



# School District of Marshfield

## Course Syllabus

Course Name: Creative Writing

Length of Course: Semester

Credits: ½ Credit

Prerequisite: None

### Course Description:

This course will explore the core of both creativity and writing, through various exercises, discussions, and exposure to a wide variety of professional writing. We will experiment with varying writing styles, lengths and purposes. Students will be encouraged to write daily both in and outside of class. As we write, students will also practice and improve grammar, sentence structure, and word choice skills. We will openly share and critique writings and hone revision skills. Whenever possible, students will be encouraged to share their writing in additional forums outside of the classroom. We will balance time to explore writing for pleasure and with time spent stretching our writing through meeting various specifications. This course will culminate in a final portfolio where students share a variety of revised and polished work, reflect on what they've learned as a writer, and select their best piece to be shared in a public forum.

### Learning Targets:

Note: Since some seniors take this class as part of their final English credit, the learning targets are aligned to 11-12 Common Core Standards. Lessons, activities and assessments may need to be differentiated for underclassmen taking the course for an elective credit.

### Speaking and Listening:

#### Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - A. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
  - B. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
  - C. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range

of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

- D. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

*(Most discussions will be based on sharing student writing.)*

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

1. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

*(Unit 1.)*

Language:

Grades 11 and 12

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
  - A. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
  - B. Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
  - A. Observe hyphenation conventions.
  - B. Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

1. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
  - A. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.
2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- A. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - B. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive*, *conception*, *conceivable*).
  - C. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
  - D. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
  - B. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
4. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- (Language standards will be met through on-going grammar exercises, a summative grammar related element of the students' portfolios and through revision activities for each unit).*

#### Reading: Informational Text

##### Key Ideas and Details

- 1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- 2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

## Craft and Structure

1. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).
2. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his/her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
3. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

## Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

1. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## Reading: Literature

### Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Grades 11 and 12: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g. where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
4. Grades 11 and 12: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g. the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Grades 11 and 12: Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g. satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

*(All reading standards will be met by introducing students to a variety of strong literature and non-fiction work that exemplifies writing traits specific to that unit.)*

## Writing:

### Text Types and Purposes

1. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
  - A. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension
  - B. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
  - C. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.  
*(Non-fiction and research based units).*
2. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - A. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
  - B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - C. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
  - D. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
  - E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.  
*(Majority of units will incorporate some sort of narrative writing in the assessment process).*

## Production and Distribution of Writing

1. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
2. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, re-writing, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 11–12 on page 54.)
3. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.  
*(Assessed through final portfolio project and through encouraging students to share their work throughout the semester).*

## Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
2. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
3. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
  - A. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).
  - B. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses]”).  
*(Addressed primarily in Unit 1.)*

### Range of Writing

1. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences.  
(*All units combined.*)

Each unit will also be supplemented by a variety of non-fiction and literature excerpts, both contemporary and classical.

Below is an outline of units for Creative Writing. Since Creative Writing is a semester course, units need to be accepted and moved with some flexibility based on time allotment, student need and student interest. For example, students may express little interest or need to work on poetry writing, but be interested in understanding the publishing process.

### Semester Long Practices:

Introduce students to ongoing classroom practices. This will include responding to and keeping track of daily writing prompts (Quick Writes). These quick writes will serve to encourage creativity, inspiration for larger writing projects, and material to practice revision and editing skills. Students will also be introduced to weekly grammar lessons and weekly vocabulary/word choice lessons. All of these lessons will be incorporated into revision exercises and the final portfolio. Students will be expected to keep track of these lessons.

Students will need a binder and notebook (preferably 3-5 subject) for the course.

The final exam will consist of a portfolio project.

### Topic Outline – Units and Themes:

First Quarter (Third if taught second semester):

Unit 1: What is Creativity and What Makes Successful Writing? (Weeks 1-3)

#### 1. Learning Targets

- A. Conduct short research about author techniques and advice
- B. Present research findings
- C. Interpret differing claims about creativity and success
- D. Create own definitions of creative and success
- E. Examine a variety of purposes for writing and how this may shape both the creative process and the success of writing

2. Recommended Text: Brenda Ueland's: *If You Want to Write* (Chapter 1) and Scott Nelson's *Write Good or Die* Chapters 1, 4, 8, 10 and 16.
3. Activities and Assessments:
  - A. Review Course Expectations and Routines (Quick Writes- Grammar Routines, portfolio summative)
  - B. Personality Shield- partner share (formative)
  - C. Read Brenda Ueland's Chapter 1- determine what should take place in a Creative Writing Course
  - D. Read Chapter 16- *Write Good or Die*- before introducing Grammar Exercises
  - E. Notebook and Binder organization check (formative)
  - F. Examine different pieces- class brainstorm rules for writing
  - G. Teacher model author research project
  - H. Students complete author research worksheet (formative)
  - I. Share one quick write (formative)
  - J. Share Author Research Presentation (Summative- add to portfolio).
  - K. Add and revise top 2 quick write so far to portfolio

