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Creative Writing: An Elective Course for High School Students

Megan Theresa Myers

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Creative Writing: An Elective Course for High School Students

Abstract

This thesis project outlines a course in creative writing designed for students in grades 9-12. The course is an elective and is expected to be taken in addition to general English classes taken as a graduation requirement.

The course is designed as a genre study on an immersion principle, which requires that students focus their attention on the characteristics that make up various genres through both reading and writing in those genres. Students are introduced to the overall workshop format of the class and to the procedure of conferencing on and revising drafts through the basic study of the genres of fiction and poetry. They then move on to genres that are less frequently taught in the English curriculum: graphic literature, drama, and multigenre presentations. Throughout the course, students are required to keep reflective journals that document their awareness of the process of writing, revising, and editing. They will be responsible for producing final drafts in genre study, one working portfolio, one showcase portfolio, and at least one submission to the class publication to be distributed to the community through the sale of monthly issues and subscriptions.

This elective course is founded in the research of current classes and methods of teaching immersion, workshops, and writing in secondary education. It offers students the opportunity to explore unfamiliar genres through reading and writing, and it provides them with a creative forum in which they can be published in an authentic achievement.

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Creative Writing: An Elective Course for High School Students

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of the requirements for Departmental Honors in

Language, Literature and Writing for Secondary Education

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January, 2006

Megan Theresa Myers

Senior Honors Thesis
ABSTRACT

Author: Megan Theresa Myers
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Creative Writing
Elective Course
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Section One:
Introduction and Rationale

Introduction and Rationale

What?

The following is a sample plan for a creative writing elective course. Although much of the plan is highly detailed and outlined, it is only a sample because I believe that education is fluid. Every course changes with each new semester and turnover of students. As the students, their prior knowledge, backgrounds, and interests change, so too will the course. The course is designed primarily in a workshop style, so lessons can be designed and implemented to meet individual classes' needs. When put into action, the lessons may be extended, cut, rearranged, or rewritten as is necessary according to continuous assessment. Because of this fluidity, the schedule outlined in the calendar is a sample only and is designed to meet a hypothetical group of students designed for the purposes of this course plan. (This hypothetical class is loosely outlined in the *who* section of this rationale.)

The sample outline is designed around a block-schedule calendar because a great many schools are switching over from the standard 7 periods-a-day to block-scheduling. Block scheduling involves an average of 90 minute classes every other day. Because it is modeled loosely after the block scheduling implemented at Berkley High School (one with which I am familiar because it was implemented during my years there), I assume that on half days, students have shortened class periods to accommodate each class. I also assume that each student has a homeroom or seminar hour in which they may choose to utilize their time however they see fit. This gives students the opportunity, then, to come to their creative writing class to spend additional time as necessary. It adds to the fluidity of my plans, too, because if a minority of students need a particular lesson that the rest do not, they may come in during their homeroom or seminar hour to receive additional instruction.

Just as the schedule is a sample of how I might expect to construct my creative writing elective course, so too are most of the materials included. For example, I hope to work with my students to create a rubric on which to grade their final performance portfolios, but I still believe that it is necessary to include a rubric exhibiting the structure and method that I would employ, so I included a sample rubric that one could imagine had been created with a hypothetical class.

The lessons included in this course outline are not an exhaustive representation of what is to be taught. This is again due to the necessity to keep a class fluid to the changing needs of varying students. For example, extensive lessons on social skills and procedures have not been included. To some extent, these will be taught when a new procedure is added. Conferencing, for example, and revising are both taught in detail. As the course is taught, however, it may be necessary to reteach or extend upon one of these skills. In that case, the lesson should be tailored to fit the needs of the students at the time.

