



Creative Writing Workshop

For Teachers of English



**bulgarian
creative
writing
competition**



Creative Writing Workshop Agenda
Organized by CORPlus Foundation
In partnership with Bulgarian American Society
Sofia, 21–23 November, 2014

Friday, November 21, 2014

14:00 – 15:30	Introduction Setting up your classroom for success: Tips on effective classroom management, and how to cultivate a comfortable and successful classroom.	CORPlus Hannah Allen Michael Deegan American College of Sofia
15:30 – 16:00	Break	
16:00 – 17:30	Long term and short term speaking engagement activities: Innovative speaking and skill development to get your students speaking english with confidence and comfort.	Hannah Allen Michael Deegan ACS
17:30	Travel reimbursement	Valya Zavyalova

Saturday, November 22, 2014

8:30 – 10:00	What does it mean to be creative?: Improv games to help you think on your feet, find your unique voice, and refresh your sense of play.	Bobbi Arduini Erica Carlson Eireene Nealand Fulbright
10:00 – 10:15	Break	
10:15 – 11:30	Poetry-- Language, Detail, Expression: Exercises examining the nature of poetry: Acrostic poems to develop individual voice and sensory detail, distilling of emotional expression exercise, giving constructive feedback.	Bobbi Arduini Fulbright
11:30 – 11:45	Break	
11:45 – 13:00	“The Danger of A Single Story” -- Connecting human rights and creative writing: Techniques for moving beyond stereotypes and clichés. Character development exercises to help you examine your own prejudices, and create stories and characters uniquely your own.	Bobbi Arduini Erica Carlson Eireene Nealand Fulbright
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:30	Playing with grammar: Group sentence-building exercises to show how and why to play with prepositional phrases, subordinate clauses, and multiple adjectives.	Eireene Nealand Fulbright

15:30 – 16:00	Break	
16:00 – 17:30	Mapping personal experiences: Brainstorming techniques to help you start, select and organize your personal narrative.	Erica Carlson Fulbright

Sunday, November 23, 2014

8:30 – 10:00	Understanding the criteria: A review of the Creative Writing Contest criteria and a look at good, bad, and outstanding essays.	Scott Bleiweis ACS Eireene Nealand Fulbright
10:00 – 10:15	Break	
10:15 – 12:00	Concluding session: What have we learned? Breakout groups in which you, as a teacher, will formulate questions and brainstorm ideas for implementing the results of the workshop in your classroom. Workshop evaluations	Scott Bleiweis, Eireene Nealand Fulbright



SESSION DESCRIPTIONS AND MATERIALS

SETTING UP YOUR CLASSROOM FOR SUCCESS: TIPS ON EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, AND HOW TO CULTIVATE A COMFORTABLE AND SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM. (MICHAEL, HANNAH)

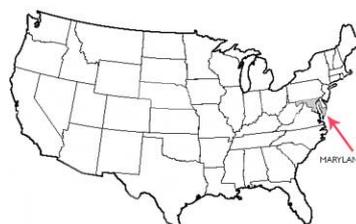
Here we will speak about classroom management strategies and tips for creating a successful classroom experience for the students. We will show pictures of our classrooms, videos (hopefully) of our own work, and share our own personal successes and failures. This will include topics like

- *Facilitating a classroom discussion*
- *Why a seating chart matters*
- *How to call on students*
- *Grading participation and why it should be graded*
- *Working with differentiated learning styles*

Creating a positive and transformative classroom!

INTRODUCTION

- Hannah Allen
- Maryland
- Fulbright Alumna (SLIVEN)



What do I teach?

- 8TH grade
- Reading and Writing
 - Literature
 - Personal and academic writing
 - Conversation and public speaking skills
 - Vocabulary
 - Emphasis on critical thinking

What will we cover:

- Classroom management
 - How to create a comfortable classroom atmosphere
- Differentiated learning
 - Teaching to different types of learners
- Participation
 - Getting students to speak English!

My teaching style:

- Teacher as facilitator, not necessarily expert
- Students need to discover for themselves
- It takes different methods to reach different kids

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Establishing a routine

There is comfort in consistency

- Quote of the week Monday
- TED Talk Tuesday
- Free Write Friday

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: MONDAY

Each student is assigned a Monday to find a quote.

- They print out the quote and share it with the class Monday morning.
- The students write it down
- Student starts discussion

TED TALK TUESDAY

- Choose a TED talk
- Write vocab students might need on board: Define it
- Show Talk
- Have discussion about it
- Cater towards **your needs**



FREE WRITE FRIDAY

- Choose a topic related or unrelated to a theme from class.
- Give students 5-15 minutes to free write about this topic.

Example:

- If you had 1,000,000 leva, what would you do?
- If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?

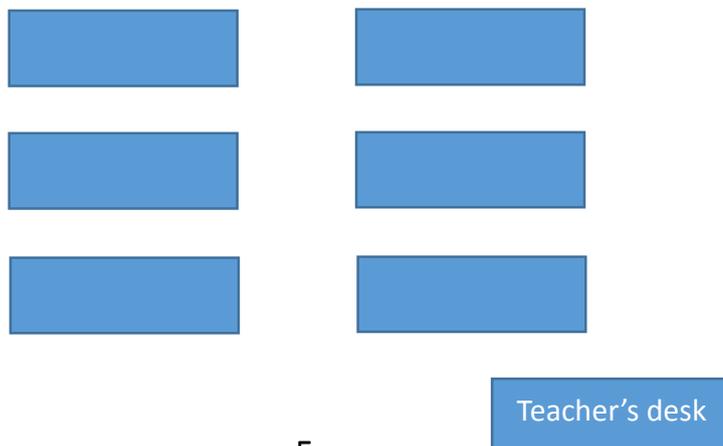


SEATING CHART

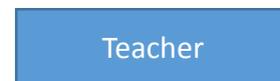
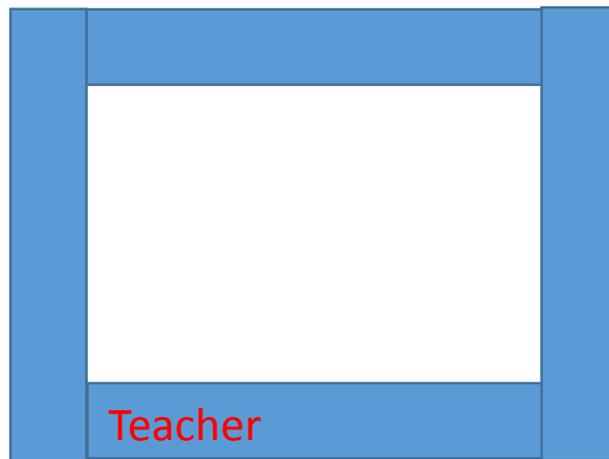
- Experiment with different set ups for different types of classes

Ask yourself, "Should the teacher always be at the center of the class?"

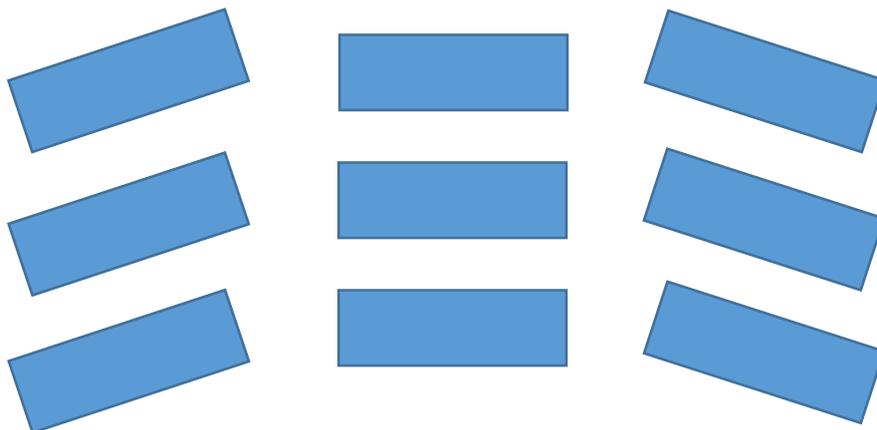
PARTNER WORK



CLASS DISCUSSION



MIX TEACHER/CLASS DISCUSSION



CLASS DISCIPLINE: NAME ON BOARD

- First offence: write student name on board
- Second offence: write check next to their name
- Third offence: Send to dean's office

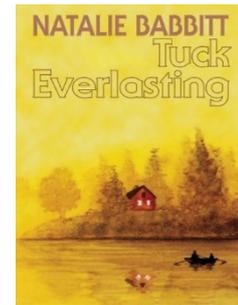
DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

Why do it?

