

Pen & Parchment

A Creative Writing Booklet



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Think Like a Writer:

What can you learn as a writer from other people's writing?

- ❖ How does the poem/story work?
 - The energy of the piece, what makes it compelling/worth reading, structure
- ❖ What holds the poem/short story together?
 - Encounter a poem/short story and encounter someone's consciousness (Message in a bottle thrown to the reader). How does the piece follow the writer's line of reasoning?
 - Connection to your own life while reading

How does the piece challenge you as a writer?

- ❖ Do you feel something, but don't know how the piece makes you feel that way?
- ❖ How does the piece change the way you think?
 - Does it break the cognitive boundary you have put up for yourself?
 - Does it change how you view what writing is/the power of writing?
- ❖ How can you apply the challenge or change the piece offers to your writing?
- ❖ How does the piece expand your artistic territory?

Message in a Bottle Concept:

- ❖ You want to read writing that makes you feel like: This message was for me, the writer may have not known that, but it is for me.
- ❖ Not every piece is for everyone, similar to how not every bottled message is sent for everyone. Writers send out their work with the hopes that it will reach the right person and have an impact on them.

Poetry

Poetry is writing that shows experiences in an imaginative way through language arranged to create an emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm (Merriam-Webster). Poetry is usually arranged in the form of verse and uses figurative language including imagery, metaphor, repetition, and many more.

Figurative Language

Figurative Language is valuable to use, especially in poetry, to paint a picture in a reader's mind and to capture the emotion/mood of a piece. Figurative Language can also engage the reader. Here are some examples of figurative language:

Imagery: Language that is visually descriptive. Think about the 5 senses.

Metaphor: A comparison that usually uses 'is'.

Examples: Your eyes are stars. The dog is a lion.

Simile: A comparison using like or as.

Examples: Her voice is like the ocean. The cake is as big as a mountain.

Allusion: An indirect reference to a person or thing found in some kind of media.

Example: "I'll turn into a pumpkin if I'm not home in time!"

Allegory: A piece that may be interpreted to have a hidden meaning.

Example: *The Chronicles of Narnia* can be viewed as an allegory for Christianity.

Idiom: An expression that means something that cannot be found in the words used.

Example: That sounds like a piece of cake.

Hyperbole: An exaggerated phrase not meant to be taken literally.

Example: This day is never going to end.

Personification: Giving human characteristics to something that is not human.

Example: The shadow dances on the sidewalk.

Onomatopoeia: A word that is associated with a sound.

Examples: splat, bang, buzz, clink, splash

Symbolism: A person, situation, object, or fact that is used to represent something else.

Repetition: Repeating a word or phrase.

Rhyme: When there are similar sounds at the end of words.

Example: A couplet is a poem with two lines that rhyme.

We plan to go on a flight

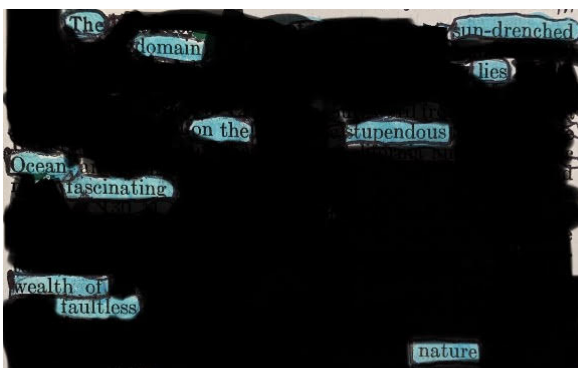
But it will be in the night

Types of Poetry

Erasure Poetry: When you have a text and pick some words

to make a poem, but cross out the rest. To try this, you can grab an old book or one that may already be falling apart. Take out a page and use a writing utensil to circle words for your poem. You can cross out the rest or draw a picture.

Example:



List Poems:

Explicit: A poem where each line starts with the same word or phrase.

Example: Start each line of a poem with "I saw" or "There was".

Embedded: A poem formatted as a list where each line adds upon the last.

Example: *Sick* by Shel Silverstein

Catalog: list something, then below add a description that may be unclearly related.

Example:

I saw him show the flyer
The food was free
Dogs run away
The sound is too loud

Haiku Poetry: Japanese poetry that is meant to make you think deeply and is usually about nature and the environment. The format is three lines consisting of 5, 7, and then 5 of either the number of words or the number of syllables.

Example: "The Old Pond" by Matsuo Bashō Translated by
Dion O'Donnol

The silent old pond
a mirror of ancient calm,
a frog-leaps-in splash.

