

The Writer's Craft, Grade 12

University Preparation

EWC4U

This course emphasizes knowledge and skills related to the craft of writing. Students will analyse models of effective writing; use a workshop approach to produce a range of works; identify and use techniques required for specialized forms of writing; and identify effective ways to improve the quality of their writing. They will also complete a major paper as part of a creative or analytical independent study project and investigate opportunities for publication and for writing careers.

Prerequisite: English, Grade 11, University Preparation

Strands

The expectations in this course are organized into the following strands:

- A. Investigating Writing
- B. Practising Writing
- C. Reflecting On Writing

A. INVESTIGATING WRITING

OVERALL EXPECTATION

By the end of this course, students will:

1. **Writing, Writers, and the Writing Life:** demonstrate an understanding of writing as an art, a craft, and a career as they explore the work of a variety of Canadian and international writers.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

1. Writing, Writers, and the Writing Life

By the end of this course, students will:

Writing Models

- 1.1 read a range of teacher- and self-selected models of effective writing to become familiar with the art, craft, and world of writing (e.g., read a variety of narrative texts that reflect diverse cultural and geographical perspectives, including work by Aboriginal authors; read work by beginning and local authors published in quarterlies and small publications; read a variety of online writing by both professional and amateur writers)

Teacher prompts: “Which of the pieces in this quarterly seem most ready for a wider audience? Why? Which, in your opinion, are not appropriate for a wider audience? Why?” “What types of writers and audiences are served by this publication?”

The Art and Craft of Writing

- 1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the art and craft of writing after examining interviews with and articles by writers about their writing practices, processes, and beliefs (e.g., compare the ideas about writing and the writing process described by two authors in two different articles; describe a new understanding of the writer’s craft that they acquired by attending a public reading of an author’s work; research recent works on freedom of expression and the importance of global communities of writers by writers affiliated with international organizations such as PEN or Amnesty International)

Teacher prompts: “If you were interviewing this writer, what questions would you want to ask about the process involved in writing this piece?” “What role have writers played

in countries where freedom of expression is controlled or denied?” “What do the writers you have researched have to say about the importance of a writing community?” “Role-play a writer you have been studying who is being interviewed on the creative challenges of writing poetry.” “What did you notice about this work when you heard the writer read it aloud that you hadn’t noticed before?”

Elements of Form

- 1.3 analyse and assess the effectiveness of the ways in which writers use elements of form (e.g., verse structure in poetry; stage directions in drama; character, setting, and point of view in fiction; headings and sidebars in magazine articles; charts and graphs in textbooks; colour, images, and fonts in advertisements) to communicate meaning (e.g., identify the stanzaic pattern used in a poem, and suggest reasons why the poet chose to use it; examine and assess the effectiveness of the persuasive interplay between fact and opinion in two reviews of a popular film; explain how the authors of a fictional narrative and a personal essay on the same theme have used the different forms to convey their similar messages, and assess which one is more effective; explain how character development is used to propel the plot of a narrative text; explain how headings and sidebars are used in magazine articles to highlight key points; explain how charts and graphs are used in textbooks to summarize and explain key ideas; explain how an author uses local colour to develop setting)

Teacher prompts: “How does the point of view in the story affect the reliability of the narrator?” “How does the writer use cause and effect to make his claim more persuasive?” “How do the stage directions provided in this play offer insight into the characters and

theme?" "How are colour, images, and fonts used in advertisements to emphasize the message?" "What choices about setting do you see this writer making that you would like to try in your own writing?"

Elements of Style

- 1.4** analyse and assess the effectiveness of the ways in which writers use elements of style (*e.g., diction, voice, tone, literary and/or rhetorical devices, sentence structure*) to communicate meaning (*e.g., explain how the imagery used by a writer strengthens the theme of his or her work; analyse the content of and the style used by journalists in a selection of national, local, and community newspapers; analyse and assess the effectiveness of the way tone is established in both the introduction to a novel narrated in the first person and the opening monologue of a play*)

Teacher prompts: "Which of the words chosen by the writer to create the mood at the beginning of the story do you find particularly effective?" "What is particularly effective about the writer's use of repetition in this poem?" "What is the impact of this short sentence, after several longer, complex sentences?" "How does the writer's use of imagery specific to that region affect the reader's sense of the setting?" "What effect does the writer achieve by varying and inverting sentence structure in the introduction to the story?" "What effect has the playwright achieved by minimizing the dialogue and focusing on silence?" "What words were particularly effective in creating mood in the poem?" "How did the author of this story achieve a humorous tone?" "What can you learn from this writer's use of varied sentence structure that you can apply in your own work?" "How did the poet sustain the metaphor?"