Likewise, lessons on grammar and mechanics have not been included in the schedule because of the ever-changing nature of the class. Because I plan to teach grammar and mechanics in much the same way as Constance Weaver argues they should be taught in her Teaching Grammar in Context, lessons will be designed and implemented as needed. The purpose for teaching these lessons will come from my

observations of students' work, their own reflections, preassessment, and continuous assessment. I think that, to design this course with pre-scheduled grammar and mechanics lessons would make an already symbolic curriculum too artificial. I fear that to mandate that a certain grammatical concept be taught on a certain day during a certain unit would compromise the teacher's attention to individual students' needs. Therefore, lessons of this nature should be implemented upon the teacher's discretion.

Students will be assessed on participation by daily notebook checks and status of the class reports, on their metacognition by periodic collections of their reflection journals, on quantity of work by the completion of a working portfolio, and on quality of work and evaluative ability by the compilation of the final showcase rubric. Students' assessment will be personally purposeful not only through the creation of portfolios, but also through the authentic assessment of submitting their work for publication. Writing for an authentic audience and not only for classmates will give students more incentive to take ownership in what they write.

Who?

This class is an elective course in creative writing designed for students in grades 9-12. As it is an elective, students with varying ages, ability levels, and experiences will be enrolled. Because of this diversity, students' assignments are designed to be flexible and will be graded on participation and rubrics reflecting skills acquired in the class. The curriculum should work to set all students at comparable experience levels by exposing them to and immersing them all in an equal amount of material. That is to say, it will not matter as much that students have read plays by Shakespeare as it will be important that they read the plays for this class. The units within this course are designed to give all students common experiences and thus equal footing in this diverse classroom.

Students are, however, expected to have some degree of prior knowledge before entering this course. As students in a minimum of the ninth grade, they should have had some experience not only with reading and writing for class assignments, but also with managing time, organizing notes and assignments, and taking responsibility for tasks of a similar nature. This class requires some amount of individual responsibility and accountability given the nature of workshop environments. While the curriculum will be structured to give students common experiences and immersion into the world of writing, it will be up to students as individuals to keep up with the class work and homework. Some assistance will be given to them in this endeavor through daily status reports, journal collections, and weekly monitoring/grading of progress as outlined in students' syllabi.

Students will have considerable input in the class by contributing heavily their values for the creation of the classroom guidelines. These should be developed during the first week of school as a result of a combination of student survey, discussion, and teacher input. They will then help to shape the construction of the class through their questions, discussion, conferences, and reflection. When creating the rubric for the final portfolio, students will have significant input in deciding upon the grading criteria and by performing self-assessments. Their participation in this process will incorporate higher-level skills by requiring that students justify the decisions they make.

Why?

It is no secret that creative writing has long been perceived as being on the far left side of the liberal arts curriculum. Its perception is oftentimes one of beatniks, hippies, and blow-off classes while, in reality, it teaches students very concrete skills essential to developing as students across the curriculum.

In many high school English classrooms, students grow accustomed to reading several works of fiction and poetry, then writing several essays (largely non-fiction). This creates a dichotomy that is inconsistent to say the least. Students are, in effect, being taught that it is important to read only creative works but to write only non-fiction. Why is it that value is placed on reading creative works but not on writing them? Through immersion techniques, students in this elective course will read creative works of various genres and will then identify characteristics, approximate styles, and learn from the craft of their reading. Because the reading will be tightly intertwined with lessons on process, craft, technique, grammar, and mechanics, students will learn many of the same concepts taught in regular English classes, but while they learn, for example, what a metaphor is in the literature, they can experiment with writing it themselves.

Each of the lessons included in this course meet several Michigan Department of Education Standards and Benchmarks. The standards and benchmarks that the course most thoroughly meets are outlined and consolidated into course objectives. The course objectives, then, are correlated to the objectives in each individual lesson and mini-lesson. Although the course was not designed around these objectives, it is apparent that it meets several of the expectations held for high school students in the Michigan English curriculum.

Section Two:
Objectives to be Met

Objectives To Be Met
By Students Enrolled in
Elective Creative Writing Course

1.   Take their own writing through various stages of brainstorming, planning, drafting, and revising (I.2.HS3, I.2.HS4).