- Reaches all different types of students
- Students learn differently
- Gives students a chance to try something new

TUCK EVERLASTING PROJECT

- Gave students a list of six different projects to choose from
- Each highlighted a different strength
 - Make a commercial
 - Re-write a song
 - Write an alternative ending
 - Make a poster



VOCABULARY MANY WAYS

- Write paragraphs
- Do short plays
- Play “around the world”
- Students who need extra help:
Lexical Connection worksheet



PARTICIPATION:

Why participation is key

- Best way to practice their English
- Hear their level
- Students learn from one another

Weekly participation

- Start them at 75 points
- +5 for asking a good question
- -5 for speaking in Bulgarian, interrupting, rude comments

FREE WRITE FRIDAY

- Play music
- Allows students to have quiet time to reflect and think in English
- Do not grade spelling/grammar
- Ask a question: *“How and when do you know your students are learning?”*

SOCRATIC SEMINAR

- A graded opportunity that allows all students to speak



**LONG TERM AND SHORT TERM SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:
LESSONS, IDEAS, & MORE
INNOVATIVE SPEAKING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT TO GET YOUR STUDENTS SPEAKING
ENGLISH WITH CONFIDENCE AND COMFORT. (MICHAEL, HANNAH)**

Here we will walk the teachers through a long term project on Poetry presentation and how to implement the steps in the class. We will show examples from our own work and have handouts for the teachers to see. The second part of the session will feature short-term speaking activities that teachers can use in the classroom immediately. We will play these games and engage the teachers directly!



WHAT WE WILL REVIEW IN THIS LESSON

- Long-term speaking projects.
 - How to plan them and implement them in class
- Short term speaking activities
- Games for added engagement and fun!

WHY DO WE DO THIS

- Develops fluency and confidence
- Applies skills that you are developing
- Demonstrates skills that otherwise are not assessed
- Allows for some fun in class

BEFORE LONG-TERM PROJECTS

Review the elements of a good public speech/oral presentation

Content:

- Is it appropriate for the grade level?
- Does it have a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the message/thesis clear?
- Is it long enough (time)?

Presentation:

- Rate/Volume on speech
- Eye-contact
- Gestures/Movements
- Pronunciation
- Appearance
- NEVER APOLOGIZE!

Talk about BEST practices

- Write the speech well beforehand and consider:
 - Your audience
 - Questions
 - Your time limit
 - 1000 words is about 5 minutes spoken
- Make notes for yourself
- Practice it at home
 - By yourself
 - To your parents
 - To your friends

LONG-TERM PROJECT: Poetry Interpretation

Main idea:

- Students present a poem (or poems) for 5-7 minutes orally
- They are encouraged to be creative/dramatic in their delivery
- They must also write a short “intro” to their piece
- They do not write their own poems, rather they “interpret” poems from other authors.



- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_WXh8q7MOE
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYAa1I0OFwU>

Introduce the project and show them the timeline:

Day 1: Discuss project and see video examples

Day 2: Have students search for and bring in poems that they are interested in

- Put them into “Support Groups” and have them share their poems/plans
- Have them share their reasons for choosing the pieces
- Talk about the appropriateness of the poem

Day 3: Voice recording of reading

Day 4: Voice recording of memorized reading

Day 5: Present poems to groups in person

Day 6: Final graded presentations

CRITERIA

- Be transparent!
- Let them in on how you intend to grade them.

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

Grade them!

- Give them a grade for completing all of the tasks on time.
- Give them a grade for their group work
- Become a “passive observer”
- Keep them engaged (listening tasks)

Modify:

- You can use the same method for original speeches!
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhLJbV-qvFM>
 - Have them peer-edit
 - Video record

LONG-TERM PROJECT: Future Tense Fair

Main idea:

- Students have to make 5-minute presentations about their predictions for the future in one area (food, transportation, etc.)
- They give their presentation at the same time as 5 other students at different “stations”
- They present to a listening group consisting of just a few students (2-4)
- The listening groups then rotate around the room to listen to each presentation and take notes



Schedules

- You must have previously formed schedules so students know which class period they will be presenting in and which groups they will be listening in.
- For a 40-minute class, you can have 5, 5-6-minute presentations with some time in between for rotation or note taking.

Sticking to the schedule is important!

- @ 5-Min—timer to signal presenters to finish up their speeches.
- @6-Min—timer to signal presenters to stop and allow listeners to ask questions, give feedback, and finish their listening-notes
- @ 7-Min—timer to signal rotation.

I used an online timer to help me!



TAKE-AWAYS

- Students have practiced a formal presentation to a small group
- They have practiced the grammar topic assigned
- They have listened to 15+ other presentations
- They have practiced identifying positive/negative traits of presentations
- They have practiced providing feedback to small groups

LONG-TERM PROJECT: Games

SHORT TERM: SPEAKING

Modify the activities mentioned to create a quick in-class practice.

30-Minute Easy Speaking Exercise

- 10-15 Minutes writing a response/summary of an article reviewed in class
- 5 Minutes practicing
- Split into groups
- 10 Minutes presenting short speeches to group
- When a student presents, each other “listener” takes notes on the speech to give feedback.
- + & -/or/ Thoughtful Suggestion & Question



LET THEM LEAD

Let your students run a review.

- Videos
- Posters
- Quizzes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vll-vN_6rnY

<http://wideo.co/view/1717861389888509541-quantifiers-be-used-to-used-to-would>

GAMES AND REVIEW

Review Games:

- Jeopardy
- Grudge Ball
- Taboo

GRUDGE BALL

Easy Review with little preparation

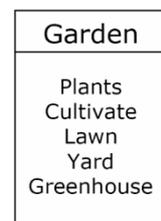
- Split the class into groups
- Give each group 10 X's on the board—these are the groups life points
- Take turns giving the groups a task
- If they do the task correctly, they can erase 2 X's from any group (or erase one from one group and one from another)

- They also have the opportunity to shoot the grudge ball into the net and if they do, they double their attack and can erase 4 X's
- If a team is out, they have the opportunity to get back in by answering a question right and getting 1 X (or three if they make the grudge ball in the net) back

TABOO

Split class into two teams (or four and two teams can play at the same time)

- Each round, one team member can give clues for the word at the top without using any of the words listed on the card.
- Teams can guess as many words as possible with no penalty for wrong answers
- Each time a team guesses the word correctly, they get a point for their team
- Players must use words only, no actions/noises!
- They can do this for a duration of 30 or 60 seconds
- A player from the other team must also watch the clue-giver to be sure he/she is not using any of the words on the card, if he/she does, then he/she cannot use the card anymore and doesn't get a point.
- After a round is over, the next team starts.



Websites:

Youtube for free video lessons/songs/examples	Just search for a grammar topic! You'll be surprised how many sites there are!
Inspiring videos with subtitles-- great for advanced classes.	http://www.ted.com/
Ideas for fun English games	http://www.eslcafe.com/
Free printable worksheets, games, etc.	http://en.islcollective.com/
Premade listening & reading exercises based on current events.	http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/--
How to play Taboo	http://www.wikihow.com/Play-the-Game-of-Taboo--
How to play Grudge Ball	http://toengagethemall.blogspot.com/2013/02/grudgeball-review-game-where-kids-attack.html--

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CREATIVE? (BOBBI, ERICA, EIREENE)

In this workshop we'll discuss what it means to be creative. Using improv games, you'll learn to think on your feet, find your unique voice, and refresh your sense of spontaneity and play! You'll also learn about elements of literary craft, symbolism, story pacing, and metaphor.

Improv Editing Game

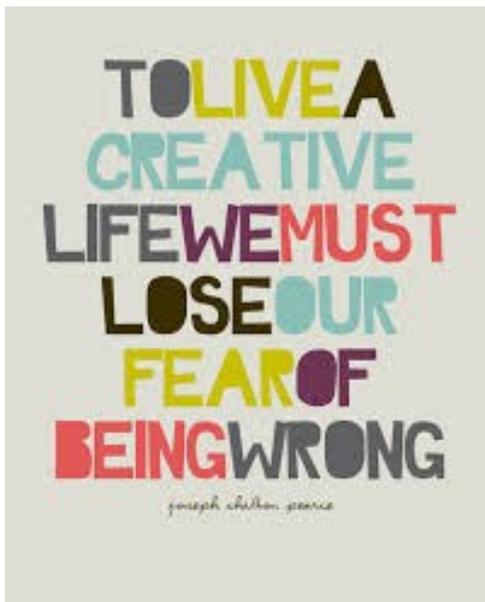
Have students tell one another stories, interrupting one another with the words: details, action, emotion. These are the three things stories are made of, and we need feedback from our readers about whether the stories we tell can (1) be visualized, (2) made to hold the attention, and (3) are able to make us feel.

Δ = Details
A = Action
= Emotion



Figurative Language Riddle Games

These are both designed to help writers expand their metaphors more fully.



Personification

- 1) One person thinks of an object. (Ex. A stick of lipstick)
- 2) A second person, or a whole group tries to guess that object by asking questions as if that object is a person.
- 3) The people asking questions should write down the answers to their questions.
- 4) At the end of the exercise they give the answers to the person thinking of the object, and person 1 writes a short paragraph in which the object speaks as if it's a person.

