expands Ideas. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

- Words affect tone, attitude, imagery, and voice. They can also reveal emotion. Read aloud the following two ways a father asks his daughter about a boy he saw her walking with.
    - "Who was that fool I saw you sneaking around with on the street?"
        - What is the father's attitude? How do you know?
    - "Was that your new Prince Charming I saw you with?"
        - What is the father's attitude? How do you know?

- Sometimes words can be considered "1¢ Words" or words that are so common, they really don't convey much. Other words, however, can be "$1 Million Words" because they provide a better description and help the reader understand more. Pass out the Word Choice handout and review the 1¢ Words and their counter $1 Million Words.
    - Point out that really, these words are synonyms of each other. Define synonyms for your students: "A synonym is a word that means the same thing (or almost the same thing) as another word."

- Explain that one great tool for revising and thought-condensing your creative writing is using synonyms. Write JAR on the board and ask your students: "Who knows a synonym for the word JAR?" Some possible answers could be can, vase, bottle, pot, crock, or vat. Next, ask your students: "What about something like EXCEPTIONAL?" Some possible answers could be odd, rare, strange, unusual, or unique.

Explain to your students that finding synonyms for words can help us make our sentences and our meanings more clear.

- Distribute index cards or sticky notes with synonyms to students for the word game. Have them follow the instructions on their handout to complete the game and then work with their partner to answer the questions on the handout.
    - Ask each student to hold their card to their forehead without looking at it. Next, ask your students to talk to each other, and without looking at their own word, or saying the words on anyone else's forehead, to try to find their synonym partner. Once each student has found their synonym match, they should work together in pairs to complete the questions on the handout.

- For the remainder of class, allow students to work on their short story

List of Synonyms

Easy	Simple
Tasty	Mouth-Watering
Pretty	Gorgeous
Smart	Brilliant
Loud	Noisy
Funny	Hilarious
Soft	Squishy
Cold	Frosty
Scary	Spooky
Jump	Leap
Run	Sprint
Sad	Sorrowful
Yell	Holler
Throw	Toss
Look	Observe
Bright	Shimmering
Disgusting	Gross
Dark	dingy

Word Choice

1¢ Words	$ 1 Million Words
Talk	Lecture; Sing; Confess
Walk	Strut; Stumble; Roam
Big	Enormous; Towering; Massive
Mean	Malicious; Conniving; Cruel-Hearted
Dirty	Scraggly; Contaminated; Greasy

Synonym Game

Instructions: Without looking at your word, hold it to your forehead. Talk to your fellow students and without looking at your word, or saying the words on anyone else's card, to try to find your synonym partner. You can ask questions like: "What does my word mean?" or "Can you describe my word to me?"

Once you've found your synonym partner, complete the following questions below.

What was your word?	What was your partner's word?

List at least 4 more synonyms for your word (make sure they are $1 Million Words!)

Use your word or synonyms of your word in three sentences describing different things.

FICTION SHARE OUT #3

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Writing Conferences

- Divide students into small groups– it may be wise to group students who are all working on the same genre of short story, or students who are all struggling with a similar issue. Within their group, students will discuss their writing and share out a portion of something they have written. They can follow the structure below, one student at a time.
    - Student #1 will respond to the prompts:
        - One thing I am finding difficult about writing this story is…
        - One thing I like about my story is…
        - One thing I want to focus on when writing is…
    - Then, student will read a portion of their story
    - Other group members will then follow up by offering positive, constructive feedback. Students can also offer suggestions for addressing the difficulties their fellow student is experiencing.
        - If you find ___ difficult, it may be a good idea to ____
        - I wonder if…
        - I really like…
- As students meet in their conferences, the teacher can make their way from one group to the next to join in. If you know in advance that a group is struggling with something, prepare a mini-lesson or exercise to do with them when you visit with that group.

Week 4 Schedule

Week 4 Purpose: Create

This week, students will continue to write creatively and finish their short stories.

- **MONDAY: Writing Day 1**
- **TUESDAY: Writing Day 2**
- **WEDNESDAY: Writing Day 3**
- **THURSDAY: Revision: Perspective**
- **FRIDAY: Fiction Share Out #4**

WRITING DAY 1

Students will work on their short stories.

What students will produce

- A draft of their short story

Materials

- Writing tools

Activity

- Begin class with a short free write to get students thinking creatively. Allow students 5-10 minutes to work on the freewrite before spending the remainder of the class working on their short stories.

