

To Infinity and Beyond – Nurturing Creativity in the English Classroom (Secondary Session)

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Programme rundown

- I. Understanding and assessing creative writing
- II. Selecting and interpreting the texts
- III. Process writing and peer evaluation
- IV. Sample activities/ projects that could be adapted to the secondary level

Part 1.

Understanding and assessing creative writing

- What is the difference between “writing” and “creative writing”?
- The theme of re-presentation as the goal of creative writing

“Writing” VS “Creative Writing”

“Writing”

According to Cambridge Dictionary,

- a person's ***style of writing*** with a pen on paper that can be ***recognized as their own***
- the ***written work***, such as stories or poems, of ***one person or a group of people***
- the activity of ***creating*** pieces of written work, such as stories, poems, or articles

What is creative writing?

The *activities* in
creative writing



The *finished works*
that emerge from
the activities of
creative writing;

The results of these are poems, scripts, stories,
novels etc.

(Harper, 2010, p.2)

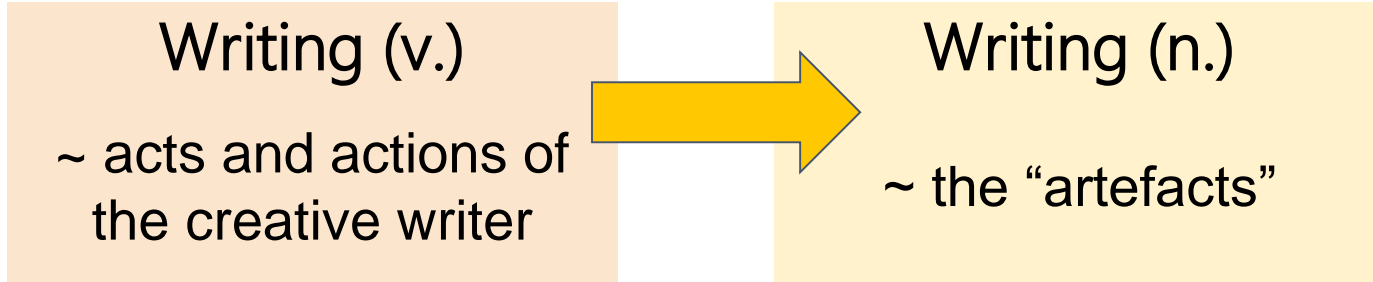
Definition of “creativity” in creative writing

“Creative writing isn’t so different from any other kind of writing”

Frankly speaking, all writing — even the one-minute, uncorrected e-mail— involves some creativity, some thinking, some **imagination**.

Wendy Bishop, & David Starkey. (2006). Keywords in Creative Writing. Utah State University Press.”

Creative writing



Some questions to consider:

- If a student writes a report creatively, is it considered a creative writing?
- If a writer writes a story with scientific facts and academic language style, is it considered a creative writing?

⇒ Creative writing is not bounded by the text type, but the acts and actions of the creative writer in making the artefacts of creative outcome.

The focus of today's seminar...

- ⇒ With reference to different educators' experience, today's seminar will highlight the benefits in teaching students **creative reading skills** [the creative writing (v.)] with sample readings and tasks;
- ⇒ introduce a variety of **artefacts** [the creative writing (n.)] to assess students' creativity;
- ⇒ share the details of workshops, competitions and projects that could be adapted to nurture the creativity of more able students at the secondary level

Definition of “creativity”

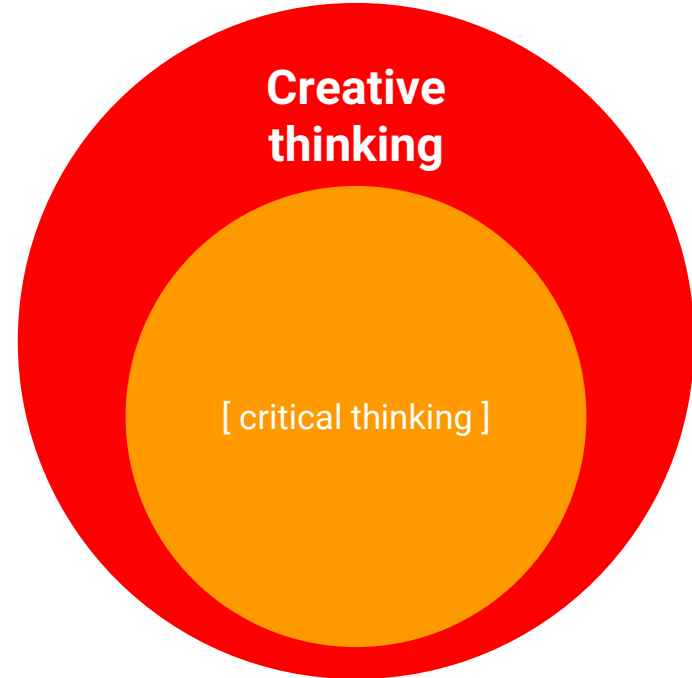
Critical = creative?

