Winter Writing 2023

Years 3-4

For our classes together over the winter term, we will be focusing each week 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. 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 two mock exams 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 also expand the students’ knowledge of classic works of literature and classic authors, ranging from The Brothers Grimm to Enid Blyton to J. K. Rowling, 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:* **Science Fiction Writing**

In our first week of lessons, we will focus on science fiction writing, starting in lesson one with considering the key question: what defines science fiction? The students will create their very own science fiction universe, and we will consider works of literature that explore these concepts, thinking about the different ways in which science fiction can be communicated to the reader. Some examples of science fiction we will consider include *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley), *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (Douglas Adams) and *War of the Worlds* (H. G. Wells). We will not be studying the books themselves but will be looking at the sci-fi worlds the authors of these books have created, and how they use technology, setting and ideas of scientific development to create points of conflict within the story. We will discuss whether the class have read or watched any science fiction and how the genre can connect to events in the real world, looking at how authors play off concerns such as global warming to create interesting plot-lines, As their final homework task at the end of the week, the students will write a passage from their own science-fiction story, being as creative as possible with the features and technologies of their imagined world whilst also considering how, and where, their writing fits into the genre’s conventions. The main skills we will be learning in week 1 are to do with the creation of the world of a story, structuring a plot, creating suspense and tension, and exploring the students’ inventiveness in forming original and unique constructs in their writing.

Vocab list: betray, flounder, glimpse, naïve, ecstatic, amble, halt, bawl, rampaged, menace

*Lessons 3 & 4:* **Fantasy Writing**

In our second week of lessons, we will be looking at the different styles and stories within fantasy writing, considering the way the genre changes from story to story, and plays off lots of different themes and ideas. We will consider the importance of features such as the supernatural, magic and mystery in the fantasy genre, thinking about how ideas of good vs. evil are often communicated. We will look at different examples of fantasy writing, considering books such as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (J. K. Rowling), *The Witches* (Roald Dahl) and *Grimms’ Fairy Tales* (The Brothers Grimm) exploring themes of darkness vs. light, good vs. evil and other wider themes such as friendship, morality and bravery (though, again, not studying the books themselves but analysing passages from them and considering overarching themes and ideas). The students will also be introduced to the notion of fantastical description, looking at why exactly descriptive writing is so important in fantasy writing, and coming up with inventive and creative ways of constructing their own fantasy landscapes and settings. We will also experiment with character creation, looking at how vivid and often extreme characters are crucial in the fantasy genre, and discuss the crucial difference between high-fantasy and low-fantasy, considering which the students prefer. For their final homework assignment, the class will have a chance to practice writing in the fantasy style, thinking about how to make the world they have imagined come to life and how to fit the fantastical elements of their writing in, deciding on whether they will follow the high or low-fantasy tradition. The main skills we will be learning in week 2 are to do with the importance of description in a story, using themes effectively & creatively, using figurative language such as personification & metaphor in writing, and how to create complex and compelling characters in their writing.

Vocab list: intolerant, diverse, livid, apprehensive, petrify, eccentric, pandemonium, lure, despise, illuminate

*Lessons 5 & 6****:* Children’s’ Story Writing**

In our third set of lessons, we will be focusing on children’s story writing, a type of writing in which the protagonist is a child finding their way through the world, learning lessons along the way. We will consider how stories that look at childhood tend to touch on all kinds of different genres and styles, ranging from the comedic to the autobiographical. The examples of children’s story writing we will be looking at include *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Jeff Kinney), *Wonder* (R. J. Palacio) and *The Famous Five* (Enid Blyton). We will discuss what the students believe the most important parts of childhood are, thinking about how to communicate the experience of growing up through using our own reflections on life. The class will get a chance to practice their emotive writing, thinking about how to craft stories out of autobiographical accounts of their own life, whilst also thinking how children’s lives have changed over the past eighty years. We will look at writing using humour and ask ourselves why this is such an effective technique in this style of writing, considering examples of humorous accounts of childhood that range from the 1940s to the modern day. We will also look at how many children’s books have a strong moral at the heart of it, and very clear, defined messaging throughout on themes such as friendship, bravery and acceptance. For their final homework assignment, the class will get a chance to write their own story with a child protagonist, deciding what the journey their character will go on is and what they will learn along the way. The main skills we will be learning in week 3 are to do with the importance of pace in writing, how to write emotively, using autobiographical experiences to paint a vivid image, connecting with the audience or readership, and how to create compelling and unique characters.

Vocab list: catastrophe, foe, throng, traipse, parched, sweltering, obliterate, declare, vast, gullible

*Lessons 7 & 8****:* Journalistic Writing**

In our final set of lessons, we will be studying and emulating journalistic writing, looking at all the different types, forms and styles of journalism. The class will be asked to consider why journalism is important to learn about, thinking about the different roles that a journalist fills and the tasks they complete. The students will also learn about the process of finding and constructing a story, with the chance to ask questions about journalism to an actual journalist friend of mine. We will look at different forms and mediums of journalism (newspapers, films, podcasts) and think about all of the different sections of a newspaper- from the review section to the cartoons to the serious articles. We will also look at structuring journalistic articles, how to use tone and build a writer’s voice, and finally touch on the persuasive nature of some journalistic writing. The class will also get a chance to act as a newspaper team, writing, editing and putting together ‘features’ for their very own paper. For their final homework assignment, the class will have to research and write a journalistic story, finding a topic that interests them and going out into the world to report on it, using the features of article writing we have learnt about in the previous lessons. The main skills we will be learning in week 4 are to do with researching and fact-checking stories, working on creating a unique writer’s voice, learning about the structure and tone of literary non-fiction and considering persuasive and informative features in writing.

Vocab list: woe, ancient, lethal, microscopic, colossal, murmur, nauseous, disclose, elite, hysterical

*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.