Variation: an emotion can also be personified. Or you can move to the next game, which is similar.

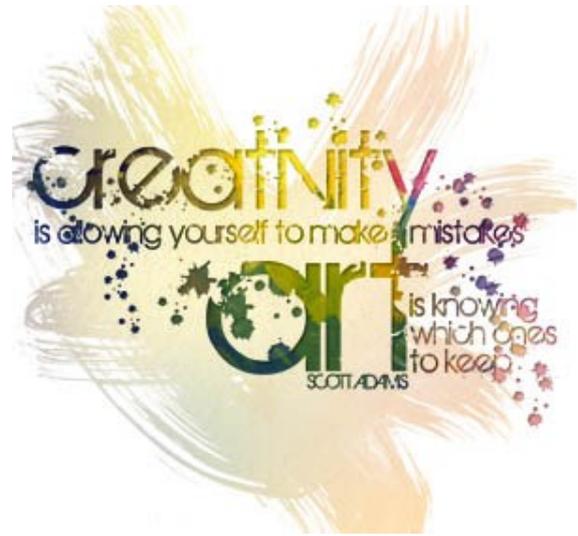
Metaphor Game

The goal is to expand a simple metaphor.

My _____ is like a _____ .

- 1) One person thinks of an emotion.
- 2) The second person (or the group) agrees on an object they will use to form their questions. (Ex. A tape dispenser, or a computer).
- 3) The group asks questions they might ask about the object they've agreed upon. (Ex. is it a new computer? Does it crash often? Does it have sticky keys?)

*Note: this game will also work if you want to make a metaphor about an abstract object, ex. the economy, or global warming.



POETRY EXERCISES FOR BEGINNERS AND ADVANCED STUDENTS

Acrostic Poem:

A poem in which certain letters in each line vertically spell out a word or phrase. Typically, the first letters of a line are used to spell the message.



- An **acrostic name poem** is one that starts each new line with a letter from a name. By the end of the poem, the person is described in a creative way.

Benefits of having students write acrostic name poems:

- They **provide a structure** for beginner writers of poetry
- They **can be adapted** more for advanced students
- They **provide a clear topic** for a poem
- They help students to **develop vocabulary and descriptive writing**
- They give students the chance to **express themselves** in a new way

Acrostic “How To”

- Have students come up with at least one adjective for each letter of their name. Encourage students to be precise with their choice of words – just as they are all different, so should their poems reflect their individuality!
- Example: **B**alanced
Optimistic
Barbaric
Bright
Interested
- **To help students work on sensory detail, have students add phrases and descriptions to the adjectives they’ve chosen. Encourage students to really try to capture their own individuality in their choice of images.**
- Example:
Balanced: Dancing on my toes, the muscles of my calves trembling with the effort to remain still.
Optimistic: Drinking gratefully even the bittersweet tang of life’s disappointments.
Barbaric by name, by nature: Listening to the hard pulse of my body, the blood flowing through my veins, the fighter in me lives.
Bright: Opening my eyes to the light of night skies, the ghosts of stars guiding my mind.
Interested in everything: The scent of the forest fire, the graffiti on the walls, the stranger on the metro – all of these (and more) are stories, waiting for me to write them down, to carry them home.
- To help students move beyond traditional concepts of poetry, encourage them to not limit themselves to strict organization using adjectives. This will allow them to create a unified concept throughout their acrostic name poems.

- Example:
Beginning not with the
Outside, but rather working my way in. I see the
Beauty of both origins and reflections. For the
Beast within me, I am grateful. If not for her teeth and claws,
I would not know the relief of surrender, the reprieve of sleep.

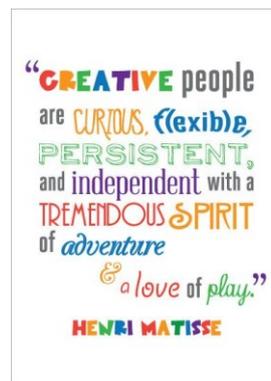
POETRY PRACTICE:

Create an Acrostic Name Poem for yourself, trying to include sensory detail. Be ready to share your poems with other people!

POETRY WRITING EXERCISE: ACROSTIC NAME POEMS

An acrostic name poem is one that starts each new line with a letter from a name. By the end of the poem, the person is described in a creative way. Acrostic poems are a good way for students of all levels to work both with adjectives and self-expression. The assignment can be adjusted to make it more simple or complex. For example, the name “Dimi” could be made into an acrostic poem like this:

Determined
Intelligent
Magical
Interesting



The above poem gives one word for each letter of the name “Dimi.” Younger students or those new to Creative Writing may want to start with just brainstorming single adjectives. This is also a good way for students to learn new, interesting vocabulary words!

The same poem could then be expanded by having students add sensory detail and specifics to their poems. So the poem above could become:

Devoted to my family, to my faith, to myself, I live everyday like a prayer.
Intelligent, my curious mind always thinks, always tries, seeing stories everywhere.
Magical is the world to me, in every moment a new surprise.
Interesting, I burn bright red in a world of grey concrete and colder eyes.

The above poem rhymes, but rhyming is absolutely not necessary for all poems! Take a look at the next example of a “Dimi” acrostic poem to see how a more advanced student might chose to put his or her thoughts together:

Deeply, I worship the world around me, the world within me.
Inspired by the changing face of the sky, the varying moods of the seasons, I find

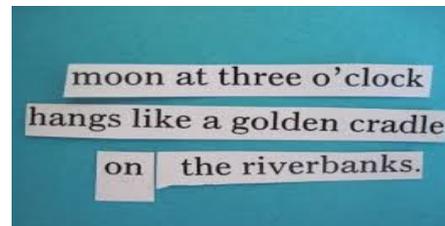
Meaning in the rustling of leaves, the shifting of mercurial winds, for they reflect my Inner nature – the climate of my soul.

Notice that each line doesn't have to end a thought. It can if you want it to, but sometimes the meaning you want to convey may not fit easily into a traditional sentence structure. In the above poem, "Dimi" is characterized not by four different adjectives, but rather by one unifying concept.

* Acrostic poems can be used with any word. It can also be interesting for all students to work on the same word and share their poems, so that they can see the different ideas each student comes up with.

FOUND POETRY

- **Found poems** take existing texts and refashion them, reorder them, and present them as poems. Found poetry is like creating a literary collage.



- **Benefits of having students write found poetry:**
 - Can be adapted for students of any level, or for students of different levels within the same class.
 - Ties other reading assignments into creative writing.
 - Offers students a way to think creatively about diction.
 - Allows students who are believe they are "less creative" to easily write a poem.

Found Poetry "How To"

- **Step One:** Select a piece of prose.
 - The prose can come from their textbooks, from newspapers or magazines, from anywhere.
 - You can ask students to bring in their own texts to work with, and use their textbooks as a backup if they forget.
 - Differentiating instruction: You can give students of different levels different texts to analyze.
- **Step Two:** Have students select words or phrases that jump out to them for any reason.
 - It is often helpful to have a pre-determined number of words or phrases for them to choose.
 - Students can also be instructed to look for specific types of vocabulary words or constructions, such as adjectives or specific tenses.
 - Students can also return to the text later if they "need" more words for their poems.

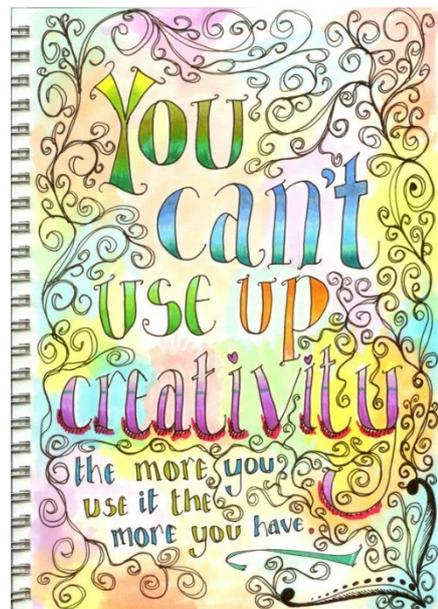
- **Step Three:** Have students write out their pre-selected words on a separate sheet of paper to see them more clearly.
 - Students can also be instructed to cut up the words and phrases they selected to make it easier for them to rearrange in the next step.
- **Step Four:** Have students rearrange the words into a new order for an emotional effect. (Along with the selection process, this is the creative aspect of writing found poetry.)

Found Poetry: Example

- Passage from Novel from *Holes* by Louis Sachar
- There was a change in the weather.
- For the worse.
- The air became unbearably humid. Stanley was drenched in sweat. Beads of moisture ran down the handle of his shovel. It was almost as if the temperature had gotten so hot that the air itself was sweating.
- A loud boom of thunder echoed across the empty lake. A storm was way off to the west, beyond the mountains. Stanley could count more than thirty seconds between how far away the storm was. Sound travels a great distance across a barren wasteland.