The Writer's Perspective

- 1.5** explain various ways in which works by selected writers from Canada and around the world are influenced by the writers' personal experiences, beliefs, and socio-cultural contexts (*e.g., explain how the social and/or political situation in a country affects the work of a writer from that country; compare a fictional depiction of the immigrant experience in the work of a writer to the writer's own background and experiences; identify specific themes in the work of a writer, and suggest reasons, based on evidence from the writer's life, why these themes recur*)

Teacher prompts: "Did the work of this Aboriginal writer give you a new perspective on Canada's cultural landscape?" "Give some examples of how bias and censorship in national reporting reflect society's values, a government's agenda, or a cultural stance." "Does this non-Canadian [*e.g., American, Chinese*] writer's representation of Canadian history in this work of fiction differ from the way a Canadian writer might represent it?"

The Writing Profession

- 1.6** research a variety of opportunities and/or careers in writing-related fields, and identify the skills needed to pursue them (*e.g., evaluate the information provided on several websites devoted to becoming a successful writer; research and determine the qualifications needed for admittance to both postsecondary and community writing programs; research the submission requirements of local publications and literary magazines; interview a professional writer for local media about the education and/or experience required to reach his or her current position*)

Teacher prompts: "What steps should an aspiring young writer take to get his or her poetry published in Canada?" "How does one get started as a freelance journalist?" "What kinds of writing assignments are offered to freelance writers?" "What are the typical assignments given to a beginning journalist?" "What educational and/or other qualifications are required for this type of work?"

B. PRACTISING WRITING

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

By the end of this course, students will:

- 1. Exploring Ideas, Forms, and Styles:** generate and experiment with ideas about writing content, forms, and styles;
- 2. Drafting and Revising:** organize, draft, and revise their writing, employing forms and stylistic elements appropriate for their purpose and audience;
- 3. Editing, Proofreading, and Publishing:** use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies to refine and polish their work;
- 4. Collaborative Writing:** collaborate in the writing process with peers by generating ideas, responding to peers' work, and assessing peers' work in a workshop setting.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

1. Exploring Ideas, Forms, and Styles

By the end of this course, students will:

Generating Ideas

- 1.1** generate and explore ideas for potential writing projects independently through reflection, reading, listening, viewing, and research (e.g., maintain a writer's notebook to record ideas and insights that could be used in writing projects; generate experimental drafts based on models presented by the teacher; use rapid writing to initiate their thinking about a writing topic; research a topic of interest for an information piece; research a controversial Aboriginal issue for an editorial; listen to radio or television panel discussions, talk shows, or interviews on an issue of their choice to find an angle to explore in writing)

Teacher prompts: "What have you read recently that was interesting or unusual and that has given you an idea to use in writing a personal essay?" "Given this particular scenario, what are some of the possible ways you could develop it?"

Experimenting With Forms and Styles

- 1.2** use text forms and stylistic elements in experimental ways to develop an effective personal writing style (e.g., collect and record examples of rhetorical devices and figurative language that they can draw on for writing projects; convert the content of a personal essay into a poem;

transform research on a historical event into a narrative poem; build a paragraph around a comment recorded in their personal journal; introduce a story through the words of an unreliable narrator; create several different introductions for a short story; combine literary, graphical, and informational texts to establish setting; use dialect to reveal character in a monologue; create a found poem from a newspaper article)

Teacher prompts: "What information would you exclude from a newspaper article in order to recast it as a poem?" "How could you alter the dialogue in a script to communicate the dramatic conflict between the characters more effectively?" "How could you adapt the media technique of jolting the audience in your short story?" "Choose a comment from your journal as your starting point, and just keep writing. If you hit a roadblock, choose another comment and continue." "Would the poem you're planning to write be more effective as a free verse poem? Why?" "Do you prefer to write poetry or prose? Opinion pieces or expository text? Can you explain why?"

2. Drafting and Revising

By the end of this course, students will:

Drafting: Focus on Content

- 2.1** select and organize ideas and information to draft texts appropriate for the purpose and

audience (e.g., use a piece of experimental writing from their writer's notebook to develop a character in a short story; use a series of entries in a personal journal as starting points for drafting a memoir; determine the most effective way to organize paragraphs in writing a review of a book, movie, or CD for a student audience; draft a text that tells the "story" implied by a piece or pieces of visual art; effectively incorporate expert opinions into a piece of journalism)

Teacher prompts: "How could you use observations of people that you recorded in your writer's notebook to develop one of the characters in your short story?" "What material or ideas in your writer's notebook could you use to develop an interesting dialogue or script?" "Which of the ideas and pieces of information you have gathered would make the most effective opening and the most effective closing for your review?"