Critical thinking ~ creative thinking?

Critical thinking generally refers to a **complex, advanced, and organized cognitive activity** that **questions** one’s own beliefs and to **tolerate** ambiguity and uncertainty.

Creative thinking, however, is much **more sophisticated** that requires strong conscious thought.

*“the creative person was someone who applied a **logic**, method, or set of techniques to a given domain of **expertise**”* supported by **education** and **socialization**
(Bishop & Starkey, 2006)



Creativity is both nature and nurture

*“A merely **novel** idea is one which can be described and/or **produced by the same set of generative rules** as are other, familiar, ideas. A radically original, or **creative**, idea is one which **cannot**”*

(Boden 2004, as cited in Bishop, & Starkey, 2006)

It is therefore the teacher's task to future nurture gifted students' creative nature.

How should creative writing be assessed?

The task to train students (whether in form of an assessment, assignment or mere exercise), should be **open-ended**, with **no clear and straightforward path to a single solution**. (Bishop & Starkey, 2006)

~ it is therefore appropriate to let students nurture their creativity through different methods and genres of creative writing.

What is the goal of creative writing?

The finished creative writing should bore both **commercial** commodities and **cultural** commodities (Harper, 2010).

For students in primary and secondary level, these terms are accommodated as “**attraction**” and “**message**”. To foster these, the creative writing classroom should be conducted heavily on interpersonal interaction and individualized attention (Leahy, 2005).

Re-representation, representation

My personal theme.

I often ask students what their stories **represent**.

“**What**” ~ message

“**Re-present**” ~ attraction

Redo, recycle, reuse, reproduce, repeat

“Repeat” ~ “Again”

However, in the process of writing the story “again”, you keep certain elements and change the representation of these certain elements too.

^My goal in teaching creative writing is to see students’ representation of “stories” (i.e., *anything* can be a story).

The Treachery of Images, also known as
“This is not a pipe”, is a 1929 painting by Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte.

“The famous pipe. How people reproached me for it! And yet, could you stuff my pipe? No, it's just a representation, is it not? So if I had written on my picture "This is a pipe", I'd have been lying!”

Part II.

Selecting and interpreting the texts

- How to develop creativity in students by interactive and critical reading skills
- Sample reading materials that ignite creativity Lesson design and analysis

How can creative writing be nurtured through reading skills improvement?

Reading is a life-long skill actualized through 5 steps:

1. Obtaining knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Continuity,
4. Critical reading
5. Creative reading

(Uzun, 2009, as cited in Baki, 2020, p.200)

By interacting with the knowledge read, new knowledge is created ~

Creative reading is a high-level reading skill and the "re-construction of a text through interpreting it based on individual experiences and imagination" (Sever, 2010, as cited in Baki, 2020, p.200).

The main aim of creative reading is to produce "extraordinary, unique and creative ideas by using the writer's ideas" (Smith, 1965, as cited in Baki, 2020, p.200)

Baki's study on how critical reading affects creative reading positively

Baki's study on 5th graders reflects an interrelation between **critical reading** and **creative reading**:

“critical reading and **evaluation skills of creative reading** are interrelated variables and that the development of critical reading skills is required for the development of creative reading skills.” (214)

Creative reading can be estimated based on 3 components:

1. divergent thinking
2. communication with the author and characters
3. **reconstruction** of the text

“Creative Reading” leads to “Creative Writing”

Reading and Writing are inseparable.

“There is a positive two-way relation between reading and creativity. Individuals with high creativity skills are more successful in the reading process, and individuals with developed reading skills are more creative” (as cited in Baki, 2020, p.203).

Training students’ evaluation skills in creative reading can boost their creative writing skills.

The reconstruction of knowledge in creative reading ~ the representation of ideas in creative writing

Flash Fiction as a preliminary choice to lead students into creative reading

5 mins task

"For sale: baby shoes, never worn."

(attributed to Ernest Hemingway)

Flash Fiction as a preliminary choice to lead students into creative reading

5 mins task

“Cosmic Report Card: Earth. F”

by Forrest J. Ackerman , June 1973 issue, SF magazine Vertex



twist

Come up with your own flash fiction

8 mins task

Use a picture as a prompt, write a flash fiction in no more than 10 words. Make sure that your fiction should show a certain story, character(s), and possibly a “twist”.

