Winter Writing 2025

Effective creative writing is all about perfecting some key elements. In this course we will be taking some advanced creative writing elements and learning to utilise them in our work, focusing on a different theme for each lesson. For each different type of writing skill set, we will consider the key conventions of each, looking at what is important to remember and how to use them in original and interesting ways, whilst also focusing on expanding the students’ comfort zone, enabling them to play around with language in a creative and innovative way. By the end of these ten weeks, they will have had the opportunity to practice and perfect their use of nine key elements of writing, and will have also taken a mock exam, designed to help them find their own unique, original voice in their writing. This is all about breaking the task of creative writing down into discrete elements, considering how spotlighting one particular element can lead to breakthroughs in experimenting with style and creating a distinctive authorial voice. They will have a homework task every week that enables them to showcase their grasp of each element, and receive weekly feedback on their writing.

**Week 1: Character Development**

In this week we will be perfecting the art of character development, focusing on the idea that characters are the element that act as the catalyst and motor of a good piece of creative writing. We will be thinking about crafting complexity in characters, how to develop characters throughout a story and how to build advanced understanding of a character’s psyche and their subtext throughout a piece of writing.

**Week 2: Crafting a Plot**

In this week we will be looking at building plots in a way that keeps them fresh, exciting and unpredictable. We will learn about the seven variations of classic plots and engage in putting our own twists on these ideas. We will also think carefully about how narrative arcs dictate a story, working with examples from literature to trace the importance of a compelling plot and how to create twists and turns along the way.

**Week 3**: **Setting**

In this week we will focus on an often-overlooked key element of writing: setting. We will focus in depth on the importance of time, place and location in storytelling, learning advanced techniques to help the students make their settings three-dimensional and believable. We will discuss crafting compelling descriptive passages and look at ways in which setting can and should be treated as a character in its own right.

**Week 4: Structure & Form**

In this lesson we will be delving into some more experimental elements of writing, considering the different ways in which a story can be structured and the implications of these structural elements on a story’s form. We will consider elements such as the presentation of the passage of time, the internal/ external world of the narrator and different forms of novel such as the epistolarynovel, using examples from literature to help.

**Week 5: Narration**

In this lesson we will feed off our ideas about structure and form last week in aid of a deep dive into the effects of different narrative styles and approaches. We will discuss perspective and why it matters and consider creative forms of narration, such as multi-character narration and narrators with instrumental bias. The students will practice writing in various different narrative styles, thinking about point of view and experimenting with unusual storytelling.

**Week 6: Symbols & Themes**

In this lesson we will think about some advanced language techniques, particularly those focusing on symbols and themes. The students will learn about how to harness symbolism and use it in a way that is neither cliché nor obscure, thinking about the ways in which symbolic landscapes can enhance a story’s message. We will also consider theme and how to utilise it in order to create atmosphere, tone and a wider moral.

**Week 7: Conflict & Tension**

In this lesson we will be working on the art of building conflict and tension, creating believable and varied sources of conflict and comparing these to examples from literature. We will consider different types of dramatic conflict and talk about which ones are most appropriate for different genres. The students will learn the technique of subterfuge here, thinking about how to hide the obvious from their reader until the climactic moment.

**Week 8: Dialogue**

In this lesson we will work on another often-overlooked element: dialogue. We will consider the key pitfalls and problems writers run into when trying to make dialogue sound believable and discuss some ways to work around these problems. The students will practice writing authentic dialogue by putting themselves in the character’s shoes and using the world around them as inspiration, considering elements such as dialect and turn of phrase.

**Week 9: Inspiration**

In this lesson we will look at taking inspiration from the writing of the students’ favourite writers, workshopping some famous texts and analysing the eight advanced elements of writing we have worked on so far in reference to this literature. The students will practice some writing exercises, thinking about how to incorporate these into their lives, and will have a chance to workshop and peer-evaluate their work.

**Week 10: Mock Exam**

This lesson will be 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. 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.