2.   Compose final drafts in a minimum of two genres and demonstrating an understanding of a minimum of five different writing techniques such as (but not limited to): voice, narrative style, symbolism, metaphor, irony, major and minor characters, subplots, complex dialogue, figurative language, and vivid imagery (I.2.HS1, I.3.HS1, I.3.HS7, VI.8.HS2, VI.8.HS4).

3.   Evaluate writing quality, technique, and development in their own work and in others' (I.2.HS3).

4.   Develop a working portfolio of writing experimentation done throughout the semester and reflect in journal-writing on the progress and processes used (IV.6.HS2, IV.6.HS4).

5.   Create a final portfolio of completed pieces in varying genres and evaluate the work in a reflective letter explaining why it was chosen for the final portfolio and on what merits it should be graded and why (X.12.HS4).

Michigan Content Standards and Draft Benchmarks

* Note: All benchmarks are taken from the high school level of given standards found in the Michigan Curriculum Framework: http://www.michigan.gov/Documents/MichiganCurriculumFramework_8172_7.pdf.

Content Standard 2: All students will demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compositions.

Benchmarks:
1.	Write fluently for multiple purposes to produce compositions, such as stories, poetry, personal narratives, editorials, research reports, persuasive essays, resumes, and memos.
3.	Plan, draft, revise and edit their texts, and analyze and critique the texts of others in such areas as purpose, effectiveness, cohesion, and creativity.
4.	Demonstrate precision in selecting appropriate language conventions when editing text. Examples include complex grammatical constructions, sentence structures, punctuation, and spelling.

Content Standard 3: All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.

Benchmarks:
7.	Recognize and use varied innovative techniques to construct text, convey meaning, and express feelings to influence an audience. Examples include experimentation with time, order, stream of consciousness, and multiple points of view.

Content Standard 4: All students will use the English language effectively.

Benchmarks:
4.	Demonstrate ways in which communication can be influenced through word usage. Examples include propaganda, irony, parody, and satire.

Content Standard 6: All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

Benchmarks:
2.	Evaluate the power of using multiple voices in their oral and written communication to persuade, inform, entertain, and inspire their audiences.
4.	Document and enhance a developing voice with authentic writings for different audiences and purposes. Examples include portfolios, video productions, submissions for competitions or publications, individual introspections, and applications for employment and higher education.

Content Standard 8: All students will explore and use the characteristics of different types of texts, aesthetic elements, and mechanics – including text structure, figurative and descriptive language, spelling, punctuation, and grammar – to construct and convey meaning.

Benchmarks:
2.   Describe and use characteristics of various narrative genre and complex elements of narrative technique to convey ideas and perspectives. Examples include use of symbol, motifs, and function of minor characters in epics, satire, and drama.
4.   Identify and use aspects of the craft of the speaker, writer, and illustrator to formulate and express their ideas artistically. Examples include imagery, irony, multiple points of view, complex dialogue, aesthetics, and persuasive techniques.

Content Standard 12: All students will develop and apply personal, shared, and academic criteria for the enjoyment, appreciation, and evaluation of their own and others' oral, written, and visual texts.

Benchmarks:
4.   Create a collection of personal work based on individual, shared, and academic standards, justifying judgments about the craft and significance of each selection.

Section Three:
Calendar

A Note on the Calendar

This calendar is meant to provide a visual flowchart of the semester. It is based loosely on the 2004/2005 calendar for Berkley High School in Oakland County, Michigan simply in order to establish a typical school year with scheduled days off. Conferences, holidays, and faculty in-service days were included as a sample of abnormalities in the typical schedule.

The curriculum, however, is all original. Its detail does not extend to homework assignments but rather depicts the topic of each class period. When a mini-lesson (or extended lesson plan) is given, its title on the calendar will correspond with a more detailed lesson plan following the calendar in chronological order.