The benefits of using flash fiction

- Flash fiction ~ **flash cards**
- Short fictional work that still encapsulates a plotline and the characters
- Instead of flashing key words to students to inspire their creativity, flashing short fictional work at students uses creativity to inspire even more creativity
- “Twist” ⇒ Guided creativity ~ reach the moment of “the awakening”
- Does not have a strict model answer, the backstory / explanation is open to interpretation ~ fun and interactive
- A good message to introduce to student, who are always insecure about their creative work ~ you don’t need to write long or use difficult words to be a good writer

Some creative reading tasks

Critical-creative literacy activities:

1. Problem-solving-based assessments (Priyatni & Martutik, 2020)
2. Translation of poetry and response poetry (Archer & Kelen, 2014)

Priyatni & Martutik's suggestions

Problem-solving-based assessments

⇒ Train higher order thinking (which cannot be assessed through MC questions)

- (a) finding the problem and the root of the problem
- (b) planning and executing at least three alternative solutions, and
- (c) expressing the best solution in the form of creative texts.

(2020, p.3-4)

Priyatni & Martutik's suggestions

Table I. The Main Features of the Critical–Creative Reading Assessment Based on Problem Solving.

Main features	Test model
Test objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to find problems• Ability to find the root of the problem• Ability to design at least three alternative problem-solving solutions• Ability to determine the best solution for reasons• Ability to arrange text framework• Ability to develop a text framework into creative writing text
Test form	Essay story problem solving
Number of items	Six items of complete overall ability test
Time allocation	120 min
Source of stimulus	News texts
Content of stimulus	Social problem
Complexity	Simple problems
Writing style	Narrative
Length of the text	450–600 words

Table 2. Scoring Guidelines of the Critical–Creative Reading Assessment Based on Problem Solving.

Aspect/score	Finding problems	Finding the root of the problems	Designing three solutions	Deciding the best solution	Designing text framework	Creating full text
4	Focusing on one problem contained in the scenario	Having a clear root problem as shown using a diagram	Consisting of three actions that match the problem, all of which differ significantly	Explaining one best solution accompanied with reasons	Creating a framework of a text-based on the content structure of the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing four/five complete paragraphs containing <i>details of original ideas, suitable, and valuable</i> to solve problems • Using a complex sentence structure with an effective grammatical structure • Using appropriate and varying vocabulary and conjunction • Having no, or only has one or two, spelling error <p>Note: Original ideas are new or fresh ideas that do not resemble the existing ideas. Original ideas can be a combination of some ideas obtained from reading activity and reactions toward what is being read</p>
3	Focusing on one problem contained in the scenario	Having unclear root problem	Consisting of three actions that match the problem, but the actions are not significantly different	Explaining one best solution but not accompanied by reasons, or the reasons are illogical	Creating a framework of a text-based on the content structure of the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing four/five complete paragraphs containing details of original ideas to solve problems, but there are parts of the paragraph that is insignificant to solve the problems • Using simple/complex sentence structure, but there are some ineffective grammatical structure • Using appropriate vocabulary and conjunction, but with less variant • Having three to five spelling errors
2.	Focusing on one problem contained in the scenario	Having unclear root problem	Consisting of less than three actions that match the problem, but the actions are not significantly different	Offering solution without reasons or the reasons are illogical	Having a framework with an unclear organization/content of ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing less than four complete paragraphs with unclear idea organization/content structure • Using simple sentence structure with an ineffective grammatical structure • Having less variant on the vocabulary and conjunction used • There are five to 10 spelling errors
1	Containing problems, but it is mismatched with the given scenario	Having unclear root problem	Containing actions unsuited to the problems	Giving ill-fitted solutions to the problems	Having a framework with unclear idea and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing one to two complete paragraphs with unclear idea organization/content structure • Using simple sentence structure with an ineffective grammatical structure • Having less variant on the vocabulary and conjunction used • Having more than 10 spelling errors

Archer & Kelen: Poetry project

Translation of poetry and response poetry

Translation task:

⇒ interpreting the meaning of the language in poetry

⇒ creating new texts with pre-existing materials

⇒ new language = new meaning (~ note that literal translation will not be appropriate.

⇒ free translation offers a “renewal” of “the spirit of poetry”.

(Archer & Kelen, 2014, p.181)

**Sample reading
materials for creative
reading**

Sample Creative Reading Tasks

The Promotion by James Tate, 2002

The Locked Room Mystery by Jasper Fforde, 2007

The Elephants on Neptune by Mike Resnick

The Promotion by James Tate, 2002

Creative Reading:

- Who was promoted?
- How was the promotion?
- What does “promotion” mean?

Furthermore,

- The poem is titled “The Promotion” instead of “My Promotion”, why?
- Referring to the animals including humans in the poem, what do the relations suggest?
- Referring to the last two lines “The human wolves don’t even see me. They fear me not.”, why did the persona describe humans as “human wolves”?

Creative writing exercise:

Tate wrote “The Promotion” using a POV of a sheepdog who reincarnated as a human.

Imagine if you were a dog in your past life, consider the questions below:

1. What species would you have been? What would you have looked like?
2. Were you a work dog or a pet dog? What would’ve been your lifestyle?
3. What would your relationship with humans have been?
4. What animals would’ve been your rivals? (e.g., cats, vacuum cleaners, wolves, burglars etc.)
5. Write a short paragraph // passage from this POV.

