

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP: 4

Contact Information

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The Department's Educational Philosophy

Proficiency in English is an essential component of education in the United States. An ability to understand and communicate in English is fundamental to the preservation of our democratic system and to the well being of its citizens.

Guiding Principles

An essential component of education and the learning process is the development of proficiency in the arts of language. The ability to articulate and respond to complex ideas is a requirement of participatory citizenship and ultimately allows each of us to be more fully human.

- Speak and write clear, idiomatic English.
- Engage in the writing process, from pre-writing to editing and peer feedback to revision.
- Develop voice and depth in both personal and literary papers.
- Develop confidence, independence and critical judgment relative to one's own work.
- Understand as fully as possible what is read.
- Increase understanding of self and others through literature.
- Develop standards of judgment and taste in literature.
- Find enduring pleasure and value in reading good books.

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP: COURSE #149

Course Frequency: Semester Course, five times per week

Credits Offered: 2.5 credits

Prerequisites: English 1

Background to the Curriculum

Creative Writing was added to the Acton-Boxborough English department's course offerings in 2007. This course was developed by Acton-Boxborough teachers in a summer R & D in 2007 and continues to undergo review and revision. The readings in the course are intended to provide students with models of writers who successfully execute plot, characterization, detail, and voice. The curriculum also focuses on writing exercises in genres of short fiction, memoir writing, poetry, and playwriting. Reading and writing exercises were also developed to closely parallel the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework expectations for grades nine through twelve.

Core Topics/Questions/Concepts/Skills

The creative writing program is a workshop-based course. In the writing workshop, several students present pieces of writing for feedback from others students in the class. Each week, different students present their work to the class in writing workshop. The overall purpose of the writing workshop is to provide students an opportunity to receive feedback, both from their peers and from a teacher, so that they can improve their writing through revisions. In order to generate ideas for final writing pieces, students complete daily writing exercises and homework assignments. Students also read and analyze models of professional writing and discuss effective styles and techniques. The class stresses the importance of writing as a process, and the final student portfolio centers around this idea.

The creative writing program

- Focuses on developing writing skills in short fiction and memoir writing.
- Provides opportunities for students to experiment in other writing genres, including poetry and playwriting.
- Explores the importance of plot and story structure through representative readings and writing exercises.
- Explores the importance of detail and imagery through representative readings and writing exercises.
- Explores the importance of dialogue through representative readings and writing exercises.
- Explores the importance of characterization representative readings and writing exercises.
- Provides students with opportunities to analyze professional writing styles and techniques.
- Enables students to explore and develop their own writing styles and techniques.
- Explores and develops the importance of the drafting process in writing.
- Develops editing and criticism skills, both in relation to students' own writing and the writing of their peers.
- Develops active listening skills.
- Offers extensive work on writing as a process, with a focus on writing models.
- Develops objective standards of effective writing.

- Addresses vocabulary, grammar, usage, and style conventions in the context of literature and student writing.
- Includes the study and application of literary terms and devices across literary genres.
- Develops an exchange of ideas through class discussion.
- Provides students an opportunity to explore their own identity and creative nature.

Course-End Learning Objectives

The Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts is comprised of twenty-seven General Standards organized into four Strands: Language, Literature, Composition and Media. The Learning Objectives for this course are matched to the relevant Framework Strand and Standard.

<u>Learning objectives</u>	<u>Corresponding state standards, where applicable</u>
<p><i>Reading and critical thinking skills</i> are listed by increasing levels of difficulty, moving from the concrete skills of observing and recalling to the more abstract skills of interpreting, synthesizing, analyzing and evaluating. It is the goal of the English Department to move each student toward mastery of advanced skills.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Understanding of plot, characters, and setting 2) Understanding of characteristics of different genres 3) Understanding of audience 4) Understanding of structure 5) Observations of connections and patterns 6) Observations of recurring character traits 7) Observations of similarities and differences among characters 8) Making of inferences about plot events, characters, and theme 9) Interpretation of character 10) Analysis of the ways that style impacts theme and mood 	<p>Lit. # 9, 12 Lit. # 8 Lit. #18 Lit. # 12, 13, 14, 17 Lit. # 12 Lit. # 12 Lit. # 12, 17 Lit. # 12</p>
<p>The <i>writing skills</i> listed below recognize that writing is a cumulative skill, with each level assuming the skills of the previous level. At this level, the student will:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1] Edit own and others' work for language conventions and organization of ideas. 2] Make meaningful revision based on peer and teacher feedback. 3] Write with grammatical correctness. 4] Exhibit a maturing style. 5] Evaluate own and others' writing. 	<p>Comp. # 22, 23 Comp. # 21, 22 Lang. # 5 Comp. # 20, 21 Comp. # 25</p>
<p><i>Speaking and listening skills</i> at this level provide opportunities for students to further develop and refine the following communication skills:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1] Reading aloud with understanding. 2] Participating in whole-class and small-group discussions. 3] Presenting dramatic readings or interpretations. 4] Listening for understanding and meaning. 	<p>Lit. # 18 Lang. # 1, 2 Lit. # 18 Lang. # 2</p>

5] Listening to appreciate literature.

The **thinking skills** in this course will further develop the ability to apply the following to literature.

- 1] Observation and recall of information
- 2] Understanding and translation of knowledge into new context
- 3] Identification of components and patterns

Assessment

(In many instances grading rubrics accompany assessments to provide students with a clear outline of expectations.)

- Submission of a term-end writing portfolio that includes:
 - ~ A final fiction short story and all related drafts.
 - ~ A final memoir and all related drafts.
 - ~ A final choice piece (students may choose from a short story, memoir, short play, or a selection of poems) and all related drafts.
 - ~ Written evaluation on the writing process, strengths, and areas to improve on for each submitted work.
- Regular writing exercises, both in-class and homework
- Free-writing and drafting in a literary journal
- Participation in writing workshops, both as a presenter and critic
- Discussion on assigned class readings
- Participation and quality of peer editing
- Effort and depth of revision
- Understanding and mastery of crucial creative writing elements, including plot, imagery, characterization, and dialogue
- Willingness to experiment with different styles and techniques of writing
- Revision and mastery of writing conventions

Technology and Health Learning Objectives Addressed in This Course

(This section is for faculty and administrative reference; students and parents may disregard.)

<u>Course activity: skills and/or topics taught</u>	<u>Standard(s) addressed through this activity</u>
1] Students will word process and properly format papers. 2] Students will follow computer-use guidelines and the academic integrity policy stated in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Student Handbook.	

Materials and Resources

Writing exercises and assignments will be drawn from the following texts:

Now Write! Fiction Writing Exercises From Today's Best Writers and Teachers, What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers, The Elements of Playwriting, Sound and Sense, and The Elements of Style.

The readings in creative writing are works that demonstrate superior style, plot, detail, and characterization. Readings will be drawn from the following texts:

Sudden Fiction: American Short-Short Stories, The Seagull Reader: Stories, and the teacher's choice of various short stories, poems, excerpts from memoirs and plays.

The following instructional methods may be employed in this course.

Teacher-centered activities

- Presenting creative writing prompts, exercises, and activities to generate ideas
- Modeling writing through an examination of professional work and/or work of former students
- Webbing or mapping to gather and organize information
- Correction/discussion of writings on overhead
- Solution to teacher-posed problems as individuals or in small groups
- Completion of writing exercises and journal assignments

Student-centered activities

- Brainstorming
- Free-writing
- Student generation of questions to consider
- Collaboration on solutions to problems
- Division of tasks by group; sharing of information
- Reflective or creative writings, shared with class
- Peer editing