Holes

There was a change
 For the worse.
 The air became humid
 Beads of moisture ran down
 The handle of his shovel
 It was almost as if
 The air itself was sweating
 Thunder echoed across the empty lake
 A storm beyond the mountains.
 Thirty seconds between the flash
 And the thunder
 Sound travels a great distance
 Across a barren wasteland



Found Poem Practice:

Again, virtually anything can be used for writing found poetry.

For example:

Create a poem out of the first page of our Creative Writing Workshop agenda. Be ready to share your poems with your colleagues.

Giving feedback

- **Tips:**
 1. Stay positive. Students are often self-conscious about their writing, and heavy-handed criticism can shut them down.

2. Look for the positives. Let students know what they are doing well. Include some positive comments on every piece of writing.
3. Ask questions. Instead of criticizing, asking them questions about their poems/stories can help students to understand better what their readers want to know.
4. Avoid overly-focusing on grammar and spelling. Student creativity often needs nurturing – especially for self-conscious students.

WRITING EXERCISE: TURNING PROSE INTO POETRY

Poetry is everywhere – but sometimes students might need a little help to see it! In this activity, students take a work of prose and choose the words and phrases from it to create their own poem. The creativity is in their selection of what to include. This activity works for students of all levels because the selected text can be aligned with what students are already reading in school.

Step 1. Choose a work of prose to model. I chose a couple paragraphs from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald because I know that my students will read a selection from it over the course of the year.

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling--and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

Step 2. Model for students how to select the phrases that are meaningful to them. In the example below, I have reprinted the paragraph with the phrases that I decided to include in bold. My selection process was based on the images and sensory details that jumped out to me. There is no formula for this selection process – this is where individuality comes in.

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, **fragilely bound** into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and **gleaming** white against the **fresh** grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other **like pale flags, twisting** them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling--and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an **anchored** balloon. They were both in

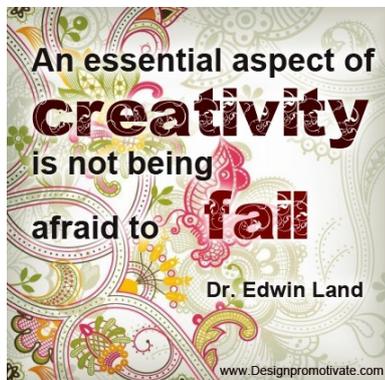
white and their dresses were **rippling and fluttering** as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments **listening to the whip** and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and **the caught wind** died out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly **to the floor**.

Step 3. Write out the selected words and phrases on a separate sheet of paper, so that students can see them clearly separated from the text.

We walked
 fragilely bound
 gleaming
 fresh
 like pale flags, twisting
 anchored
 rippling and fluttering
 listening to the whip
 the caught wind
 to the floor.



Step 4. Rearrange the words and phrases into a new order, to create an emotional effect. Show students that they can also play around with line breaks, capitalization, and punctuation in order to make the poem more cohesive.



Like pale flags twisting,
 we walked.

Gleaming, fresh.

Listening to the whip,
 the caught wind,
 fragilely bound,
 rippling and fluttering,
 anchored
 to the floor.

Step 5. Have students try one on their own!



The Danger of A Single Story (Bobbi, Erica, Eireene)

Where do stereotypes come from and how do they limit our ability to create experience the world through our senses? Beginning with stereotypes about Americans we'll show how writers can move beyond vague descriptions to create excitingly dynamic characters. Closing with the question: what do stereotypes say about us? We'll talk about strategies for moving beyond stereotypes and just how much can be gained by confronting them.

Transcending Clichés and stereotypes in writing

Clichés and Writing

Cliché: A phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought.

Examples of English language clichés:

“It was a dark and stormy night.”

“Her eyes were as blue as the sky.”

“It felt like my heart was ripped in half.”

- How do clichés limit creative writing?

Adequate Descriptions

- Clichés are **inadequate** descriptions because they are so overused as to be nearly meaningless.
- A single adverb or adjective can often provide an **adequate**, evocative description.
- “Eyes as blue as the sky” is a cliché.
 - Consider instead:
 - “**Steel** blue eyes”
 - “**Cornflower** blue eyes”
- What are the different feelings these different descriptions evoke?

Original Descriptions

- Every now and then, a writer will want to include an impressively **original** description, a singularly evocative phrase or sentence

Ex: “...every time she took a stride it looked as though she were going to pop the skirt of her blue-striped seersucker suit, she was in such a rush...”

– Robert Penn Warren, *All The King's Men*

- Sometimes, descriptions are original because they are unexpected

Ex: “Their young daughter’s eyes were grey and cold, exhausted.”

– Dave Eggers

Writing Exercise:

Inadequate vs. Adequate Descriptions

For the two prompts on the next slide, try to think of:

1. An inadequate description (= cliché)
2. An adequate description (One or two words)
3. An original description (a phrase or sentence)

Describe these!

- How this man feels: he has just learned that his wife of 30 years has been cheating on him for their entire marriage.
- The sunrise on a clear summer morning.

Stereotypes and Writing

- Stereotype: 1. A standardized mental picture that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment
2. To repeat without variation; make hackneyed; cliché

How do stereotypes limit character development in creative writing?

TED Talk:

“The Danger of the Single Story”

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Stereotypical Characters

- “The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.”

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, novelist

Even a simple Google search can reveal stereotypes about any group. . . .

- What matters is not whether stereotypes contain truth, but that well-developed characters have depth and do not rely solely on stereotypes for their characterization.

Recognizing Stereotypical Characters



Transcending Stereotypical Characters

- **Writing Tips for Students:**
 1. Do your research.
 2. Create three-dimensional characters.
 3. Try to understand stereotypes and their roots.
 4. Challenge expectations.
 5. Develop empathy.
 6. Read literature from other cultures.

Writing Exercise: Character Development

- **Write a small scene for one of the following situations, developing interesting characters:**
 - A. A refugee youth moves to a small town in Bulgaria and attends the local school for the first time. What does the refugee student teach those who are already there?
 - B. What does a drug dealer do when not dealing drugs?
 - C. What does a street musician do when not playing music?
 - D. What does a homeless person do for fun?

Writing Tips for Students:

Creating Non-Stereotypical Characters

1. Do your research. If you're not familiar with certain types of characters--racial groups, career types, etc.--then it's important to research what you don't know. Don't make assumptions.
2. Create three-dimensional characters. This means your characters should have equal strengths and flaws. No one is perfect (or perfectly evil) and neither should your characters be.
3. Try to understand why your culture formed the stereotypes it has and what's at stake in supporting them. Stereotypes often are created in response to repressed fears, or unmet desires. As a result, frequently stereotypes tell as much about the people who hold them as about the people they are supposed to describe. Asking why a stereotype is present – what it hides and it is really meant to defend – can often lead to fruitful discoveries.
4. Go against the grain of expectations. For instance, your gay character might be a champion bodybuilder. The blond cheerleader might also volunteer her services at a food bank. That gangbanger might be a college graduate.
5. Put yourself in your character's shoes. Stereotypical characters are often created because the writer doesn't relate to that character herself or himself. Even if the character is incidental, imagine who or what that character might be and why he or she became that way. You don't have to write an entire back story for the character, but try to go beyond the surface and dig a little deeper. It will come through in your writing.
6. Read as much literature as you can, especially literature that is outside your own culture or genre. If you're not familiar with different writers of different cultures, ask your teacher or a bookseller. They will probably be able help you find authors that might broaden your reading experiences.

Writing Exercise: Creating Interesting Characters

All characters should have a backstory, even if it doesn't come up directly in the plot. Try to apply the writing tips on creating non-stereotypical characters to the following questions – instead of relying on clichés, use your creativity to make your character 3-dimensional!

Background:

Gender
Race
Social class
How many siblings
Parents' relationship
Neighborhood
Health/disability
Religion
Level of education
Special abilities

Present circumstances:

Age
Marital status
How many (if any) children
Sexuality
Political views
Appearance
Habits
Fears/ phobias
What s/he gets upset about
What s/he gets excited about
What s/he really dislikes in other people
What s/he admires in others



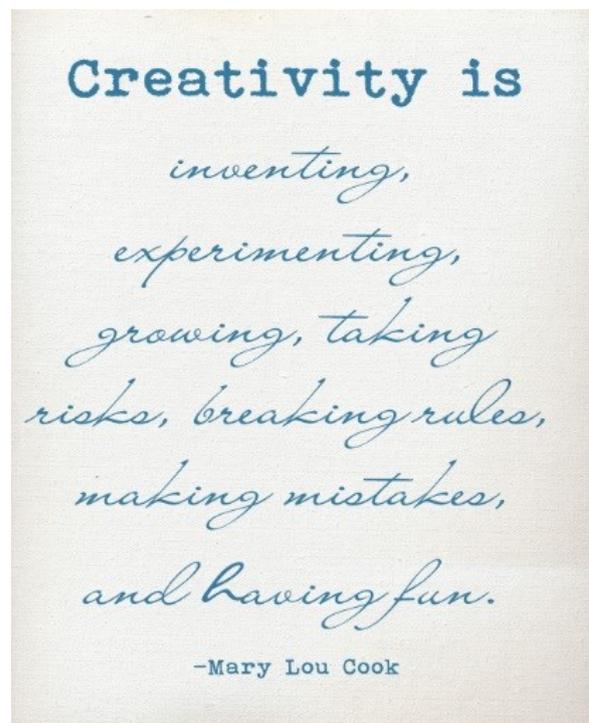
CLICHÉS EXERCISE

What is a cliché, and why is it bad? Clichés are the mummified remnants of a colorful phrase turned meaningless by excessive use. As Maxwell Nurberg says, clichés "are generally fixed idiomatic phrases, some of which may have originally been valid, fresh, and colorful but through constant use have become about as personal as a rubber stamp or a mimeographed love letter." A cliché is a phrase or metaphor that was once sparkling and original, but now it is dead through overuse. It is so often used that it merely annoys experienced readers due to its predictability and triteness.