Drafting: Focus on Style

2.2 use appropriate text forms and stylistic elements to communicate ideas and experiences effectively in their writing (e.g., use an interior-monologue or stream-of-consciousness style to reveal character; convey authority in writing a critical review; use dialogue to reveal the distinctive personality traits of two characters; use unconventional grammar for effect in a rap; use colourful expressions and unusual diction to evoke a particular region in a piece of dialogue; use sentence fragments where they might be appropriate to both the content and style of a piece of writing, and effective for the purpose)

Teacher prompts: "What tone of voice would suit the narrator of your essay?" "How could you alter the dialogue to make these two contemporary teenage characters more believable?" "Keep in mind, when you are developing a character or a tone, that every word you choose must suit your purpose. Initially, fill in words to 'make do', but return to that spot later and persist until you find the most effective word to use." "How could you use dialect or non-standard English to convey character without stereotyping or demeaning the character?"

Revising

2.3 revise drafts by reviewing and refining content, form, and stylistic elements to produce clear, coherent, and effective written work (e.g., review their work to determine if varying the type and length of the sentences would better achieve their purpose, and make changes where appropriate; review a personal essay to determine

whether using or changing transitional words and phrases would make it more cohesive, and make changes where necessary; review their use of the active and passive voice in a short story to ensure that it is appropriate, and make changes where needed to make the story more effective; review the conclusion of an essay and make revisions to achieve the effect intended; review the feedback and assessments provided by the teacher and their peers, and incorporate suggestions where appropriate)

Teacher prompts: "Would compressing the ideas or imagery in your poem strengthen its impact?" "Is the way you have organized your essay the most appropriate way to convey your thesis?" "Where could you incorporate more specific descriptive details to strengthen readers' impression of the setting of your story?" "How could you change the dialogue to help readers form a stronger impression of these two characters?" "Do you think the assessment you received from the group is valuable? Have they understood or misunderstood your intentions?" "Which of the suggestions offered by your peers in the workshop session have you decided to use in your revision?"

3. Editing, Proofreading, and Publishing

By the end of this course, students will:

Editing and Proofreading

3.1 edit and proofread their written work, applying the conventions of spelling, usage, punctuation, and grammar appropriately and effectively (e.g., read their work to a partner to help identify errors they may have made in punctuation and subject-verb agreement; use electronic grammar and spell-check programs to identify possible errors; use a peer conference to address a specific aspect of their work, such as sentence errors; use a student-directed teacher conference to address a specific aspect of their work, such as recurring grammatical errors)

Teacher prompts: "Reading your writing aloud always improves it. You catch things that you wouldn't notice otherwise." "Ask a partner to read your work, and listen to determine if there are any problems in it." "How do you know if a computer program has accurately identified problems in your writing?" "If you suspect that a peer's work contains grammatical errors, mark them with a highlighter pen."

Publishing

3.2 produce polished written work, using a variety of effective presentation features appropriate for the purpose and intended audience (*e.g., prepare a manuscript for submission to a specific literary publication, following the guidelines provided by the publisher; produce a polished piece of writing for submission to a school or community publication, providing accompanying images, such as photographs or other graphics, if appropriate; produce a polished short story for submission to a literary contest, adhering to the contest guidelines; produce a children’s story, with appropriate illustrations, for presentation to the library of a local elementary school; produce a script, including stage directions, for a play for submission to a drama contest for secondary school students*)

Teacher prompts: “What design features and fonts would best enhance your résumé for a summer job? A children’s story for an elementary classroom?” “What do you need to do if you want your manuscript to be taken seriously?” “Why does a professional writer have to take deadlines seriously?”

4. Collaborative Writing

By the end of the course, students will:

Generating Ideas Collaboratively

4.1 generate and explore ideas for potential writing projects collaboratively through brainstorming and other discussions with a partner or as a group in a workshop setting (*e.g., as a group, brainstorm ideas for writing an opinion piece on a controversial issue, considering the pros and cons of possible actions, potential arguments, and the points of view of various stakeholders; with a partner, use graphic organizers to sort ideas and develop a direction for writing a personal essay; in small group, advance a plot sequence by asking and proposing answers to a series of “what if” questions related to the options arising from conflicts between characters; work with a partner to develop a fully realized setting for a science fiction or horror narrative; as a group, brainstorm to develop an extensive bank of imagery suitable for use in writing surrealist poems*)

Teacher prompts: “What ideas for writing your personal essay have emerged from your group’s discussion of ‘writing against the grain’?” “How has the group activity on experimental plot structure influenced the way you are approaching your short story?” “What ideas for personal narratives did you get by sharing your childhood memories

with your partner?” “What insights might not have occurred to you without the input of others?”