The Locked Room Mystery mystery by Jasper Fforde, 2007

(The answer should not be revealed to the students until the writing exercise is collected)

Creative Reading:

Before you read, scan through the text and highlight all italicised words.

While reading,

- Who are the characters? List them out while you read.
- Why are the characters' names important in a detective story?

Furthermore,

- Fforde mentioned "Identical Twins plot device" and "Locked Room killed inside a locked room [...] tired old plot device", what is the function of these devices to a detective story?
- What is Fforde's stance about using these devices and elements in detective stories?

Creative writing exercise:

You are one of the characters in the story, write a short paragraph to defend yourself.

Cryptic Final Message discovered a cryptic final message in the waste-paper basket that writes "intimate nectar". Inspector Mary thought it could be an anagram but Inspector Spratt thought it must mean something else. Imagine if you are another inspector working on this case, what do you think the message means?

The Elephants on Neptune by Mike Resnick

Creative Reading:

Before you read, consider these questions:

1. Do you believe in aliens? UFOs? Other creatures living in space apart from Earth? How different or similar do you think they would be to humans?
2. What is the relation between humans and animals on earth? Do you find it normal or problematic?

While reading,

- "By the time they had all emerged, there were almost as many men as elephants [...] We claim this planet in the name of the United Federation of Earth" (p.152) How do these lines make you feel?
- Why did the elephants call themselves the Jews of the animal kingdom?
- How have elephants been used throughout history?

After reading,

"Neptune encourages metamorphosis. [...] Neptune had somehow imparted to them [the elephants] the ability to evolve at will, though they had been careful not to abuse this gift."

Why did Resnick write the metamorphosis of elephants and men in a way that they became reversed?

Refer to Neptune's opinion on the last page, do you think it is referring to the old elephants or the new elephants?

Creative writing:

Would you rather be humans or elephants? Explain.

Part III.

Process writing and peer evaluation

- Designing appropriate guiding questions that stimulate creativity
- How to conduct an enjoyable and effective peer evaluation
- Lesson design and analysis
- Sample tasks and worksheets

Giftedness and innate creativity

Creativity refers generally to the ability to come up with novel and useful ideas or ways of doing things.

(a) domain relevant skills and knowledge

(b) task motivation

(c) creativity-relevant processes

(Harper, 2010)

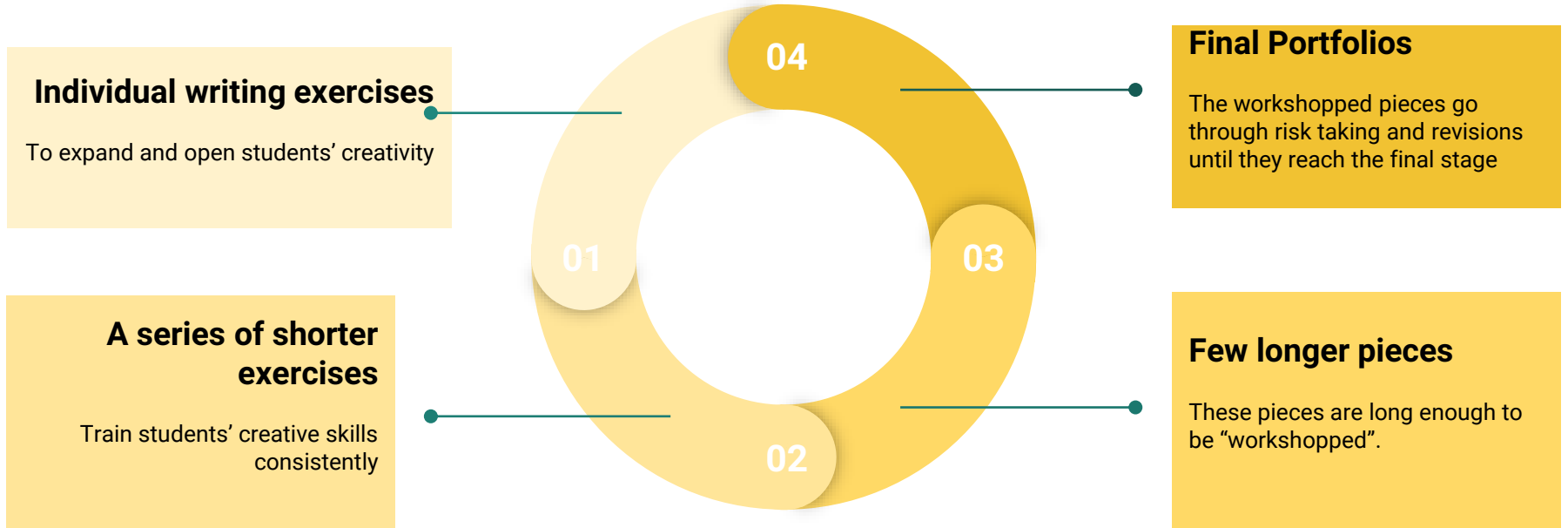
As teachers, we can train gifted students' creative writing skills by letting them practise diverse **“problem-solving”** tasks

~ asking the “WWYD” questions

E.g., The little mermaid was facing a life-and-death choice-making problem, what's the best way to solve it? What's makes the best ending for the story? Who gets the happy end? Who needs to sacrifice and why?