## Unit 2: Writer's Tools (Weeks 4-7)

1. Learning Targets
  - A. Learn and understand writing tools including, but not limited to: point of view, descriptive writing, voice, setting, figurative language, imagery, diction, detail, syntax, and tone
  - B. Evaluate and interpret the above writing tools
  - C. Practice and revise individual use of the above writing tools
  - D. Share, discuss and constructively criticize peer writing
2. Recommended Texts: Scott Nelson's *Write Good or Die*, exercises from *Discovering Voice*, and *Creative Writing: A Teacher's Guide*. Avi's *Nothing But the Truth* makes an excellent excerpt for the exploration of point of view
3. Activities and Assessments
  - A. Continue Daily Quick Writes, Weekly Grammar and Word Choice Exercises, Sharing Writings and Revising best Quick Writes
  - B. Introduce and Define each writer's tool
  - C. Evaluate effective use of each writer's tool
  - D. Practice each writer's tool (formative)
  - E. Select two practice pieces, revise and share and revise again to be included in final portfolio (summative)



### Unit 3: Advanced Writing Tools: Dialogue, Conflict, Theme, Characterization, and Humor (Weeks 7-9)

#### 1. Learning Targets

- A. Understand and define dialogue, conflict, characterization and humor as well as key literary terms related to each (ie. internal conflict versus external, direct and indirect characterization, satire/sarcasm)
- B. Interpret and evaluate effect use of the above writing tools
- C. Practice implementing and revising the above writing tools
- D. Share, discuss and constructively criticize peer writing

#### 2. Recommended Text: *Write Good or Die*. A variety of short story excerpts, *Creative Writing Exercises*

#### 3. Activities and Assessments

- A. Continue Daily Quick Writes, Weekly Grammar and Word Choice Exercises, Sharing Writings and Revising best Quick Writes
- B. Introduce and Define each of the advanced writing tools listed above
- C. Evaluate effective use of each writer's tool
- D. Practice each writer's tool (formative)
- E. Select two practice pieces to thoroughly share, discuss, revise and edit for final submission in writer's portfolio (summative)

### Second Quarter (4<sup>th</sup> quarter if taught second semester)

#### Non-Fiction Unit (10-11)

#### 1. Learning Targets

- A. Understand variety of purposes for non-fiction writing and how the purpose influences style, diction, audience, etc.
- B. Evaluate effective non-fiction writing and how that writing achieves a specific purpose or conveys a specific message
- C. Analyze writing techniques especially persuasion and humor in non-fiction
- D. Evaluate arguments and organization of non-fiction pieces
- E. Determine a specific audience and purpose to create their own non-fiction piece

#### 2. Recommend Text: Kelly Gallagher's *Write like this*, a variety of contemporary non-fiction pieces including news articles, reviews, advice columns, and memoirs etc.

#### 3. Activities and Assessments

- A. Purposes of Writing Brainstorming Worksheet (teacher model, student create own)

- B. Review powerful non-fiction pieces representing each of the major non-fiction writing purposes
- C. Critically discuss and examine non-fiction pieces (formative)
- D. Create own non-fiction piece, share, collaborate, criticize, edit and revise (summative)

#### Poetry (Weeks 12-13)

##### 1. Learning Targets

- A. Review writer's tools and understand how these tools may be used differently and similarly in poetry
- B. Read and evaluate a variety of poetry
- C. Mimic styles and content of various poems with original content
- D. Develop original poems with specific purpose or writer's tool in mind

##### 2. A variety of poetry, *Write Like This*

##### 3. Activities and Assessments

- A. Writers' tools review
- B. Acrostic Poems (Formative)
- C. Bio-Poem (Formative)
- D. Sensory Poem (Formative)
- E. Six-Word Memoir (Formative)
- F. Backwards/Forward Poem (Formative)
- G. Create several original poems, share, collaborate, criticize, edit and revise (Summative)

#### Short Story Unit/ Poetry Book/Novel Proposal Unit (1-1.5 Weeks)

This would be a cumulative unit to allow students to apply knowledge gained in previous units to a writing genre of their own desire. There would be formative planning checks, and revision checks with formative feedback, leading to a summative final project. This would be largely student driven based on interest and genre. This unit could be moved as one of the final units, or earlier depending on student interest and need.