A few of the class periods on the calendar indicate 'workshop' without a specific lesson plan given. On these days, assume that the class follows a structure similar to that of "My First Workshop." Any mini-lessons taught on these days should tie in directly to the immersion material for the unit. For example, if a mini-lesson on comma splicing is necessary in December, students should work with examples from Big Mouth and Ugly Girl. Such days should give students time to write, conference, get caught up on reading, and reflect in their journals. Having time devoted only to workshop leaves the schedule some degree of flexibility for teaching additional mini-lessons as deemed necessary by continuous assessment and allows for unforeseen delays in previous lessons, school cancellation, and events planned during the hour (assemblies, etc.).

Some activities may be noted on the calendar but not on lesson plans if they do not encompass a complex plan. For instance, the calendar indicates that fiction and poetry posters be made on September 21 and October 1, respectively. The dates on the calendar for these activities are merely guidelines and indicate the time by which students should have contributed to a class poster outlining the characteristics of these genres. Since the activity did not require a lesson plan beyond the application of their prior knowledge (and knowledge acquired throughout the mini-study of that genre), the activity is noted only on the calendar and not in detailed lesson plans.

On the first days that students are introduced to an immersion text, the class should set a reading schedule which students are required to follow. The schedule (page guidelines) should be kept on the board throughout the unit and students' participation should be monitored through daily notebook checks.

It should be assumed that each day on the calendar, despite particular lessons assigned to the day, should be scheduled as follows:

- 15 minutes: Journal entry or writing prompt focused on a particular writing technique illuminated in reading.
- 10 minutes: Share journal entries, discuss techniques addressed. Mini-lessons may be applied here.
- 5 minutes: Reminders, announcements, etc.
- 60 minutes: Mixture of mini-lessons and workshop time

This outline is used because it provides a standard class structure that students can come to expect and rely on. Time allotments are not rigid, but are (like most things in this project) guidelines. If more time is needed to discuss journal entries and techniques, then this may take precedent over in-class writing time during workshops. The journal time allows students to focus on specific skills and to engage fully in the class before starting

to work on a larger piece of writing. Possible journal prompts may be found in the lesson bank portion of this project.

        Significant due dates are listed on the calendar but may or may not be included in the detailed lesson plans as they may or may not pertain directly to that mini-lesson. (For example, journals are due to be turned several times throughout the semester. These due dates are noted on the calendar, but not on the lesson plans that will also be taught on this day because they would have been collected regardless of the lesson plan.)

August

2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Getting Started	26 Getting Started	27	28
29	30 Getting Started	31				

September

2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 How to Succeed in this Class	**2**	**3** (No School: Labor Day Recess)	**4**
5	**6**	**7** My First Workshop	**8**	**9** Experiencing Through Writing	**10**	**11**
12	**13** Seeing the World From Many Angles	**14**	**15** Seeing the World From Many Angles	**16**	**17** (No School: Holiday)	**18**
19	**20** 1. Fiction Posters 2. Where Do We Go From Here?	**21**	**22**	**23** Discovering Poetry	**24**	**25**
26	**27** 1.Discovering Poetry 2. Genre Deadline: Poetry or fiction (choice)	**28**	**29** 1. Workshop 2. Submission Deadline	**30**		

October   2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 1. Poetry Posters 2. Workshop 3. *Journals Due*	**2**
3	**4**	**5** What is this 'genre' stuff, anyway?	**6**	**7** 1. Comic Books in an English Class?!? 2. Begin reading Maus	**8**	**9**
10 Comic Books in an English Class?!?	**11**	**12**	**13** Painting a Picture	**14**	**15** Open for lessons re: journals	**16**
17	**18** Getting to Know Metaphor	**19**	**20**	**21** (1/2 Day: Conferences) 1. Workshop 2. Genre Deadline: Graphic Literature	**22**	**23**
24 What's Your Problem?	**25**	**26**	**27** Workshop	**28**	**29** (1/2 Day) 1. Mid-semester survey 2. Submission Deadline	**30**