- Choose one of the following free write prompts, or allow students to select one for themselves.
    - Make up a holiday or celebration from an imaginary land and describe it to someone who's never heard of it before
    - What would you do if one morning you woke up and you were invisible?
    - Write about a hard decision that you had to make and how it affected you.
    - Describe the funniest thing you've ever seen happen.

- If students are struggling and need some inspiration, allow them time to read! You can offer one of the short stories below or allow them to read something of their choosing.
    - "Barney" by Will Stanton
    - "The Lady, or the Tiger?" by Frank R. Stockton

WRITING DAY 2

Students will work on their short stories.

What students will produce

- A draft of their short story

Materials

- Writing tools

Activity

- Begin class with a short free write to get students thinking creatively. Allow students 5-10 minutes to work on the freewrite before spending the remainder of the class working on their short stories.

- Choose one of the following free write prompts, or allow students to select one for themselves.
    - If you had the chance to be a guest star on a television show, what show would it be? Why?
    - If you got the chance to plan a dinner for the President, what foods would you serve?
    - Write about a rocket-ship on its way to the moon or a distant galaxy far, far, away.
    - Envision a dragon. Do you battle him? Or is the dragon friendly? Use descriptive language.

- If students are struggling and need some inspiration, allow them time to read! You can offer one of the short stories below or allow them to read something of their choosing.
    - "Barney" by Will Stanton
    - "The Lady, or the Tiger?" by Frank R. Stockton

WRITING DAY 3

Students will work on their short stories.

What students will produce

- A draft of their short story

Materials

- Writing tools

Activity

- Begin class with a short free write to get students thinking creatively. Allow students 5-10 minutes to work on the freewrite before spending the remainder of the class working on their short stories.

- Choose one of the following free write prompts, or allow students to select one for themselves.
    - Write something so sweet, it makes your teeth hurt.
    - Write about putting together the pieces of a puzzle.
    - Write about a secret you've kept from someone else or how you feel when you know someone is keeping a secret from you.
    - Write about an extreme or silly sport. If none inspire you, make up the rules for your own game.

- If students are struggling and need some inspiration, allow them time to read! You can offer one of the short stories below or allow them to read something of their choosing.
    - "Barney" by Will Stanton
    - "The Lady, or the Tiger?" by Frank R. Stockton

Barney By Will Stanton

AUGUST 30TH. We are alone on the island now, Barney and I. It was something of a jolt to have to sack Tayloe after all these years, but I had no alternative. The petty vandalisms I could have forgiven, but when he tried to poison Barney out of simple malice, he was standing in the way of scientific progress. That I cannot condone.

I can only believe the attempt was made while under the influence of alcohol, it was so clumsy. The poison container was overturned and a trail of powder led to Barney's dish. Tayloe's defense was of the flimsiest. He denied it. Who else then?

SEPTEMBER 2ND. I am taking a calmer view of the Tayloe affair. The monastic life here must have become too much for him. That, and the abandonment of his precious guinea pigs. He insisted to the last that they were better-suited than Barney to my experiments. They were more his speed, I'm afraid. He was an earnest and willing worker, but something of a clod, poor fellow. At last I have complete freedom to carry on my work without the mute reproaches of Tayloe. I can only ascribe his violent antagonism toward Barney to jealousy. And now that he has gone, how much happier Barney appears to be! I have given him complete run of the place, and what sport it is to observe how his newly awakened Intellectual curiosity carries him about. After only two weeks of glutamic acid treatments, he has become interested in my library, dragging the books from the shelves, and going over them page by page. I am certain he knows there is some knowledge to be gained from them had he but the key.

SEPTEMBER 8TH. For the past two days I have had to keep Barney confined, and how he hates it. I am afraid that when my experiments are completed I shall have to do away with Barney. Ridiculous as it may sound there is still the possibility that he might be able to communicate his intelligence to others of his kind. However small the chance may be, the risk is too great to ignore. Fortunately there is, in the basement, a vault built with the idea of keeping vermin out, and it will serve equally well to keep Barney in.

SEPTEMBER 9TH. Apparently I have spoken too soon. This morning I let him out to frisk around a bit before commencing a new series of tests. After a quick survey of the room he returned to his cage, sprang up on the door handle, removed the key with his teeth, and before I could stop him, he was out the window. By the time I reached the yard I spied him on the coping of the well, and I arrived on the spot only in time to hear the key splash into the water below.