Narrative Poetry: Tells a story

Ballads: Tell a story and often have the rhyme pattern of ABCB.

Epigram: Short witty statements that often rhyme and comment upon human behavior.

Example: "Fatigue" by Hilaire Belloc

I'm tired of Love: I'm still more tired of Rhyme.
But Money gives me pleasure all the time.

Prose Poetry: This kind of poetry can be seen as a combination of poetry and fiction. There are no line breaks in prose, instead, it is written in the style of a paragraph. Prose maintains poetry styles such as figurative language, repetition, and rhyme. The sentences do not have to be complete sentences. The main difference between stories and prose is that stories have a plot, while prose is meant to capture emotions and may have some descriptions of events. However, once a prose poem has orderly descriptions of an event/shows the big picture, it becomes a story rather than a prose poem.

Example:

"Bath" By Amy Lowell

The day is fresh-washed and fair, and there is a smell of tulips and narcissus in the air.

The sunshine pours in at the bath-room window and bores through the water in the bath-tub in lathes and planes of greenish-white. It cleaves the water into flaws like a jewel, and cracks it to bright light.

Little spots of sunshine lie on the surface of the water and dance, dance, and their reflections wobble deliciously over the ceiling; a stir of my finger sets them whirling, reeling. I move a foot and the planes of light in the water jar. I lie back and laugh, and let the green-white water, the sun-flawed beryl water, flow over me. The day is almost too

bright to bear, the green
water covers me from the too bright day. I will lie here awhile and
play with the water and the sun spots. The sky is blue and high. A crow
flaps by the window, and there is a whiff of tulips and narcissus in the air.

Slam/Spoken Word Poetry: Poetry that is performed and is meant to involve the audience. Slam poetry usually includes strong feelings, imagery, vivid and concrete words, and rhyming that does not need to have a consistent pattern. Some poets may use different movements and voice tones.

Free verse: A poem that does not need to rhyme or have any patterns. Anything goes in free verse poetry.

Song: A poem that is meant to be sung and is usually accompanied by music. A song usually includes a refrain/chorus that repeats throughout the song.

Tips for writing poetry

- ❖ Go for it! Remember that your poem does not have to be perfect in your first draft. The goal of your first draft should be to capture the mood of the poem, and revisions can be made later.
- ❖ It's all about practice. Some of the greatest writers have written pieces that are not very good and sometimes it takes writing many "bad" poems to get one good one. Every piece gives you practice.
- ❖ Remember, it's okay if you show bad parts of yourself in your writing because people are not perfect. Writing has a way of capturing our humanity.
- ❖ When you edit a poem, you can change the lineation. You can make each line shorter or longer. You can also end a line with words like 'but' or 'and' to engage the reader. You can also change the size and spacing of words.

Example: The sun-drenched
 domain lies on the stupendous Ocean
 fascinating wealth of

Ideas for finding inspiration to write a poem

- ❖ Write about something you see that you find fascinating.
- ❖ Start a poem with a metaphor.
 - Example: 'Life is a beach' or 'Happiness is a strawberry'. You can make a metaphor about anything; think about your life experiences.
- ❖ Consider writing a poem about a photo, you can use the perspective of the person in the picture, photographer, or observer that may or may not be present in the photo.
- ❖ You may also write a poem about an art piece. This is called ekphrastic poetry.
- ❖ Go outside and write about nature or write about something that makes you happy.

- ❖ Use parts from poems you have already written and combine them to make a new poem. Even if you write a poem you do not like, there may be some lines you like and can use in a new poem.

Short Story

A short story includes all of the components found in a novel, but it is shorter. A short story includes characterization, themes, and a complete plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

Tips for writing a short story:

- ❖ When editing your story, consider varying sentence lengths to keep the reader engaged.
- ❖ Remember, writing takes practice. You may not have a great story at first, but every story makes you a better writer.

Planning your story:

- ❖ Consider brainstorming or making a small outline, but remember not to spend too much time outlining. Go for starting your story!
- ❖ Remember to include a theme or message within your story. Do not just write to write something, have a purpose.

Plot:

- ❖ Do not spend too much time on the exposition. Start the story as soon as you can.
- ❖ To start a story, try to establish a conflict that determines whether or not the main character will be able to reach a goal.