November 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		1. From Screen to Script 2. Begin A Raisin in the Sun		From Screen to Script		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Open for reteaching, survey results		Getting to Know You	Open for reteaching needs from journal evaluation	1. Workshop 2. Journals Due	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Complicating Matters				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	1. Drama Posters 2. Genre Deadline: Drama		(1/2 Day: Thanksgiving) Workshop			
28	29	30				
1. Recap genres 2. Submission Deadline						

December

2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 We Can Use More than One?	2	3 Blending Voices	4
5	6	7 Blending Voices	8	9 Multi-genre in research: workshop in library	10	11
12	13	14	15 Blending Voices	16 Blending Voices	17	18
19	20	21 (Winter Recess Begins)	22 1. Wrap up novel and plan for break: create lists of genres, techniques 2. *Submission Deadline*	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Multi-genre in research: workshop in library

January   2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 (Classes Resume)	4 Re-Cap of genres, techniques. Reminder of upcoming due dates	5	6 1. Workshop 2. Working Portfolio Due	7	8
9	10 Workshop	11	12 (Final Exams Start) Portfolio Fair (Final Portfolios Due)	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Section Four:
Bank of Lessons

Getting Started:
Preassessment, Establishing a Community, and Gaining Common Ground

Objectives:
- Preassess students home communities, writing background, writing ability levels, and experience
- Establish classroom procedures and guidelines
- Gain common ground for writing so that all students may start the semester with one draft
- Begin process of metacognitively reflecting on writing

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, notebooks, etc.
- Poster board or paper
- Chalkboard or overhead projector

Outline:

DAY 1:   Distribute the beginning-of-year survey to students on the first day of class. Class time may be given following introductions, but the majority of this assignment should be completed at home as it should be given a considerable amount of thought. Students should be instructed before filling out the survey that they are to be candid as they will not be graded for the content of what they write, but for the fact that they wrote it at all. They should be aware that their responses will contribute to the creation of a set of classroom guidelines.

DAY 2:   Ask students to share their ideas of environments conducive to concentration as well as their values for how they would like to be treated. In cooperative learning groups, ask students to establish some guidelines that help to encourage the values listed on the board. Group reporters should then write their rules either on the board or overhead and the guidelines should be synthesized and voted upon depending on the class' perception of importance. Based on this rating, students should establish a set of consequences to accompany the guidelines.

   For instance, if the majority of students agree that it is very important not to say rude things about another student's writing, then they might decide that a consequence of doing so includes warnings, apologies, and eventually a lunchtime detention.

   Just as the students are a part of the community and should have a say in its guidelines, so should the teacher. As students contribute suggestions and values, add to their list and supplement missing information so that their guidelines can appropriately influence the way the class runs.

   Once the guidelines and consequences have been established and discussed in class, the students should sign a contract to promote the adherence to the guidelines. The guidelines should also be posted for viewing in the room. A suggested title for the posting is: "Guidelines for Participating in this Classroom Community."

   Toward the end of the hour (following the collaborative effort to establish community guidelines), assign to students an essay explaining "What I did on my Summer Vacation." Explain, though, that the only stipulation for the essay is that none

of it may be true. Students' questions may be abundant, but the assignment should be fairly vague to allow for a greater range of creativity.

DAY 3:   At the beginning of the next class period, ask students to turn to a neighbor and briefly share what they thought of the assignment. Rather than simply responding that they liked it or didn't, students should follow a sample list of questions to guide their discussions. These sample questions should be displayed throughout the discussion:

- o   How much of your narrative is fiction?
- o   Did you think it's harder to write true stories or fictional stories?
- o   What did you do to make sure that nothing in your story was true?
- o   Was any part of your narrative true?
- o   If so, how did you turn it into fiction?