Procedures to train students' writing skills

In Vanderslice's 2011 book *Rethinking Creative Writing in Higher Education*, she cites that undergraduates students should go through **the four steps of creative writing** (31):



Procedures to train students' writing skills

Education of gifted students must focus on enrichment and acceleration.

Enrichment - “a set of programming options that extend and supplement the regular curriculum and often include topics that are not typically covered in the curriculum”

Acceleration - to “allow students earlier access to courses and content than their same-aged peers”

(Subotnik & Worrel, 2011)

Procedures to train students' writing skills

Vanderslice's (2011) teaching experience suggests that

1. Grading **students' written responses** to the work of other students **is more important** than grading their submission of creative writing.
"I do not grade their creative work, although I always respond to it in detail", this encourages "grade-anxious" students to explore their own creative writing ability (31)
1. Curriculum should give a combination of **craft driven** (good writing = good writing = good writing) and **real-world based experience**.
Hands-on real-world creative writing situations may include *"editing and publishing online and print magazines, freelance writing and connecting with the local, regional and national arts communities" (31)*

"You cannot be a poet unless you have first read a poem" -- Anthony Hecht

Creative writing skills can be practised effectively through workshops.

How should they be conducted in a classroom?

Workshops

Brophy (2009) gives suggestions on the modes of literary workshops under the section “Workshopping the workshop”.

Workshops start with “**denial**”, which “begins and justifies the process of the workshop; and the writing workshop in these times signals to students that they are part of a creative-writing class.”

He defines the workshop as “a live event, dominated by **spontaneous responses, group dynamics, all the naturalness and excitement of live reactions** to a piece of writing”

Brophy's workshop suggestions

The most effective workshops are frequent and vary in the way students receive feedbacks.

1. Whole class
2. Whole class (pairs or small groups within the class)
3. Internet forum
4. Groups of students can be encouraged to form their own peer workshopping outside the subject
5. Invite students to discuss their work / WIPs without showing it
6. Public reading, where the writer hears his/her work read aloud

In a creative writing classroom

Students learn from peers through in-class workshops.

A typical workshop:

// The circulation of work should be conducted outside class;

⇒

Then, the students read and comment on the draft at home;

⇒

The students' work is discussed in groups in class;

⇒

During which, the author is asked not to speak;

⇒

After the workshop, students return their marked copies to further guide the writer's revisions.

//

(Bishop & Starkey, 2006)

Writing group

Within a workshop, **writing groups** where writers discuss each other's work is an effective way for students to learn from successful interactions.

A few points to note:

- Ask appropriate questions as well as answer them
- Contribute and respond, but do not dominate the discussion
- Help the group reach agreement
- Recognize the significance of nonverbal communication
- Draw the group back to the topic
- Check perceptions about and clarify the meanings of statements and ideas
- Seek people's opinions, especially those who have not been talking

(Bishop & Starkey, 2006)

Benefits of writing groups

⇒ provide stimulation and critical commentary

⇒ offer a means for individuals, both in and outside of school, to enter literate communities

(Bishop & Starkey, 2006)

Teachers' role in guiding creative writing

Leahy (2005, p.14-15) resists the role of teacher as mere stamp of approval. **The teacher should offer:**

- Praise (makes students want to write more)
- Criticism (makes students want to write better)
- Guidance (makes students want to write better)
- In class discussion
- Written comments
- One-on-one tutorial conferences

Teachers' role in guiding creative writing

Teachers should give **useful comments**.

X discussion of feeling (e.g., 'This is good because readers can read it any way they want to'; 'I can relate to that')

X discussion of language

Give constructive comments to address any problem on the writing itself from a writer's POV, as if you are speaking from writer to writer.

E.g., Cliché, ambiguity or confusing meanings

Most importantly, treat everyone's work as unfinished, always

(Leahy, 2005, p.14-15)

Trial-mark activity for teachers

“Snow White, Prince and Magic Mirror”

You will be asked to download [this edited excerpt](#) to your own device to give comments on. Before that, here's my demonstration on the first paragraph.