I own I am somewhat embarrassed. It is the only key. The door is locked. Some valuable papers are in separate compartments inside the vault. Fortunately, although the well is over forty feet deep, there are only a few feet of water in the bottom, so the retrieving of the key does not present an insurmountable obstacle. But I must admit Barney has won the first round.

SEPTEMBER 10TH. I have had a rather shaking experience, and once more in a minor clash with Barney. I have come off second-best. In this instance I will admit he played the hero's role and may even have saved my life.

In order to facilitate my descent into the well I knotted a length of three-quarter inch rope at one-foot intervals to make a rude ladder. I reached the bottom easily enough, but after only a few minutes of groping for the key, my flashlight gave out and I returned to the surface. A few feet from the top I heard excited squeaks from Barney, and upon obtaining ground level I observed that the rope was almost completely severed. Apparently it had chafed against the edge of the masonry and the little fellow, perceiving my plight, had been doing his

utmost to warn me.

I have now replaced that section or rope and arranged some old sacking beneath it to prevent recurrence of the accident. I have replenished the batteries in my flashlight and am now prepared for the final descent. These few moments I have taken off to give myself a breathing spell and to bring my journal up to date. Perhaps I should fix myself a sandwich as I may be down there longer than seems likely at the moment.

SEPTEMBER 11TH. Poor Barney is dead and soon I shell be the same. He was a wonderful ratt and life without him is knot worth livving. If anybody reeds this please do not disturb anything on the island but leeve it like it is as a shryn to Barney, espechilly the old well. Do not look for my body as I will caste myself into the see. You mite bring a couple of young ratts and leeve them as a living memorial to Barney. Females-no males. I sprayned my wrist is why this is written so bad. This is my laste will. Do what I say an don't come back or disturb anything after you bring the young ratts like I said. Just females. Goodby.

The Lady, or the Tiger? by Frank R. Stockton

Long ago, in the very olden time, there lived a powerful king. Some of his ideas were progressive. But others caused people to suffer.

One of the king's ideas was a public arena as an agent of poetic justice. Crime was punished, or innocence was decided, by the result of chance. When a person was accused of a crime, his future would be judged in the public arena.

All the people would gather in this building. The king sat high up on his ceremonial chair. He gave a sign. A door under him opened. The accused person stepped out into the arena. Directly opposite the king were two doors. They were side by side, exactly alike. The person on trial had to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open whichever door he pleased.

If the accused man opened one door, out came a hungry tiger, the fiercest in the land. The tiger immediately jumped on him and tore him to pieces as punishment for his guilt. The case of the suspect was thus decided.

Iron bells rang sadly. Great cries went up from the paid mourners. And the people, with heads hanging low and sad hearts, slowly made their way home. They mourned greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have died this way.

But, if the accused opened the other door, there came forth from it a woman, chosen especially for the person. To this lady he was immediately married, in honor of his innocence. It was not a problem that he might already have a wife and family, or that he might have chosen to marry another woman. The king permitted nothing to interfere with his great method of punishment and reward.

Another door opened under the king, and a clergyman, singers, dancers and musicians joined the man and the lady. The marriage ceremony was quickly completed. Then the bells made cheerful noises. The people shouted happily. And the innocent man led the new wife to his home, following children who threw flowers on their path.

This was the king's method of carrying out justice. Its fairness appeared perfect. The accused person could not know which door was hiding the lady. He opened either as he pleased, without having knowing whether, in the next minute, he was to be killed or married.

Sometimes the fierce animal came out of one door. Sometimes it came out of the other.

This method was a popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they would see a bloody killing or a happy ending. So everyone was always interested. And the thinking part of the community would bring no charge of unfairness against this plan. Did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

The king had a beautiful daughter who was like him in many ways. He loved her above all humanity. The princess secretly loved a young man who was the best-looking and bravest in the land. But he was a commoner, not part of an important family.

One day, the king discovered the relationship between his daughter and the young man. The man was immediately put in prison. A day was set for his trial in the king's public arena. This, of course, was an

especially important event. Never before had a common subject been brave enough to love the daughter of the king.

The king knew that the young man would be punished, even if he opened the right door. And the king would take pleasure in watching the series of events, which would judge whether or not the man had done wrong in loving the princess.