At the end of discussion (10 minutes), ask students to volunteer to share their answers discussed in groups. Annotate their findings (both the questions and answers) on the board or overhead, then explain that in this class, it will be important not only to write, but to reflect on writing. To do this, then, students should ask and answer specific questions about how, what, and why they wrote what they did. The class discussion should briefly outline what they should be aware of with a process and should serve as a mini-lesson on writing reflection journals.

Once the class has compiled a list of items to consider when reflecting on a writing, ask students to write a journal entry or letter to the teacher reflecting on the summer narrative assignment. Students should include their process and what they eventually thought of the end result. They may choose to focus on what was easy and what was difficult or on what they were happy with in the final product and what they might like to revisit at a later date.

At the end of the class period, students should turn in both their summer narratives and journals/letters. These drafts will be used to assess students' creative writing knowledge. (For example, from reading these, the teacher may ascertain that students tend to excel in voice but falter in tense and narration. From this information, lessons on tense and narration would become a main focus of the next few classes.) They will also serve to assess students' metacognitive skills to determine the extent to which the skill should be taught for upcoming reflection assignments involved in the workshop.

Survey One: Beginning of the Semester

<u>Purpose:</u>
- Assess students' backgrounds, attitudes, and experiences with writing
- Assess students' ability to put thoughts into words
- Establish community norms and develop classroom policies and procedures

<u>Directions:</u>

This survey is designed to give you – the students – a voice in how the class is run. This is YOUR class, so let's make it work for YOU! In the space provided, answer the following questions. You may attach additional paper if needed. Your answers will be graded on completion, not on content, so be honest and thorough.

1.   What is a writer?

2.   Describe yourself as a writer. Include past experience as well as how you view yourself as a writer today.

3.   Where/When do you like to write? What conditions are best for your concentration?

4.   Describe a typical day during the week. What do you usually do in the morning? After school?

5.   How do you expect to be treated in this class a) by your teacher and b) by your peers?

Survey Two: Middle of the Semester

<u>Purpose:</u>

- Evaluate the classroom to ensure that students understand the workings of the community in which they participate.
- Assess the development of attitudes toward writing and the class over the course of the semester so that, if needed, changes may be made.

<u>Directions:</u>

Now that we're half-way through the semester, I want to ensure that the second half will be as productive as possible. This survey will give me an idea of what I need to change and work on in order to make your classroom the best it can be. Now is a great chance to speak out and let me know what is and what isn't working for you. In the space provided, answer the following question. You may attach additional paper if needed. Your answers will be graded on completion, not on content, so be honest and thorough.

1.   Explain the class procedures.

2.   How do you feel while you're in this classroom?

3.   Do you write at home?

     1   2   3   4   5

     Never   A lot

4.   Do you write at school?

     1   2   3   4   5

     Never   A lot

5.   Where else do you write?

6.   What changes to the class would help you to make the most of your time? (What isn't working for you and what constructive suggestions do you have to make it work for you?)

Name: _____

Survey Directions:

This survey is designed to give you – the students – a voice in how the class is run. This is YOUR class, so let's make it work for YOU! In the space provided, answer the following questions. You may attach additional paper if needed. Your answers will be graded on completion, not on content, so be honest and thorough.

1. What is a writer?

2. Describe yourself as a writer. Include past experience as well as how you view yourself as a writer today.

3. Where/When do you like to write? What conditions are best for your concentration?

4. Describe a typical day during the week. What do you usually do in the morning? After school?

5. How do you expect to be treated in this class a) by your teacher and b) by your peers?

Name: _____

Survey Directions:

Now that we're half-way through the semester, I want to ensure that the second half will be as productive as possible. This survey will give me an idea of what I need to change and work on in order to make your classroom the best it can be. Now is a great chance to speak out and let me know what is and what isn't working for you. In the space provided, answer the following question. You may attach additional paper if needed. Your answers will be graded on completion, not on content, so be honest and thorough.