#### Children's Book Unit (2-2.5 Weeks)

##### 1. Learning Targets

- A. Understand unique style, audience, purpose and diction required for children's literature
- B. Examine and evaluate the role of illustrations within children's literature
- C. Evaluate popular classic and contemporary children's literature and determine what makes them "classic" and appropriate for children
- D. Create (and collaborate for illustrations) original children's book

2. Recommend Texts: *Good Night Moon*, Dr. Suess, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*
3. Activities and Learning Targets
  - A. Share favorite children's stories and brainstorm qualities of strong children's literature
  - B. Read several popular Children's tales
  - C. Create a definitive list of Do's and Don'ts in children's books (formative)
  - D. Search for collaboration opportunities for illustration
  - E. Group write children's book (formative)
  - F. Individual children's book (summative)- look for opportunities to share at Marshfield Public Library or with elementary school students

#### Writing with Other Media Unit- Collaboration Unit (2 weeks)

This unit would involve student directed research and collaboration in understanding how writing relates to other media. Students can research illustrations and cover art, screen plays, dramas, sets, music/CD art, sketch comedy writing, etc. This is an excellent unit to examine film and the process of creating a screen play, but then also evaluating the final result (such as in *The Freedom Writers* or *Finding Forrester* or *Dead Poets Society*.) This could also provide opportunity to work with other subject areas including music and art teachers.

#### How to Get Published- Research Based Unit (2 weeks)

1. Learning Targets
  - A. Research and understand publication process and requirements
  - B. Rank and evaluate "Getting Published Tips" based on what is most relevant, realistic, and successful
  - C. Create a presentation to share route to successful publishing
  - D. Create submission for proper publication company based on student desired genre
2. Recommend Text: *Write Good or Die*
3. Activities and Assessments
  - A. Review successful writing tips for publishing from unit 1
  - B. Introduce students to a variety of magazines and texts for learning how to publish based on their particular genre
  - C. Group brainstorm of publishing Do's and Don'ts (formative)
  - D. Individual research and presentations of publication tips he or she learned (formative)

- E. Students select one piece from the writing portfolio and plan a submission to an appropriate and research publication company

### Novel Planning (1 Week)

This novel would be incorporated based on student need and interest. This unit could be merged earlier in the coursework, taught separately or taught with the “How to Get Published” unit. Students would learning long-term planning strategies of how to develop conflict and characters over a novel versus a short story setting. Students would also learn the importance of having a clear vision for their novel and a concise novel “pitch” for publishers and future readers.

### Tall Tales/ Folk Tales Unit (1-1.5 Weeks)

1. Learning Targets
  - A. Define Tall Tales/ Folk Tales and common writing strategies associated with each
  - B. Mimic writing strategies common in folk tales
  - C. Create original folk tale
2. Recommend Text: Various Tall Tale/ Folk Tale Excerpts
3. Activities and Assessments
  - A. What is a tall tale? What makes it “tall”?
  - B. Define elements of tall tales
  - C. Read several tall tales
  - D. Short Tall Tale/Hyperbole/Origin Story Exercises (formative)
  - E. Create original tall tale, share and revise (summative)

Finalizing Portfolio (2 Weeks at the end of the semester)/ Final Exam Unit: This would be a unit heavy in revision and preparing the final product of the students’ semester exam or their writer’s portfolios. Students will review the writing they have done for the course, reflect upon their strengths and weakness and their purpose in writing, select their “best” pieces, and write a final piece. Ideally, these final pieces or the portfolios themselves will be shared with an audience other than the creative writing class (ie. Submitted to literary magazines, published online, shared at the Marshfield Public Library, or displayed in the High School LMC).

Recommended Texts for the Course Overall:

Dean, Nancy. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High School*. Canada: Maupin

House, 2006. Print.

Gallagher, Kelly. *Write Like This: Teaching Real World Writing Through Modeling and Mentor*

*Texts*. Portland: Stenhouse Publishing, 2011. Web.

Howie, Denise. *Creative Writing: A Teacher's Guide 30 Years Experience at Your Fingertips*.

Np, 2013. Web.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor Books,

1995. Print.

McDonald, Majorie. *Creative Writing Strategies: Writing Exercises*. Amazon, 2012. Web.

Nicholson, Scott. Ed. *Write Good or Die: Survival Tips for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Literacy Inc, 2012.

Web.

Uelanda, Brenda. *If You Want to Write: A Book about Art, Independence and Spirit*. Saint Paul:

Graywolf Press, 1987. Print.