On a snowy day, a queen sewed clothes for her child by the ebony window. She accidentally stabbed her fingers, and hurriedly hung her injured fingers out of the window for fear of getting the clothes that were about to be finished. Looking at the three drops of blood dripping from her fingers on the snow, the Queen thought, I hope my child's complexion is as white as snow, his lips are as red as blood, and his hair is as black as ebony! A few months later, the queen gave birth to a girl. As expected, she named her "White Snow". The queen who gave birth to a child was so weak that she passed away not long after, while the king who was often outside had no time to take care of the child and deal with trivial matters in the palace, and seamlessly integrated the new queen.

The new queen brought a talking mirror when she married. She has few friends and is narcissistic. She regards the mirror as her best friend, and the dialogue with the mirror usually does not exceed:

"Mirror, mirror, who is the most beautiful in the world?"

"Queen, you are the most beautiful in the world!"

My demonstration


“Snow White, Prince and Magic Mirror”


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"Mirror, mirror, who is the most beautiful in the world?"



 Sophina CHU (ENG) 12:58 AM Feb 4 ✓
/h/ difficult to read

 Sophina CHU (ENG) 12:58 AM Feb 4 ✓
/d/ - difficult to read

 Sophina CHU (ENG) 1:13 AM Feb 4 ✓
this is interesting because it explains how a responsible father's presence may change the whole story around. If you can elaborate on this more in the later part of the story, the message will be clear

 Sophina CHU (ENG) 1:15 AM Feb 4 ✓
this is the first time you introduce the mirror, "talking" is not a good description because it's very neutral, it does not paint a mental picture of how it looks like
try other adjectives too, antique? broken? polished?
[Show less](#)

“Do”s and “Don’t”s

“Do”s

- ✓ give writer-to-writer advice
- ✓ address clichés, ambiguity or confusion
- ✓ give constructive suggestions on rewriting words, sentences or paragraphs

“Don’t”s

- X discussion of feeling
- X discussion of language mistakes (unless it hinders the understanding)

Teachers' role in guiding creative writing

Create writing assignments that require both **imagination** and **skill** in shaping ideas.

The writing task should be analytical and imaginative, where students commit to “process writing” instead of seeing their work as simply an end-product.

E.g., Appropriate use of point of view for fiction writing

(Leahy, 2005, p.39)

**Sample
worksheets and
activities for
process writing**

Scene-writing practice

Please see attachment

Process Writing

Yzur by Leopoldo Lugones

1. Brainstorm, think about the differences between a chimpanzee and a human? (hint: how do you communicate with animals?)
2. Watch a clip of chimpanzees, what do you think they are saying? Is there a system? How does it sound? Does it sound like other sounds you've heard of before? Is there any grammar? Who else can understand? Any gestures needed in this language?
3. It was Yzur's owner's conclusion that Yzur refused to speak with him in human language. Imagine that you were Yzur. Write a letter as your last will to respond to your owner. (hint: be creative with the word choice, sentence pattern, even your handwriting)

For gifted/ more able students

The following tasks are even more **analytical, critical and comparative** in nature. They're meant to

- **invoke** the students' reflections based on their own experiences,
- guide their **interpretations** during the creative reading process
- train their **critical thinking** skills when **rewriting** the piece from a character's perspective // when expressing their own thoughts using the same **writing techniques** // **elaborating what hasn't been written** in the authors' words

Writing Exercise

“The Things They Carried” by Tim O’Brien

1. You can tell a lot about a person from his or her appearance. You read how the characters are represented from “The Things They Carried”. Pick one and explain how you interpret him/her from the thing(s) s/he carried.
2. Take a picture of anyone on the street. Interpret his/her personality, life, beliefs, favourite food, habits, voice, hobbies, interests etc. by referring to the thing(s) s/he carried.

Checklist

Character:

Carried:

The way s/he carried:

What s/he did to the things s/he carried:

Indication:

Sample

Character: Silvia, a nurse at a care house

Carried: a red bracelet with little bells that jingled when she busied herself at work

The way s/he carried: the bracelet is worn out so she kept tightening the knot to make sure that it did not fall off

What s/he did to the things s/he carried:

She would whisper to the bells whenever someone she took care of passed away, others thought she was creepy but she was only praying and chanting sad melody in hopes that her patients went to heaven

Indication:

She's religious and mysterious. She cared about her patients a lot, she had seen so many people she cared for passed away. Whispering to the bracelet kept her mind sane.

COMPARATIVE TASKS

My Life with the Wave by Catherine Cowan and Mark Buehner (based on the story by Octavio Paz) AND

“I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud” by William Wordsworth

How do you see nature?

The boy in *My Life with the Wave* imagined that the cloud will be more gentle. “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” gives another POV.

Write a poem using the Wave’s POV.

COMPARATIVE TASKS

A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 1968

- Compare how different characters use / consume the very old man with enormous wings.
- What if the very old man with enormous wings appeared in your neighbourhood one day, how will you treat him? Either pick a POV from the characters or use your own POV as a young student.