1. Explain the class procedures.

2. How do you feel while you're in this classroom?

3. Do you write at home?
   1   2   3   4   5
   Never   A lot

4. Do you write at school?
   1   2   3   4   5
   Never   A lot

5. Where else do you write?

6. What changes to the class would help you to make the most of your time? (What isn't working for you and what constructive suggestions do you have to make it work for you?)

Name: _____

Survey Directions:

Now that you've finished this course, please take the time to let me know what you think so that I can continue to improve for future classes. In the space provided, answer the following questions. You may attach additional paper if needed. Your answers will be graded on completion, not on content, so be honest and thorough.

1. What did you like best about this class?

2. What could have been better?

3. Write a note for one of my students to read on the first day of class next year. Explain to that student how to succeed in this course.

How to Succeed in this Class:
A Lesson on Conferences and Workshop in General

Objectives:
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of conferencing by contributing to a sample class conference and by participating in conferences about their own work (Course Objectives 1 and 3).

Resources:
- Overhead projector
- Sample poem written by instructor
- Multiple colored pens
- Paper
- Students' drafts of summer narrative

Outline:
Place a copy of a poem that you wrote on the overhead projector. The copy should be a work-in-progress, and not a final draft as you should be genuinely seeking guidance from the class. Explain to students that this is a poem you wrote and that, together, the class will go through a sample conference of the poem. Students should be made aware that this sample conference will be used throughout the semester, then, in their own personal conferences. Begin by reading the poem aloud to the class. Then, ask for, without giving suggestions, students to summarize it back to you. As they summarize, annotate their comments next to the correlating lines of poetry and give verbal feedback such as, "So in this line you see..." and so on. Then, ask for students to alternate between positive comments and suggestions for improvement. Also annotate these comments regardless of whether or not you agree with them. Continue to give verbal feedback and reiteration of what was said.

Then, slide the overhead to the side and put a blank transparency on the projector. It may be helpful to use a new color pen. Ask students what they experienced during the process of conferencing and write down their observations. To remind students, you might need to refresh their memories by putting the poem with comments back on the projector at intervals. The collected list of comments should include, but may not be limited to:
- Read aloud
- Summarized
- Gave positive AND negative feedback
- Offered suggestions
- Listened to suggestions
- Wrote down what was said
- Marked on the poem itself
- Did not say anything rude
- Was honest
- Author made sure he/she understood what the comments were

Title the list to reflect that these qualities make up a "Good" conference. Leave this list up as a reference and break students up into randomly selected groups of three to hold conferences on their summer narratives (which should be returned with comments and suggestions attached on a separate sheet of paper). Circulate throughout the room to ensure that students are having productive conferences. All students should be actively participating and following the steps listed in the class discussion. Allow at least 50 minutes for conference time.

While students are still in their groups, ask them to jot down a few ideas of where they could go next with the writing. Ask for a representative from each group to write a few of these ideas on the board. Explain, then, that revision does not only entail "fixing mistakes," but that a lot can potentially change. Also explain that, while we listen respectfully and record all suggestions, we don't have to use all of them when revising.

Explain that drafting, conferencing, and revising will be an integral process to this class. Then, hand out the class outline with due dates and assignments. Go over this in detail, outlining expectations and answering questions. It should be taken home and signed by the student and his/her parents/guardians. Detailed rubrics for the assignments may be made available as the semester progresses.

Creative Writing Assignments and Due Dates
(How Will I be Graded???)

