

Workshop on "Creative Writing and Storytelling"

General Notes

Types of Creative Writing

- 1) A Poem. Any observation or statement could be a poem. A poem could also be words about -- or words thought or spoken by -- remembered or imagined characters.
- B) A Story. A story is a series of events relating to remembered or imagined characters.
- C) A Play. A play is one or more scenes in which a remembered or imagined character appears and speaks to him/herself or to other characters.

Twelve Elements of Story

- 1) The **Title** of the story.
- 2) **Characters** (their histories, thoughts, decisions, actions, etc).
- 3) Characters' **Ways of speaking**.
- 4) Characters' **Ways of moving**.
- 5) **Place**.
- 6) **Time** (continuous, or jumps, flashbacks?).
- 7) The **Storyline** (also known as, plot) -- in one or two sentences.
- 8) **Objects** in the story.
- 9) **Sensory Elements** in the story: Smells, Flavours, Colours, Textures, etc.
- 10) **Emotions** in the story (for the characters, the teller, and the listeners).
- 11) **Who is the Narrator?** What is his/her Point of View, Tone of Voice, and Style?
- 12) **Point** (Theme, Meaning, Moral, Message, Lesson, Take-away).

All stories are about **situations**. Story readers and listeners can **Project** themselves into, and **Imagine** themselves in these situations. They may **Empathise** and **identify** with -- and even possibly **Imitate** -- the characters. Considering if they might do things the same as, or differently from, how the characters do things gives the listeners *practice for living*.

Identify a story's **Turning Points** (also known as Defining Moments, Dramatic Moments, Moments of Decision, Moments of Truth, Pivotal Points, Crucial Scenes, and Key Scenes).

When discussing a Story

Ask "**Open Questions**" (questions with no right or wrong answers), such as,

- 1) What is one specific thing -- an image, an action by a character, etc -- you liked about the story, or about the way the story was written or told.
- 2) Might you have any suggestions for improvement regarding the story, or about the way it was written or told? Might you like to add to the story, or change it in any other way?
- 3) Might the story remind you of any personal experience, or of some other story?
- 4) Does the story seem to teach any lessons?

Creative Writing Methods

- 1) Daydream. Write about whatever comes to mind (for 10 minutes). This could be about "big" issues like your ideas and feelings about society and/or your personal identity, or "small" issues like something that happened in school the other day.
- 2) Go over what you have written, and underline or highlight the words and sentences of what you have written that seem to you to be the most interesting.
- 3) Write about the highlighted words and sentences (for 10 minutes).
- 4) Create imaginary characters and place them in the highlighted situations. Let your imagination play -- the situations could develop in your writing differently than the way the situations occurred in real life.

ROQI -- Remember, Observe, Question, Imagine.

Personify things, ideas, ideals, behaviours, animals, etc. That is, represent them as characters who have human-type consciousness and language ability.

Write about, or as, Alter Ego characters. These are aspects of oneself, personified as characters.

Working with one's Life Story

- 1) Write your Life Story -- from when and where you were born, to today. You might focus on your unique interests, talents, and abilities. In other words: What are you good at, and what do you know a lot about? When and how did you discover these unique interests? How do you plan to develop and apply these interests through education and work?
- 2) Identify turning points, outstanding story elements (motifs), and themes in this story.
- 3) Write the story as if it had happened to a character external to your self.
- 4) Change the story in any other way. Create a metaphorical (fantasy) version of the story, or of any part of it.

Story-writing Prompts

Write about

- your favourite _____.
- something you have done well.
- a place only you know about.
- some aspects of society you tend to think about.
- some environmental issues you tend to think about.
- professions you are considering joining.

If You Could ...

If you could do anything -- What would you do?

If you could go anywhere -- Where would you go?

If you could be anyone -- Who would you be?

If you could meet anyone -- Who would you meet? (How might the conversation go?)

Problems and Solutions

Make a list of problems -- big and small, personal and social. For each problem, write about numerous possible solutions.

Why Does He/She Feel That Way?

If a character might be happy, he/she might feel this way because ____.

If a character might be sad, he/she might feel this way because ____.

If a character might be in a rush, he/she might feel this way because ____.

If a character might be confused, he/she might feel this way because ____.

If a character might have a feeling of achievement, he/she might feel this way because ____.

Etc.