Further readings for teachers on Magical Realism

"The History of Magical Realism in Literature" in Gale Study Guides to Great Literature: Literary Topics, p.1-16

Another magical realism story of Marquez:
The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World

The teacher can use the genre of magical realism and encourage students to write stories based on alternative universes that are magically real // really magical.

COMPARATIVE TASKS

The Snow Queen by Hans Christian Andersen and Disney's Frozen

The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen and Disney's The Little Mermaid

Expected focus:

- Identify the trends in Disney's adaptation
- Both Elsa and Ariel eventually became queen by inheritance and marriage. Does it make any difference?

Peer Review Form

Instructions

You are paired up with the partner next to you.

The purpose of this feedback sheet is to give you opportunities to learn from one another and to think more critically about your own work through the evaluation of your classmates' work.

Guidelines for offering feedback

- ✧ **Be honest but polite.** Make sure that you address major issues with your partner's writing by giving honest, polite and constructive feedback.
- ✧ **Highlight and ask useful questions.** Your job as a reviewer is not to proofread or fix the writings, but rather to help your classmate understand how the writing affects readers. Given this approach, you may underline or highlight the parts that you do not understand so that you can address it to your partner afterwards.
- ✧ **Respect each other and beware of taking over.** The draft that you submitted for peer review is just a WIP (work-in-progress). Be a silent listener while listening to your partner's feedback, you should do the same as well. Make sure that your discussion helps each other improve.

Objectives of this peer review form:

- Train the students to **not focus on language too much**, which would hinder their creative writing process
- Like a writing group, let students have **writer-to-writer discussion** to see which part works and which part doesn't
- Understand that **no one's work is complete**, a creative work is meant to be rewritten over and over again, it's a process (WIP)

Peer Review Feedback Form

Reviewer's name: _____

Writer's name: _____

Reviewer: What comments do you have that will help the writer compose a better next draft? Read through the draft once and answer below.

Content and Organization

To test your understanding of your partner's work, summarise the creative writing in 50 words.

What is the main message of the writing? Indicate it on the paper and explain.

The form is divided into sections of:

- **Content and Organisation**

By trying to **summarise** the reviewed piece, the reviewer can see if the draft convey the message clearly

If the **main message** is unclear, the writer will need to rewrite and re-organise the whole piece

- **Language and Style**
- **Other Suggestions**

What is the best or most interesting point the author has made? Why? Suggestions:

Any part made you feel confused? Highlight it and make suggestions:

The first and last sentences of creative writing are always important.

Do you see any significance in how they are written? If not, give suggestions on improving the structure.

- **Content and Organisation**

Asking the reviewer to identify **particular parts of liking and confusion** helps the writer understand what speaks to the reader and what doesn't

Letting the reviewer read the **first and last few sentences** again allow the writer to also see if the whole piece is encapsulated well, and **if the organisation is well-planned.**

- **Language and Style**

- **Other Suggestions**

Language and Style

Look at the word choice, any problems like repetition and/or misused words that would impede your understanding?

Do you see any problems with grammar, punctuation, spelling, or any other writing conventions?

What tense was it written in? Is it accurate?

Who is the narrator, is the tone appropriate? Does it fit the story?

Other Suggestions

What other suggestions do you have for revision?

- **Content and Organisation**

- **Language and Style**

The aim of this section is not to help the writer proofread as it is the writer's responsibility to make sure that the language is accurate.

The main focus here is to see any confusion in word choice, tone and voice of the character.

Sometimes the word choice or repetition hinders the readers' understanding, this section helps indicate the area of improvement

- **Other Suggestions**

Other general comments, the reviewer may leave some supportive comments to cheer the writer up too, or write about any personal taste in suggesting how the piece may be rewritten

Part IV.

Sample activities/ projects that could be adapted to the secondary level

- Creative writing workshops
- Creative writing competitions
- Project-based English ambassadors
- Author-specific creative writing projects
- Video essay and prose reading
- Powtoon projects

Sharing: Creative writing competitions

From and To Graphic Novel Workshops (I) - (V)

1. Settings
2. Characters
3. Rewriting
4. From graphic to graphic novel (i)
5. From graphic to graphic novel (ii)

From and To Graphic Novel Workshops (I)

1. Settings

Step 1 - Introduction - difference between comic books and graphic novels

Step 2 - The function of graphic novels - to discuss taboos and difficult topics such as abuse and depression

Step 3 - show pictures from graphic novels and inspire students about what underlying issues are discussed

When you join the competition, you need to pick an image.

Based on the image, you should interpret the message behind and build your own story. Use the following steps:

1. Identify the setting;
2. Think about what's special about the setting, how different it is from the ordinary world?
3. Knowing the uniqueness of the setting, borrow the character (if any) from the image and write what happens next.