Characters:

- ❖ Focus on one main character, it can be difficult to shift between multiple perspectives within a short piece. You can use multiple perspectives in longer works.
- ❖ Do not just describe a character. Reveal the qualities of the characters through their actions. You can do this through dialogue as well.
 - When writing dialogue, consider how you actually speak.
 - Consider listening to and writing down a conversation to get authentic dialogue.

Inspiration Ideas for writing a short story:

- ❖ Listen to a conversation in a public space, like a coffee shop, and create a story based on what you hear.
- ❖ Think of daydreams with questions of what if.
- ❖ Think about fascinating dreams you have had.
- ❖ Imagine being new to your surroundings. Think about what would stand out.

Script Writing

- ❖ Script: The words written to be spoken in a movie, play, broadcast, or speech (Cambridge Dictionary).
- ❖ A screenplay is a story written with words to be spoken by actors in a movie or television program (Cambridge Dictionary).
- ❖ The difference between a screenplay and a script is that a script may be used in a variety of contexts, while a screenplay is only used for screen programs like movies or shows.

Writing a Script

- ❖ Use the opening dialogue to reveal background details, like who the characters are and information about the setting.
- ❖ Keep language simple. For the most part, characters will not make speeches, they will speak normally for people in their situation.

Formatting a Script

- ❖ Start by describing the setting. If you are writing a script for a play or movie, first write the main setting name like house or forest, in bold print. Then, describe the setting below the name. When describing the setting, you can also write some actions that the characters are doing. If you are writing a script for a radio show, the setting must be described through the dialogue.
- ❖ When writing dialogue, first write the character's name above what they are going to say, then write their dialogue.
- ❖ When writing an action, leave a space before and after the action. Include the character's name, or who is doing the action within the paragraph. Do not write the character's name above the action, because this is used for dialogue.
- ❖ Consider looking at examples of movie scripts online or plays in the library to have a visual formatting example.

Tips for Writing a Script

- ❖ It can be easier to start by writing a radio script, rather than a television script because you do not need to worry about sets and props in a radio script. You can add props to the script later if needed.

- ❖ Consider imagining that the story is actually happening around you to help the dialogue flow better.
- ❖ When watching movies or plays, or when reading a play, pay attention to what the characters say.
This can give you an example of what is natural for characters to say in a script.

Tips for Writing Dialogue

- ❖ The key part of writing dialogue is to make it seem natural.
 - A person will not tell their life story to everyone, so consider putting the character in situations where they may need to describe certain details about themselves.
 - Use vocabulary to reflect the character's background.
 - If you need to give the reader background information, consider creating a scene where an expert needs to explain details to someone who is new to learning about something.
- ❖ Consider paying attention to key components of conversations in your life.
- ❖ Listen to conversations you hear in public places to hear what everyday/natural language sounds like.

Novel

- ❖ A novel is a book-length narrative. A novel includes characterization, themes, and a complete plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

Tips for Writing a Novel

- ❖ A novel can be viewed as a collection of short stories that are connected by an overarching theme. It can be helpful to work on short story writing before writing a novel. Once you master the short story, writing a novel may be easier.
- ❖ You do not have to be perfect at writing short stories before writing a novel. If you would like to try this longer style, go for it! All writing practice can help you become a better writer.
- ❖ It can be helpful to write a little every day when working on a novel. If you write one page every day for a year, you can end up with a 365-page novel!

Creative Nonfiction

- ❖ Memoirs: A written piece by someone about their own life. A memoir usually focuses on a specific experience or time period, while an autobiography may be more broad.
- ❖ Autobiography: A piece written by someone about their own life. An autobiography is usually an account of a person's entire life.
- ❖ Personal Essays: This is about a significant experience in the writer's life and how it shaped part of their identity. A personal essay is often used when applying for a job, and in this context, it is called a personal statement.

Tips for Writing Creative Nonfiction

- ❖ Think about a memorable experience or something others can learn from. Think about a vacation, family tradition, learning experience, or unique person you learned from.
- ❖ Connect your past and future.
- ❖ Show who you are.
- ❖ Tell your story.
- ❖ Keep your audience in mind. Are you writing something for your future self to remember an event? Are you writing for your family? Are you writing for a job? Based on your audience, you may want to highlight certain parts of an event.
- ❖ Questions to think about: What do you love? What makes you unique? How have you changed/grown from an experience?

Story Components to Consider

Writing Suspense

- ❖ Suspense is all about making the reader know something will happen, but leading them to be curious about what will happen.
- ❖ Consider including cliffhangers or open-ended questions to engage the reader, because people desire closure in stories.
- ❖ Include hints throughout the story, like backstories, so that the reader will desire to put pieces of the story together.
- ❖ You can also create suspense in your writing by including high stakes, time constraints, big challenges, hard choices, or unpredictability.