For instance, the phrases *bite the dust*, *breath of fresh air*, *smooth as silk*, *a crying shame*, *after all is said and done*, *at the crack of dawn*, *bored to tears*, *drop a bombshell*, *flat as a pancake*, and *in this day and age* were once effective and striking phrases. No longer. Millions of writers have used them so much, they have worn out their originality. To illustrate how dull and predictable clichés are, see how easy it is to fill in the missing words in the last half of the examples below.

rear its ugly head
sadder but wiser
I have a sneaking suspicion
the bottom line
in one fell swoop
last but not least
life takes its toll
few and far between
crystal clear, clear as a bell
for all intents and purposes
take the bull by _____
the thrill of _____, the agony of _____
swept it _____
packed in as tight as _____
that captain runs a tight _____
believe it or _____
breathe a sigh of _____
better late _____
like a bolt from the _____
that was the _____ that broke the _____ 's

perish the _____
as alike as two _____ in a _____
beyond the shadow of a _____
leave no stone _____
Don't have a _____, _____!



Unfortunately, many students are fond of clichés. They find comfort in the old and the familiar. It is too easy to sit back and let the trite phrase spill forth thoughtlessly from your pen.

Don't give into that urge! Clichés have a funny way of forcing writers' thinking into old ways of thinking, rather than allowing them to refigure thoughts in a new way. Your job is to make language new. Clichés are insidious, and they creep up on you when you least expect them. Avoid them like the plague. (Oops! There's another one!)

Special Note: What is the worst cliché that appears in every freshman composition class? Students who begin their papers with phrases like, *since the dawn of time* or *throughout the history of mankind*. In a typical fall term, I would find at least six students who use this cliché in their first paper. Students who start their papers this way immediately sin against the holy spirits of creativity and originality.

CURING CLICHÉS

There are three cures to the cliché crisis.

(1) First, you can simplify the phrase. It's not colorful, but it is better than using a cliché and labeling yourself as an unoriginal writer who can't think of a better way to phrase a simple idea.

"A bolt from the blue" would then become "a shock"

"beyond the shadow of a doubt" would then become "undoubtedly"

"Swept under the rug" would then become "concealed"

"As pure as the fresh driven snow" would then become "immaculate"

(2) A bit more advanced technique is to take the trite phrase and give it a slight twist, a minor tweak that radically changes the meaning of the phrase. Doing so breathes new life into dead language by making it de-familiarized; the reader encounters the words anew for the first time, and becomes pleasantly surprised.

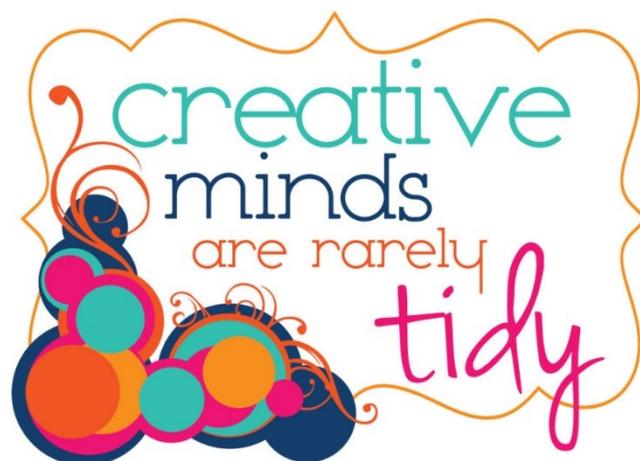
For instance, G. K. Chesterton wrote, "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly." Talulah Bankhead wrote, "I am as pure as the fresh driven slush." Another writer, Tom Bethel, avoided a Shakespearean cliché by writing, "Washington is Thunder City--full of sound and fury signifying power." Sometimes, the new phrase made by refashioning a cliché may make a good title. One James Bond film, far too action-packed to live and let live, decided to *Live and Let Die*.

Such verbal slight-of-hand is available to any student who takes the time. One student, writing about bombing technology, concluded, "That's the whole thing in a bombshell," cleverly twisting the cliché about *nutshell*. An old student of mine, one who was writing about animal research, realized that the phrase "on the other hand" was becoming repetitive in his paper. He stirred up the language pot and wrote "on the other paw" in reference to an animal. It was a bit too cute for my own writing, but all the other readers in class who encountered his twist on the cliché loved it.

(3) Finally, the best (and hardest) way to cure a cliché is to make up an entirely new image or phrase, one you have never heard before but which expresses the same idea. Either think of an image that startles the reader by its unexpectedness or one that connotes appropriate emotional resonances in the reader. The "schemes and tropes" section on *CN Online* may help. Try your hand at it. Take the clichés below and create a new original phrase to express the same idea.

rear its ugly head
sadder but wiser
I have a sneaking suspicion
the bottom line
in one fell swoop
last but not least
life takes its toll
few and far between
crystal clear, clear as a bell
for all intents and purposes
take the bull by the horns
the thrill of victory, the agony
of defeat
he swept the problem under
the rug
packed in as tight as sardines
that captain runs a tight ship

you mad, bro?
believe it or not
breathe a sigh of relief
better late than never
like a bolt from the blue
that was the last straw
that was the straw that broke
the camel's back
I'm fed up with you!
perish the thought!
as alike as two peas in a pod
beyond the shadow of a doubt
leave no stone unturned
Don't have a cow, man!
Clear as glass!
actions speak louder than
words



Playing with grammar: long sentences (Eireene)

Why use long sentences? Why use short ones? Working with a photograph you've brought from home, we'll work in groups to build long sentences. In the process we'll become playful with grammar, learning why adjectives, prepositional phrases, and subordinate clauses matter. We'll also talk about tension and juxtaposition, coming to understand what goes on in between short sentences. We'll discuss the choice between long and short sentences and see how one can be transformed into the other.

Long Sentences Game

- 1) Start with a noun.
- 2) Place it in the middle of the page.
- 3) Add three adjectives
- 4) Add a simple action. (ex. the blonde, long-haired girl stretches her hand.)
- 5) Add prepositional phrases.
- 6) Every time a noun comes up add adjectives to it (don't forget to leave room on the board for this!).
- 7) Add subordinate clauses.
- 8) When you feel the story doubling back on itself try to wrap up the end of the sentence.
- 9) Add a date and time and weather to the beginning.
- 10) Edit! Take out unnecessary adjectives, try to create a tension alternating between happy and sad, break up sentences.



Mapping Personal Experiences: How to “Write about yourself” (Erica)

Our students are used to writing responses to assigned essay topics. But how do you approach an assignment where the topic is you? Using word webs and other brainstorming techniques, we will discuss the genre of personal narrative as it applies to university essays, the creative writing competition and personal journaling. You’ll learn how to structure and select experiences suitable for a dynamic personal narrative.

What is a Personal Narrative? And Why should your students be writing them?

A Personal Narrative is...

- A story about you! *Narrative* = story!
- Often used interchangeably with “Personal Essay”
- A variety of *Creative Nonfiction*
- An account of the writer’s own experiences, opinions, aspirations, etc.
 - The subject is the writer herself
 - Topics external to the writer (e.g. a political cause the writer is passionate about) should always be related back to the writer
- Limited in scope
 - Focused on ONE (or a FEW) closely related aspect[s] of the writer’s life

A Personal Narrative is **NOT**...

- An autobiography or a memoir
 - Do NOT attempt to tell your entire life story!
 - Remember to keep it limited in scope!
- An encyclopedia entry; an uninteresting “laundry list” of facts
- An “essay”
 - Remember you are allowed to be creative!

Why Should Students Write Personal Narratives?

- Personal expression
 - Share one’s unique viewpoint with an audience
 - Possible audiences: Teachers, peers, newspaper readers
 - Journal writing
 - A way to “talk things out” with oneself
- Writing practice
- To stand out in applications and competitions!
 - The CorPlus Creative Writing Competition
 - University Applications
 - Applications for other sorts of competitive programs (see next slide)
- Can you think of other reasons why students write personal narratives?