From and To Graphic Novel Workshops (II)

2. Characters

Step 1: introduce the definition of “fiction” and “character” in “fictional character”

Step 2: show an image that shows the physical appearance of a character and ask students to guess how s/he is like., then even more image / videos to show the backstory of the character, and ask the students the same questions again ⇒

Step 3

Step 3: tell students that a good character should be round and a good writer should have all backstory information in mind even if not all are written in the story

Step 4: Show a video of how to make a good character

Step 5: Show images of different monsters that represent different fear (fear is often one-sided, so students can write the backstory of these characters)

Step 6: Let students draw their monster with annotations, then present the monster orally in class

Fictional character

Basic requirements

- Multi-dimensional
- Relationships
- Round

A. DRIVE

Establish a character's motivations and goals.

E.g., Harry Potter's quest to defeat Lord Voldemort, fueled by his parents' murders.

Great characters are driven by a deep-seated motivation and have a goal they are trying to reach. This creates interesting characters and also creates a story arc.

The main character's **driving force** should be one of the first story elements you figure out, since the subsequent action will be driven by this motivation.

2. VOICE

Choose a voice.

Who will be telling the story?

First person point of view allows a character, usually the main character, to narrate the story using the pronouns “I” and “me.”

Third person point of view is a voice that is outside of the action. The perspective of the narrator will determine how a character’s information is revealed over the course of the story.

3. SECRET

Do a slow reveal.

Refrain from revealing too much the first time you introduce a character.

Reveal information bit by bit as you tell the story—not unlike the way people get to know one another in real life.

4. VERSUS

Create conflict.

Conflict is a literary device that pits opposing forces against one another, most often involving the main character. Conflict creates **tension** and is used to move a story forward by forcing characters to make decisions.

STRONG VS WEAK - if you have **strong** characters, test their resolve by putting them against something that reveals their **weaknesses**.

GOOD VS BAD - A conflict can be external—create a **bad** guy to go up against a **good** character.

5. HISTORY

Give important characters a backstory.

We all have a backstory, and your fictional characters each need one, too.

Dig into your characters' lives and flesh out their histories.

Even if most of it won't make it onto the page, a character's backstory will **help you figure out what makes them tick and will inform their decisions in the story.**

6. PERSONALITY

Describe a character's personality in familiar terms.

To create believable characters, create a personality for your main and secondary characters **based on characteristics of real people** — that will help you create a multi-dimensional, round character with recognisable personality traits and quirks.

7. IMAGE

Paint a physical picture of your characters.

Describe your character's **physical appearance**: hair color, eyes, stature.

What are their mannerisms?

What is their **body language** like?

Describe them to help readers envision a more realistic image of your character.

8. SIDE

Develop secondary characters.

Create different types of characters that contrast with one another. A **sidekick** (think Watson to Sherlock Holmes) or a **foil** (Draco Malfoy in the Harry Potter books) can illuminate the main character's traits, strengths, or flaws.

If you create a static character—a flat character arc that does not evolve much—contrast them with a dynamic character, one who undergoes a metamorphosis throughout the story

From and To Graphic Novel Workshops (III)

3. Rewriting

Step 1: introduce to the student the definition of “rewriting” stories

Step 2: show examples of successful rewritten work

Step 3: show interesting examples of non-traditional rewritten work

Step 4: ask students to identify the “moment” that triggers their emotional feelings

Step 5: choose a meme to write the “moment”

Redo

Recycle

Reuse

Reproduce

**Are all the “re-” parts in
these words the same?**

Re-writing

What does the “re-” stand for?

Re =

- Repeat
- A more accurate definition:

“Again”

But in the process of writing the story “again”, you keep certain elements and change the representation of these certain elements too.

Rewrite

representation

re-presentation

The major elements to make a great story:

- Theme
- Setting
- Character
- Conflict
- Plot

However, a great story does NOT have to include ALL of them in the story, they can be included in the brainstorming process but also left out for the readers' realisation while understanding the story.

In a previous workshop (making of characters), creating a backstory can help you write a creative story.

Here you will read a rewritten backstory of this meme.

From and To Graphic Novel Workshops (IV)

4 From graphic to graphic novel (i)

From and To Graphic Novel Workshops (V)

5. From graphic to graphic novel (ii) (workshop, peer review)

Video essay and prose reading

Powtoon projects

Worksheet, guidelines, storyboard

How to use:

<https://elearning.hsu.edu.hk/support/>

Main functions:

Template / themes, choose and edit the characters, adjust the animation of the characters, add objects, add music and add voiceover (for the entire video and individual character), publish to Youtube (unlisted), enter text with/without effects etc.

Possible ways to “rewrite” fairy tales

Changing the **text type**

E.g., Interview with the princess

E.g., entertainment news article on the behind-the-scenes of the actors and actresses

E.g., Youtuber etc.

^ inspiration:

Anne Frank as a youtuber

Changing the **setting**

E.g., Snow White in the 21st century

E.g., The Little Mermaid in Asia etc.

Changing the **ending**

E.g., Happy end → sad end;

E.g., happy end for the villains etc.

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