Autumn Writing 2021

Years 34

For our classes together over the autumn term, we will be focusing every two weeks on a different style of writing, looking at famous works written in that style/ form/ genre and learning how to both analyse and emulate the conventions of each style. The two-week structure enables students to study each genre in greater depth, helping them to explore nuances within the genres themselves and giving them a greater opportunity to experiment with form and style. Within each lesson we will consider literary techniques, structure, writer’s voice and other key elements of writing, whilst also completing vocabulary exercises to encourage the class to expand their lexical range. There will also be a writing workshop and a final mock exam where the students will have a chance to practice and receive feedback on different ways of writing creatively, experimenting with new ideas and advanced writing styles. These lessons will finally expand the students’ knowledge of classic works of literature and classic authors encouraging them to broaden their horizons with what they read and how they write, so the students will be able to dip into whole new ways of thinking about literature, language and art.

*Lessons 1 & 2:* **Play Writing**

In our first pair of lessons, we will focus on playwriting, starting in lesson one with considering the key elements and structure of a play. The students will learn what separates drama from other types of writing, thinking about what can and cannot be communicated in the same way when working from a script. This will be an introduction to the format and style of play writing where we will consider the different elements that can be found on the stage (i.e., audience awareness, costume, lighting, sound, stage directions). The students will be encouraged to think outside of the box in how they frame their own play scripts, completing some drama exercises in order to understand the genre of drama more fully. The main skills we will be learning in playwriting are to do with how to create and sustain suspense and drama, the names and functions of various dramatic terms and how to play with format and style in their writing.

*Lessons 3 & 4:* **Poetry Writing**

In our second pair of lessons, we will be looking at the genre and tradition of poetry writing, considering the myriad of different poetic styles and considering which best suit the students’ passions and ideas. We will consider the importance of features such rhythm and meter, rhyme, metaphors and similes etc., using the work of famous poets to study what actually makes a poem a poem and how we can define what poetry truly is. The students will be given the opportunity to write using multiple different poetic forms (limericks, sonnets, free-form, haiku) and will also complete work on writing based on character and theme. The students will be encouraged to think lyrically about poetry writing, finding music that they enjoy and considering the closeness between the two genres. The main skills we will be learning in poetry writing are to do with the importance of figurative language, using themes effectively & creatively, how to use word sound and rhythm to add texture, and how to identify the best structure to use in a poem.

*Lesson 5 & 6:* **Autobiographical Writing**

In our third pair of lessons, we will focus on first person perspective writing, thinking particularly about autobiographical writing. We will consider the central conventions of the genre, comparing two author’s takes on autobiographical writing and learn how to how to play around with conventions from within the framework, experimenting with different ways of accomplishing the same task. The students will be asked to analyse the importance of emotive writing, looking at structural tips to help create a powerful account of a memory, and translating this into their language and word choice. Here we will also cover many different mediums- from letters, to diaries, to reports, to prose- giving the class a range of styles and techniques to work from and considering how they can write through both a fiction and non-fiction lens with this genre. The main skills we will be learning in autobiographical writing are to do with how to hook the reader, how to create relatability, how to use word choice effectively and how to use sensory language.

*Lessons 7 & 8****:* Comedic Writing**

In our fourth set of lessons, we will be focusing on comedic writing, looking at the way humour can be used to many different effects in crafting a story or piece of writing that grips and entertains the reader. The students will be encouraged to think about what they find funny and why, considering how to use different techniques, such as the unexpected, to write comedically. We will also look at differentiating different types of comic writing, trying our hand at comedies of error, slapstick and sarcasm. We will discuss the subjective nature of humour and ask if anything is universally funny, whilst also discovering how to come up with their own unique and ridiculous characters, such as in Shakespearean comedy, version of comedic tropes such as mistaken identity, and vivid descriptions of ridiculous and entertaining antics. The main skills we will be learning in comedic writing are to do with the importance of timing and pace in writing, how to write with an authoritative and confident tone, connecting with the audience or readership, and how to create compelling and unique characters.

*Lessons 9****:* Writing Workshop**

This lesson takes all of what the students have learnt over the past few weeks and aims to teach them how to self-evaluate by workshopping a piece of writing of their own. Using a piece the students have written in the past for homework, this class will comb through every part of their work and encourage the class not only to evaluate their own ideas but also to give positive feedback and constructive criticism for the work of their peers. It teaches them how to use a mark scheme effectively, goes over how to proof-read under time pressure, and most importantly gets them to recognise what it most important to focus on when evaluating writing of both a creative and persuasive kind. They will also get to spend time re-formulating their work to make them the best they can possibly be, using the feedback from their classmates and their own self-evaluation to inspire a new approach to their work- which is particularly good practice in terms of learning the importance of re-drafting. Finally, we will also focus on planning processes, considering what to include in a plan and how to get the most out of the time in an exam, in preparation for the mock exam in lesson 10. The students will have the opportunity to ask any questions they like about writing and will be encouraged to work around the genres they feel least comfortable with in order to help push their work into an even higher bracket.

*Lesson 10:* **Mock Exam**

This lesson will contain a mock exam to help test the students’ skills, enabling them to showcase all they have learnt about writing over the past nine sessions. They will be asked to complete a thirty-minute exam under timed conditions, which we will then go through step by step as a class. They will have their exam graded and returned to them after the lesson and can use these mocks to track their progress and work out their strengths and areas of improvement in writing. This lesson is designed to consolidate their knowledge and to help them get used to the format of writing in exams. They should aim to use as many different advanced writing techniques, high-level vocab examples and interesting structural devices as possible- all of which we will have covered in the preceding weeks.