Example: The BulRA Application

- The following is from the application for the Bulgarian Reading Association's (BulRA) High School Exchange Program, open to grade 10 students. It awards winners a year of study in the USA or UK
- Information available at bulra.org
- *"Attach to your application a Personal Essay written by you in English ... about 750-1000 words in length, describing yourself and what makes you unique, using specific examples and interests. If any of your answers to the questions in the Application Form are not fully informative, please expand on them in your essay..."*
- "In addition, the following questions are suggested as the kinds of things you might like to discuss:
 - Have you had an experience or a relationship that has particular importance to you?
 - Describe briefly the various members of your family and what they mean to you.
 - Tell us about your most common activities and interests, which you enjoy the most, and why.
 - Do you belong to any clubs or other group organizations, and hold any special positions in them?
 - Are you particularly interested and active, or particularly talented in any sports or hobbies?
 - Do you have any special accomplishments (artistic, musical or other cultural activities and/or talents)?
 - Do you have any specific plans for the future?
 - What are your reasons for wishing to spend a year in the UK or in the USA?"

Which response is more compelling?

"Are you particularly interested and active, or particularly talented in any sports or hobbies?"

- "Tennis is my favorite sport because it's the sport I'm best at. I want to get even better at it, so I practice two hours a day, four days a week. I only started playing two years ago and last year I placed 2nd at the Regional Tennis Tournament! I think tennis is a great sport because I have learned so much from it..."
- "Two years ago, I had never ever seen anyone play tennis, not even on TV. Then one day at school, my friend Alex said to me, 'I saw this tennis player on TV! His name was Grigor Dimitrov, like your dad! Isn't that funny?' I thought it was funny, too, to imagine my dad playing sports! And then a few days later I was flipping through TV channels and I saw Grigor Dimitrov was playing on the sports channel, so I started watching..."

"Essay" vs. "Narrative"

- Remember the BulRA application said that the questions provided were *suggestions*.
- Many students do not realize the freedom they have in answering these sorts of questions.
- An "essay" produces a more generalized response.
- A narrative response builds off a *story* and how the story affected the writer.
 - The story provides focus and structure to the response.

Two Kinds of Prompts

Students can produce a personal narrative in response to:

- A question with a suggested topic
 - E.g. “Write about a family member and what their relationship means to you”
- No topic suggested – Just write about yourself!
 - From the BulRA application: “Describe yourself and what makes you unique”

“Write About Yourself”

WHERE TO BEGIN?

A few suggestions for brainstorming

The Hardest Part is Getting Started

- Coming up with a suitable, focused, interesting topic takes effort.
- Students might be tempted to give up:
 - “I’m boring. There’s nothing to say about me.”
 - “This is stupid.”
 - Student may simply produce a bland “laundry list” to just finish the assignment.
 - “I just don’t know what to write!”
 - ^^ This is what we’ll work on! 😊

Everyone has stories!

- Everyone has an identity!
- Possibly the most basic component* of someone’s conception of themselves is their identity.
- One definition of identity: The labels we give ourselves.
- Everyone applies multiple labels to their identity. Some kinds of labels:
 - *Familial*
 - *Professional*
 - *National/Ethnic/Religious*
 - *Interests/hobbies*
 - *Political*
 - *Certain experiences*
- We’ll build off these labels to create a word web about ourselves.

An example from 90’s pop music!

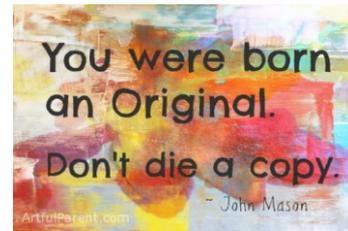
**Meredith Brooks: “I’m a Lover”
(as sung by Alanis Morissette)**



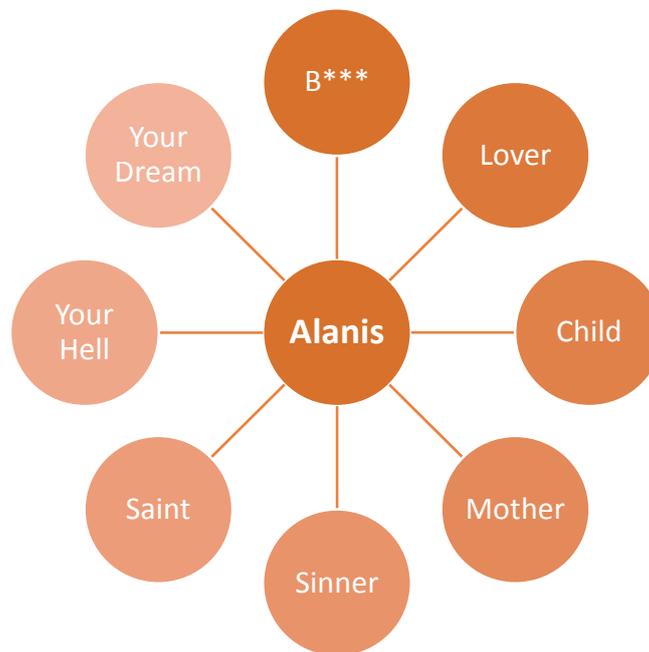
What are the labels that Alanis applies to herself?

From the song: "I'm a Lover"
"I'm a little bit of everything
All rolled into one"

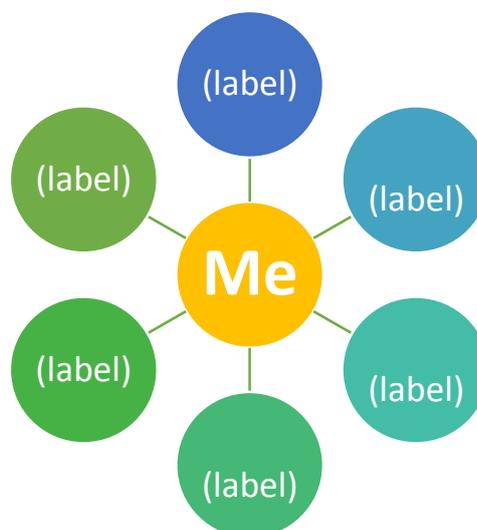
*I'm a b****, I'm a lover, I'm a child, I'm a mother
I'm a sinner, I'm a saint, I do not feel ashamed
I'm your hell, I'm your dream, I'm nothing in between
You know you wouldn't want it any other way"*



Alanis' Labels (Word Web)



Your Labels! (Word Web version)



Your labels (Chart version)

(label)	(label)	(label)
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
(label)	(label)	(label)
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

Think of six labels YOU apply to yourself.

- *Familial* (Mother, son, cousin...)
- *Professional* (Teacher, writer....)
- *National/Ethnic/Religious* (Bulgarian, Orthodox Christian...)
- *Interests/hobbies* (Football fan, Amateur pastry chef...)
- *Political*
- *Certain experiences* (surviving an illness, meeting a hero...)
- Other categories? Suggestions?

Details -- Making Associations

- Now, you have six labels for yourself, but you probably need some more details to come up with ideas for a narrative.
- This is where you can start *making associations* to add details about your labels.
 - *Making Associations*: A few words (feelings, memories, ideas, etc.) you have about that label as it applies to you
 - Write down the first few things that *immediately come to mind*.

Making Associations (example 1)

Here is a list of associations I made for one of my labels.

- Expatriate
 - *Bus travel (compound memory of a lot of different experiences)*
 - *Awkward, paranoid (feelings)*
 - *The time I sort of felt like my hair was on fire (specific memory)*
 - *Really meaningful friendships (idea)*
 - *Taking pride in America but not wanting to live there (idea)*
- These associations have immediate meaning to me, but would require explanation for others

Making Associations – a note

- It might be helpful to make a list of associations of only one variety to describe your label (e.g. Only write adjectives, only make a list of short memories to describe that identity)
- Make sure to write the FIRST things that come to your mind
 - Don't worry about how banal they seem

Making Associations (Example 2)

- Teacher

Storytelling Time!

- Look at your partner's paper and ask questions about the associations that most interest you.
 - Ask follow-up questions if you want to know more about that story
 - Move on to a new topic if you are not interested
- As you tell your stories, do you see relationships start to form between different associations / different identities?
 - Make notes on your word webs/charts if you need to!

Getting Started Shouldn't Be So Difficult Now

- You should now have several different ideas for personal narratives.
- The goal now is to get them on paper to create a rough draft!

Associative Writing Exercise

- A kind of free write!
- Start writing down one of the stories you told your partner. If you run out of things to say, tell another story, about anything
- Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar
- The rules:
 - Do not stop writing
 - Write as fast and as much as you can

Considering your audience

A Few notes for Choosing A story Worth Telling

Who Are Your Students Writing For?