Point of View

- ❖ The point of view can reveal information about the characters and plot.
- ❖ Who is telling the story?
 - First-person (I, me, my), Second Person (You, your), Third Person (he, she, they).

Audience

- ❖ Who are you writing this for?
 - You will use different language when writing for a younger or older audience.
 - You use different language in an academic setting compared to when writing a whimsical story.
- ❖ Are you writing this for yourself, or for others?
 - Based on the occasion and who the piece is meant for, you may highlight or remove certain details.

General Writing Tips

- ❖ There are many different writing styles, so there is something for everyone. Some creative writing styles that you may not initially think of include:
 - Riddles, Crossword puzzles, Cartooning, Editorials, Jokes, and Greeting cards.
- ❖ Your first draft does not have to be perfect. Every time you write you are getting better.
 - Allow your thoughts to flow freely without the fear of making grammatical or spelling errors. You can write without the goal of it being perfect to share with others.
 - Remember, you can always edit your work later. Your first draft is meant to capture the main themes or emotions.
- ❖ Consider asking family, friends, or teachers for feedback on your work. This can help you to make revisions you may have not known that you needed.
 - However, you do not have to take every suggestion. Feedback is meant to help you, but stay true to your own unique voice in your piece.
- ❖ Everyone can be a great writer. Great writing comes from practice.
 - Writing is like learning how to play an instrument.
- ❖ Write regularly. Consider putting time for writing into your schedule.
- ❖ Remember, creative writing is meant for self-expression. You can write something just to work through your emotions without the goal of sharing your piece with others. You can write something for just yourself, but if you want to share it with others later you can do that too.

Writing Prompts

- ❖ Consider keeping a Journal, Diary, or Common Place Book where you can write about interesting experiences or findings. This documentation can help you collect and revisit writing ideas. This can also help you practice and improve your writing skills.
 - Diary: “A daily record of personal activities, reflections, or feelings” (Merriam-Webster).
 - Journal: “a record of experiences, ideas, or reflections kept regularly for private use” (Merriam-Webster). The main difference between a journal and a diary is that a journal is more intimate and more about reflection. A diary is more about recording day-to-day events.
 - Common Place Book: A notebook where you may write down observations, thoughts, or memorable quotes you see or hear. This can be useful for collecting inspiration or remembering ideas for your writing.
- ❖ Whether you need inspiration for writing something or you would like to practice your writing skills, writing prompts can be helpful. There are many writing prompts, but here are some to get started:
 - If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
 - If you could go anywhere, real or imagined, where would you go and why?
 - Imagine falling down a rabbit hole, what do you see and where do you go?
 - Write about a picture. You can imagine yourself being in the photo as a bystander, photographer, or the main person or object in the photo.
 - Read an old news article and reflect upon it or write about what it would be like to be in the story.
 - Write about your thoughts on a famous quote.
 - Write about a time when you learned something new about yourself.
 - Write about a time when something funny happened with your family or friends.
 - Write about the last vacation you went on.
- ❖ Microfiction can be a fun way to get into the mindset for writing. Microfiction is when you tell a story with just two sentences. To do this, pick a genre (or multiple genres) like comedy, fantasy, drama, romance, science fiction, or horror, and write a story with two sentences.

Writing Careers

If you are interested in the writing field, there are many jobs, whether you want to write or work on other parts of the process. Even most jobs involve some writing component, from marketing pieces to legal writing.

- ❖ If you want to be a writer, you can be a fiction or poetry writer. Other writing jobs include songwriting, joke writing, greeting card writing, and textbook writing.
- ❖ Writers are also needed for writing plays, television programs, and radio shows.
- ❖ Some jobs within a newspaper setting include news journalism, feature story writing, editorial writing, and column writing. Newspapers also need people to create crossword puzzles and cartoons.
- ❖ When creating a book it is necessary to have illustrators and editors as well.

Thank you!

I hope you enjoyed reading this booklet and learned a new thing or two! I created this informational booklet as a part of my Girl Scout Gold Award to provide more creative writing education to the community. Creative writing holds a special place in my heart, and I have enjoyed seeing people discover their love of creative writing. Thanks for reading! -Savannah Smith (Summer 2024)

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For the short story section:

<https://literacyideas.com/how-to-write-a-short-story/>