The day of the trial arrived. From far and near the people gathered in the arena and outside its walls. The king and his advisers were in their places, opposite the two doors. All was ready. The sign was given. The door under the king opened and the lover of the princess entered the arena.

Tall, beautiful and fair, his appearance was met with a sound of approval and tension. Half the people had not known so perfect a young man lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the young man entered the public arena, he turned to bend to the king. But he did not at all think of the great ruler. The young man's eyes instead were fixed on the princess, who sat to the right of her father.

From the day it was decided that the sentence of her lover should be decided in the arena, she had thought of nothing but this event.

The princess had more power, influence and force of character than anyone who had ever before been interested in such a case. She had done what no other person had done. She had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew behind which door stood the tiger, and behind which waited the lady. Gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

She also knew who the lady was. The lady was one of the loveliest in the kingdom. Now and then the princess had seen her looking at and talking to the young man.

The princess hated the woman behind that silent door. She hated her with all the intensity of the blood passed to her through long lines of cruel ancestors.

Her lover turned to look at the princess. His eye met hers as she sat there, paler and whiter than anyone in the large ocean of tense faces around her. He saw that she knew behind which door waited the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it.

The only hope for the young man was based on the success of the princess in discovering this mystery. When he looked at her, he saw that she had been successful, as he knew she would succeed.

Then his quick and tense look asked the question: "Which?" It was as clear to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not time to be lost.

The princess raised her hand, and made a short, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw it. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

He turned, and with a firm and quick step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating. Every breath was held. Every eye was fixed upon that man. He went to the door on the right and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we think about this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart. Think of it not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself. But as if it depended upon that hot-blooded princess, her soul at a white heat under the fires of sadness and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild terror, and covered her face with her hands? She thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the sharp teeth of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him open the other door? How had she ground her teeth, and torn her hair, when she had seen his happy face as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in pain when she had seen him run to meet that woman, with her look of victory. When she had seen the two of them get married. And when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the happy shouts of the crowd, in which her one sad cry was lost!

Would it not be better for him to die quickly, and go to wait for her in that blessed place of the future? And yet, that tiger, those cries, that blood!

Her decision had been shown quickly. But it had been made after days and nights of thought. She had known she would be asked. And she had decided what she would answer. And she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered. And it is not for me to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you:

Which came out of the open door – the lady, or the tiger?

REVISION: Perspective

Students will learn about the different types of fiction writing and discover where stories come from.

**Idea generating activities adapted from NaNoWriMo materials*

What students will produce

- A brainstorm of story ideas

Materials

- List of Interests, Borrow a Character, News You Can Use, A Whole New World handouts

Activity

- Tell students that sometimes when you're stuck in a story, it can be helpful to get a new perspective or new ideas by doing a short activity based on your characters.

- Instruct students to: choose a piece of writing you've already drafted. It could be a section of your short story or just a short scene you created in an activity. Then, use one of the prompts below to understand your characters better and get deeper into your piece. Maybe it'll take you in a direction you didn't expect and a side character will become more important. Or maybe you'll use what you learn through the activity to help you revise.
    - **Prompt 1:** Pick a key moment of epiphany or realization for your main character and rewrite it from the point of view of an unimportant side character. How might a less important character perceive the realization? What do you learn about your main character (and their epiphany) through this new perspective?
    - **Prompt 2:** Swap the ages of two characters and rewrite a scene between them. How do their ages change the way they interact with each other? Do you learn anything new about the scene or the characters when you switch their ages?
    - **Prompt 3:** Most writers (and readers!) would agree that conflict is often what makes us learn about a character and keeps a story moving. Sometimes we end up making our protagonist deal with a terrible situation for the sake of the tale. Write a letter to your main character, apologizing for something you put them through in your story. How did that conflict help your piece?

- Students should spend the rest of their class time revising and working on their short story

FICTION SHARE OUT #4

Students will share their works using a specific share out strategy

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Share out Strategy: Loud + Proud

- Students will share the short story they wrote over the course of the entire unit and read it, loud and proud, to a small group (or class!). Remind students that as their classmates read, be sure to listen very closely—the same way you want to be listened to. Don't forget to give snaps, a round of applause, etc. when they're done! After, students will draw or write what it felt like to share their piece.

- Consider turning this event into an open mic event. Create invitations and encourage other teachers or facility staff to attend, set the scene by putting table cloths over desks, place battery-operated candles around the room to set the mood, offer special food or drink, make it fun and special!