- Personal Journals (Audience is students themselves)
 - Free Writes will suffice – they can write whatever they please
- University Admissions Officers
- Judges of the Creative Writing Competition
- Teachers
- Committees for other awards (e.g. BulRA)
- Who else?

Inappropriate Topics

- Inappropriate topics are those that the reader:
 - Might feel uncomfortable/offended/annoyed reading

- Will not find original (Don't choose a topic if the audience has probably already read dozens of essays that are very similar)
 - Remember that stories can be clichéd.
 - Ideas you are not well-informed about, that you are in danger of misrepresenting.
- ***What are some topics inappropriate for the Creative Writing Competition?***

Interesting Topics

- After they eliminate inappropriate topics, students can develop a personal narrative about anything!

BUT:

1. It has to respond to the question in the prompt (if given)
2. BE INTERESTING

Most Things Can Be Interesting

- *Any topic can be interesting if the writer is passionate about it!*
- Some tips for writers:
 - Use your own voice
 1. Don't rely on a dictionary when writing
 - Tell a story only YOU can tell
 1. Tell the story from your unique perspective
 - Make sure your story has a point!
 1. Is there character development evident in the story?
 2. Is there a moral or a lesson learned in the story?
- If YOU care about the narrative, then your audience will, too.
- Your entire narrative doesn't have to "just" be the story – use the story to demonstrate something that is important to you.
 - E.g. In the sample narrative about the tennis player, the subject could later reflect upon how surprising coincidences can lead to unexpected things – how life doesn't always turn out strictly as expected.

After Writing the First Draft

Some tips for revising your personal narrative

- Have a friend read the narrative. Does the narrative "sound" like you? Do they think you are telling the story with your "own voice"?
- Try moving parts of the story around.
 - Sometimes the middle (or the end) of the story is the best place to start the narrative.
 - A "hook" can encourage interest at the beginning, and then you can explain the rest of the narrative later.

Sample Questions and Concluding Notes

Some Prompts That Can Encourage Thoughtful Essays

- Ask the students to think of an object that is important to them, and use this object to show some of their characteristics.
- What is your earliest memory?

- What are some things you believed when you were younger that you now think are wrong?
- What is something that most people don't care about, but you really do?
- If you could relive or erase a single day from your memory, what would it be?

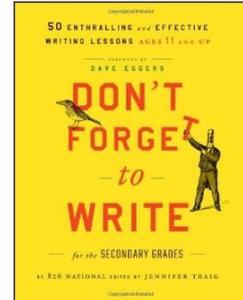
Are there ways to expand and adapt these activities for other applications?

Acknowledgements!

The “labels” activity was adapted from the chapter “Look Smart Fast: College Application Essay Boot Camp” by Risa Nye

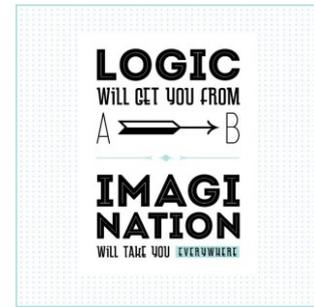
And some of the sample prompts at the end of the presentation are from “The Story of Me: Writing About Your Life and Your Family” by Jason Roberts

in *Don't Forget to Write for the Secondary Grades*, a collection of writing lessons compiled by 826 National



UNDERSTANDING THE CRITERIA: HOW TO EVALUATE CREATIVE WRITING - SCOTT

In this session we will review and discuss the judging criteria for the Creative Writing competition. Our goals are to ensure you that know and understand how contest entries are evaluated, and why certain examples of creative writing are considered better than others. We will use actual student entries from last year's competition to illustrate these concepts.



One of the main points of confusion in preparing students for the Creative Writing contest is ensuring they (and you, the teachers) understand and recognize the difference between a creative piece of writing and an academic essay. Here are some guidelines and examples to ensure your students' work meets the requirements of this competition.

A creative story--the subject of this contest--is a work created (hence the word "creative") entirely by the author based on his or her own ideas. It is usually told using a narrative structure and features a plot (a series of events that take place constituting a beginning, middle and end), one or multiple characters, and some kind of conflict or disruption. Many of the resources on the BCWC website further elaborate these components. The key is that creative writing is entirely invented by the author, even if it is very realistic. Examples of creative writing: any work of fiction ever written, from Greek mythology to Shakespeare's plays (even though many were based on historical events, he wrote them as narrative stories) to Charles Dickens to Tolstoy's War & Peace to Harry Potter and The Hunger Games. While creative writing must have some version of a narrative structure, the writing can be manifested in a variety of styles or forms including short story, poetry, novel, play, etc.

On the other hand, academic essays--for these purposes it is sufficient to group all kinds of essays together-- are written in order to establish the author's opinion, or position, on a given topic and support it with factual evidence. Unlike creative stories which can take many forms, all essays (more or less) follow the same prescribed structure: 1) introduction to the topic with a thesis statement that the author will prove, 2) fact-based evidence supporting the thesis (with the expectation that sources of evidence be clearly identified; in creative writing citation is largely irrelevant b/c the author makes everything up), and 3) a conclusion.

The key difference between a creative story and an academic essay? Everything in an essay must be based on fact. Examples of essays: the majority of writing assignments you did in high school and college, when a teacher asked you to answer a factual question or give your opinion and support it with evidence.

It might help you to see the differences by using one of last year's actual Creative Writing contest topics: "which of the 5 senses could you do without and why?" Please keep in mind this is just a crude example I put together very quickly.

Here is a creative story about the 5 senses topic: "Once upon a time there was a man who had the best vision in the world. He could see amazing detail in anything he looked at, and people envied this ability. One day a witch became jealous of this gift, and removed it from the man to use herself. The man was left completely blind; he went from seeing the best of anyone to not seeing at all. At first he was very sad- he thought his great sight made him

special. But then he realized there was more to experiencing the world than seeing it. He learned to pay more attention to his other senses and appreciated much more the different smells, textures, tastes and sounds he encountered. After a while he decided sight wasn't that important after all, and of all the senses he could lose, he was glad to be without sight." {This is quite basic, but note how it has a plot, characters, a disruptive event--the witch taking his sight--and is fictional, consisting entirely of creative thoughts of the author}

An essay about the 5 senses topic (as might be written by a high school student): "Of all of the senses, I would be ok without my sense of taste. Sight is very important to your safety and you can get great pleasure by seeing amazing people and objects. Smell is important in case of a fire, and lots of food and flowers smell really good. You need to hear because not being able to listen to music would be terrible. Touch is really important too, because if something is very hot or cold but you don't know that could be dangerous. In conclusion taste is not necessary to experience life or be safe and that is what I could do without." {Note the essay structure and style: introduction/thesis (the first sentence), presentation of facts (or in this case what the author believes are facts), conclusion. And all based on reality.}



Concluding session: What have we learned?

For the workshop's final session we will bring together all aspects of creative writing you have learned about throughout the weekend. Through small and large group discussions you will reemphasize the most important aspects of preparing students for the writing competition, and return to your schools with clear plans of action. You will also have the opportunity to discuss points of confusion or discuss ideas or topics you want to explore further. You'll also be able to ask the trainers any questions you still have.

EXAMPLES FROM LAST YEAR'S CONTEST

Sample 1: A less good example (75%):

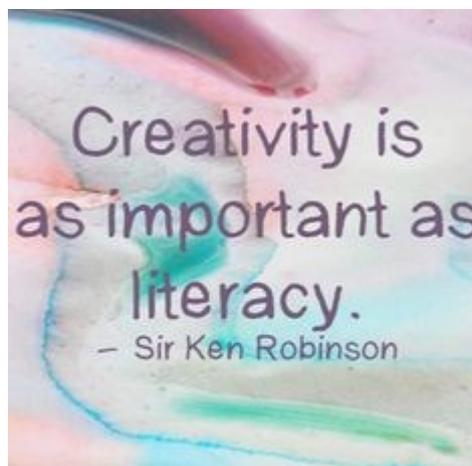
All animals are living creatures and can communicate with the ones from their species. Humans can't understand animal language because they aren't from the same species. They wouldn't know how much an animal can say. But it also depends if the animal will choose to say something.

For instance, the fish is a creature that doesn't speak, according to people. But if we think a little there are many different kinds of fish that all live in the different land of fish that all live in the water and kingdom and God made every fish unique with different pattern, just like the people are. Also some of us eat them and some of them eat us. It's a complete harmony between the two worlds on our planet.

It speaks for sure. It also might know everything, although it's somehow impossible. But we can't hear them, so we'll ever know. Maybe there are fish in a fish school right now that are writing an essay: "Are the humans mute or do they not speak because they know everything?"

It's the only animal that can't hear us. If we say to a fish "Sit down!" or "stand up!" it won't do anything.

"The fish world will remain a mystery for us, as our world for them. Unless a crazy human or fish scientist invents a translation machine.