Providing Feedback to Peers

4.2 provide constructive feedback to peers on works in progress by working with a partner or as a group in a workshop setting (*e.g., describe their personal response to a peer’s reading of his or her introduction to a story, and ask if it was the response he or she intended; make specific suggestions aimed at improving a peer’s personal essay, such as taking into account a wider range of cultural experiences, using appropriate slang or unconventional grammar to express strong feelings about an event described, or reorganizing some of the paragraphs to make the essay more coherent; compose written feedback on a draft of a classmate’s work, praising particularly effective aspects of the piece and making specific suggestions for improving others*)

Teacher prompts: “What persuasive techniques worked particularly well in this letter to the editor?” “What made the strongest impression on you in this piece of writing?” “What feature of or detail in the poem that your classmate read aloud provoked the strongest response from the group?”

Assessing Peers’ Work

4.3 assess peers’ written drafts, working with a partner or as a group in a workshop setting, to aid peers in their revision process (*e.g., work with a partner to assess the written work of another peer and to develop constructive suggestions for the peer to use in revising his or her work; refer to specific criteria, determined earlier by the class, in explaining their assessment of a peer’s work; discuss the merits of suggestions for revision received from peers in their writing workshop*)

Teacher prompts: “What criteria should be used to assess this type of writing?” “What specific suggestions for revision will you and your partner offer your peer?” “Can you suggest a possible future direction for this piece to your writing partner, and explain why going in that direction may improve the work?” “Discuss and account for similarities and differences in the responses to this work by individuals in the group. Negotiate an assessment, based on criteria established by the class, that everyone in the group can agree to.”

C. REFLECTING ON WRITING

OVERALL EXPECTATION

By the end of this course, students will:

- 1. Metacognition:** identify their strengths as writers and areas where they could improve, and assess the growth and development of their own writing style.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

1. Metacognition

By the end of this course, students will:

Understanding Their Creative Choices

- 1.1** identify and explain specific creative choices they made throughout the writing process to help them better understand the art of writing (e.g., explain the relationship between their choice of content, form, stylistic elements, and techniques and their purpose and audience; identify and explain improvements in their writing skills and changes in their personal writing style)

Teacher prompts: “Why did you decide to end the story the way you did?” “In writing this piece, when did you find yourself moving away from the style of the model to develop your own style?” “How did you determine whether or not to accept your peers’ suggestions for revision?” “Where did you find it necessary to break away from habitual patterns in your writing style to improve the quality of your work?” “Can you identify a recurring theme or motif in your work, and explain how it relates to your personal experience?”

Understanding Their Perspectives and Biases

- 1.2** explain how their own beliefs, values, and experiences are revealed in their writing (e.g., explain what they have included in and excluded from their description of a person, and how they intend the resulting description to affect the reader’s impression of the person; examine their writing to check for bias, and consider whether other perspectives and/or voices should be included to strengthen the impact of their writing; explain where and how their personal values and beliefs are reflected in the characters in a story they have written; identify,

and explain the significance of, images in their poems that reflect specific personal or cultural experiences they have had; explain how the genres and styles they prefer to read have influenced their writing)

Teacher prompts: “How can you make sure that your writing reflects your own beliefs, values, and experiences, but also appeals to a wider audience?” “Are there any perspectives missing from your writing? If so, were these omissions a conscious choice?” “What genres do not engage you as a writer? Why do you think this is? Do you think that your content interests shape your preference for a certain genre?”

Planning to Improve

- 1.3** identify their areas of strength and weakness as writers, and the steps they can take to improve their own writing (e.g., explain the difficulties they encountered in revising a specific piece of writing, and how they overcame them; identify a gap in their writing skills, and strategies they could implement to become a more well-rounded writer; identify the step in the writing process that causes them the most problems, and what they plan to do to address this difficulty)

Teacher prompts: “Describe the strengths you see in your most recent piece of writing, and areas where you think you could improve.” “What factor or combination of factors causes you to abandon a piece of writing?” “What specific writing techniques would you like to work on?” “Do you see yourself more as a creative writer, an analytical writer, or a technical writer?” “How has learning about and practising the writing of fiction enhanced your ability to write non-fiction, and vice-versa?”

Demonstrating Growth

- 1.4 select samples of their writing that document their growth as writers for inclusion in a portfolio (e.g., *prepare a portfolio of their work that demonstrates their development as a writer, and use two selections from it to explain their development; prepare a portfolio of their work for a summative conference with the teacher; prepare a portfolio of their work for submission at a college or university admission interview*)

Teacher prompts: “What works in progress and finished pieces would you include in your portfolio to show your strengths as a writer?” “How would you adjust the contents of your portfolio, depending on whether you were entering a technical or a creative writing program at the postsecondary level?” “What techniques are you more confident with at the end of this course than you were at the beginning?” “How has your writing changed throughout this course?” “If you could give one piece of advice to an aspiring writer entering this course next year, what would it be?”