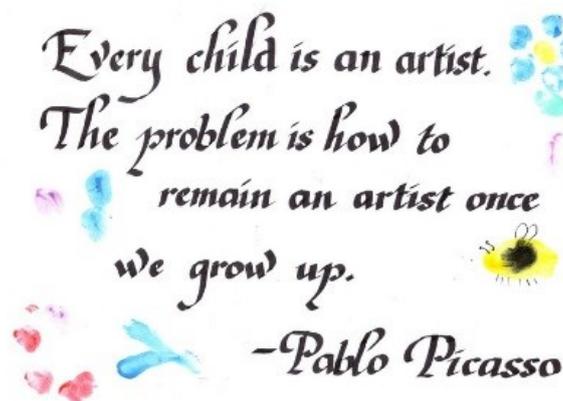
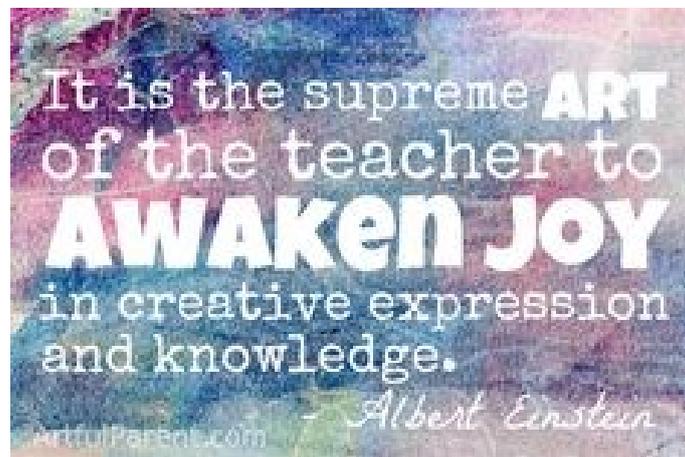


Sample 2: A good example!

The fish was swimming around in circles in its small sphere of hollow glass full with water. The small thing was looking through the transparent glass, seeing the swirled reflections of the room around it. Was it staying there in silence because the animal was too simple to be able to speak? Was it even a fact?

What if the fish had enormous intelligence? That would change everything. Intelligence comes with a curse. The bonus of being able to express opinions full of logical and rational ideas might shape an opinion far too complex to be understood by lesser beings.

The fish was swimming around in circles. It was waiting. Waiting so evolution could do its magic. Waiting for the “intelligent” beings who were now keeping it as a pet to grow in their minds. One day, they might be able to understand it. Then the fish would share its secrets. They would be able to make even ideas bigger and better than individuals by themselves.



Creative Writing Workshop Evaluation Summary

38 forms

Was the workshop useful for you? – 5,84 out of 6

1	2	3	4	5 - 6	6 - 32
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Do you feel confident to prepare your students for the Creative Writing competition? – 5,37 out of 6

1	2	3	4 - 6	5 - 12	6 - 20
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- **Having attended the seminar, yes, I think I feel more confident even though confidence is not one of my strengths.**

Overall

- Very useful, inspiring, well organized.
- On the whole, I'm very glad I took part in the seminar. I find most of the things we discussed were useful and applicable in class. Thank you all!
- A clear distinction between academic and creative writing.
- Thanks a lot! It's great sacrifice of you! You made your life more difficult by giving us this knowledge – now you'll have so many wonderful creative writings that you'll find it very difficult to judge 😊
- Time restrictions, schools' curriculum and large classes can be hindrances but one can always find a way to implement the ideas in their classes and boost their students creativity.
- I wish good luck to all contestants.

Any other questions? - n/a

Any other ideas for implementing these ideas in your school?

- I would do my best to start creative writing classes in my school. For the time being, creativity takes place every day in my classes.
- I'm going to implement these ideas in my high school English literature classes.
- I'm going to create a PowerPoint presentation for my students and make them familiar with the Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition judging criteria 2015.
- In preparing students for different types of competitive procedures (for example the YES program or the Benjamin Franklin Summer Institutes) they are required to provide answers/writings, the same for the LA GLOW summer camp.
- 90% of them are (these ideas).

Other comments/suggestions

- Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the seminar 😊 Suggestion: Pay attention to timing. We had too much time for some of the activities and not enough time for the others.
- To have some of the “less good” essays published on the website so that we could illustrate for the students what are the most common mistakes they make and help them avoid at least some of them in their next participations. If there are samples of “the best” and the “less good” writing on the same topic it will make the judging criteria even more clear.
- I think some of the sessions/workshops were too theoretical and not aimed specifically to Creative Writing Competition. The most useful workshop for me was today’s, on Sunday morning, when we commented some students’ works. It would be good for me if the seminar lasted only on Friday and Saturday.
- The ideas and approaches are very interesting but few of them could be applied in the real Bulgarian classroom because of the limitations of time and curriculum. They could be applied to few students from each class. State clearly that the piece of writing should present a story.
- Thank you for being together!
- A very well structured seminar, useful, really creative, done step by step.
- Another meeting / seminar (suggestion). Thank you all for the excellent presentation, I personally understood and learnt so many things I didn’t know but I longed to.
- Thank you for the excellent presentations, useful tips and examples, original and creative approach that I would be happy to incorporate in my lessons.
- It was great we had to do practical activities.
- Everything is useful. Explained in details= Excellent lecturers. Good examples. Friendly atmosphere.
- It was very useful for me. I really feel confident to prepare my students for the Creative Writing Competition. All facilitators were great. I liked them very much.
- Good luck to everyone! Thank you for this useful (adj. 1), informative (adj. 2), pleasant (adj. 3) seminar.
- Thank you! You are perfect!
- Thank you.

WORKSHOP FACILITATORS' BIOS



- **Hannah Allen** comes to Bulgaria from the state of Maryland, the state known for having the best seafood in the country! She holds a bachelors of arts in Religious Studies from Wheaton College. She first came to Bulgaria on a Fulbright scholarship and taught ESL to high school students in Sliven. In 2013 she came to the American College of Sofia to teach ESL. In addition to her work as an ESL teacher, Hannah is a co-founder of the BEST Foundation, the Bulgarian English Speech and debate Tournament foundation. She currently acts as the financial director and assists in coaching students in debate. In her free time Hannah likes to sing and play guitar. She has started an All-girl a cappella group at ACS, the Lotus Notes, and they preform around the city of Sofia.
- My name is **Michael** and I come from a small town in Pennsylvania that has more squirrels than stop signs. I studied Communications in College but now live and teach English in Bulgaria. I love to travel, eat, and watch funny cat videos online! My teaching experience includes teaching some undergraduate classes in college, teaching a year at a foreign language high school in Kardzhali and currently I'm on my second year at the American College of Sofia. I also act as the Assistant Project Manager to the BEST Foundation. In addition to teaching, I coach the speech and debate team at ACS. My email is deeganmichaeljames@gmail.com if you want to get in touch!
- For the past eight years, **Bobbi Arduini** has worked with high school students in California to develop their individual writer's voices. Bobbi earned her undergraduate degree in writing from Hampshire College (2002), and her Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction at Saint Mary's College (2005), where she was also a recipient of the Chester Aaron Scholarship for excellence in writing. Her essays and poems have been featured in several anthologies and literary journals, including *Women*

Reinvented; Good Dogs Doing Good; and Sacred Fools. Bobbi is in process of earning a second Masters degree in International and Multicultural Education with an emphasis Human Rights at the University of San Francisco. As a recipient of the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant award, she currently teaches literature and creative writing at the Plovdiv English Language School, where her students never fail to regularly inspire new insights and stories.

- **Erica Carlson** holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, Classics, and Philosophy from The University of Arizona, where she was Editor-in-Chief of the university's undergraduate literary magazine, *Persona*. A recipient of a Fulbright U.S. Student grant for the 2014-2015 school year, she is an English Teaching Assistant at "D-r Petar Beron" Foreign Language High School in Kyustendil. She plans to pursue a career in education, and hopes to encourage her students to use writing and literature to think critically and creatively.
- **Scott Bleiweis** currently teaches English as a second language for 8th and 9th grade at the American College of Sofia. For the 2013-14 school year Scott taught English for grades 8-12 at Yordan Radichkov Foreign Language School in Vidin, Bulgaria. During this past year he served as a judge for CorPlus' Bulgarian National English Spelling Bee in Vratsa and Bulgarian (English language) Creative Writing Competition in Sofia.
- **Eireene Nealand** writes fiction. Her stories, poems and translations have appeared in *ZYZZYVA, Sidebrow, WHR, Fourteen Hills, Absent, Transfer, elimae, and The St. Petersburg Review* and *eohippus*, among other places. Her work has received multiple awards including an Elizabeth Kosova Fellowship for study in Bulgaria and an Ivan Klima Fellowship for study in Prauge. To her degrees from UC Berkeley and San Francisco State, she recently added a Ph.D. in Literature from UC Santa Cruz. She is currently a Fulbright fellow in creative writing and is teaching a course about prose and cinema at Sofia University.