Every Week:

1. You must draft one piece of writing (NOTE: revisions count as additional drafts). If you are working on a draft longer than a five-page short story, please see me to revise your requirements.
***Keep in mind that, in order to complete one draft per week, you will need to do a good amount of writing outside of the class
2. You should participate in one conference.
3. I will check your notebooks. In your notebooks each week, I should be able to easily find:
   1. Journals
   2. Notes from lessons
   3. Handouts and group work

10/1 and 11/12:

Journals are due. Turn in your process journals paper-clipped together and dated in chronological order. For each journal, I will be looking for the following items:

1. Participation (You should have one journal entry for each class meeting.)
2. Question and Answer (You should ask questions about your writing, something we've learned in class as it applies to your writing, and then you should attempt to answer those questions. You will not be graded on the answers themselves, but rather that you attempted to tackle your question.)
3. Detail (When reflecting on a piece, refer to specific examples in your writing. Then, rather than reflecting that, "I didn't like it," explain WHY. Also, rather than just reflecting on the piece itself, reflect on what you're thinking as you're writing it.)

The last section of journals will be collected with the working portfolio.

9/27, 10/21, 11/22

Genre deadlines. Each unit will be based on a specific genre. During this unit, we will read literature written in this genre, and we will learn about the craft and process involved in writing in the genre. You will all experiment with these new, and most-likely unfamiliar genres. I will be collecting a final draft (including rough drafts and conference notes) in the corresponding genre during each deadline.

1/6:

Working portfolio is due. The working portfolio should contain ALL drafts written in this class. There should be a MINIMUM of 15 drafts. (Note, this is subject to change depending on the length of drafts). With your drafts (all drafts and revisions, please), include ALL of your process journals. It may be helpful to submit

this in a binder with divisions or in a folder with more than one pocket.

1/12:   Final portfolio is due. From the working portfolio, choose four drafts to take to completion. (Taking a piece to completion includes rough drafts, conference notes, and revisions.) The drafts should be representative of at least 2 different genres and should utilize a variety of writing techniques. Then, write a DETAILED letter to me explaining why you chose these three pieces and what I should look for when grading them. You will be graded on the pieces themselves AND on your analysis of them included in the letter. We will determine specific grading for this project later in the semester.

9/29, 10/29, 11/29, and 12/21:   Submission deadlines for class publication. You will be required to submit *at least one* piece (final draft) for publication in the class literary magazine during at least one submission period. *It is YOUR responsibility to keep track of these deadlines and of when you have submitted. DO NOT wait until the very last deadline to submit your first piece.* If you choose to submit more than one piece or for more than one deadline, you will receive additional points.

Submission For Publication

Deadline Date (Circle one):

9/29   10/29   11/29   12/21

Date Received:_____
Instructor's Initials: _____

Name:

Title of Piece:

Genre:

Why should this piece be included in the class publication?

Final Draft Submissions (Genre Deadlines)

Name:

Title of Piece:

Genre:

What techniques did you use in this piece that are specific to the genre? Be specific and explain your answer in detail!

I will be grading each final draft on the following criteria:

- genre characteristics
- content: imaginative, new, thoughtful, well-developed, and presents a clear idea or ideas
- process: include all drafts and conference notes
- editing: spelling, grammar, mechanics

Please write a one-two page letter to me explaining what grade you would give this final draft based on the abovementioned criteria. You must explain each one thoroughly and by using specific examples.

My First Workshop:
A Lesson Recalling the Process of a Conference

Objectives:
- Students will demonstrate understanding of literary terms by teaching them to other students and by asking questions (Course Objective 2).
- Students will participate in a workshop environment (Course Objectives 1, 2, and 3).

Resources:
- Paper and writing utensils
- Poster board or banner paper
- Markers

Outline:

Remind students of the list of literary devices constructed during the previous lessons and ask students to turn to their neighbors and explain two of the items from that list. Once they have done that, each student should write down one question that he/she has about the literary terms. The question may be fact based (i.e. "What is a metaphor?") or curiosity based (i.e. "I wonder how my story would change if I described a situation using irony?"). While students are writing their questions, circulate through the class to read the questions and choose students to ask their questions. Answer fact-based questions that were frequently asked for the whole class on the board or overhead. Questions left unanswered can be put on hold until the next class period (or may be answered individually during workshop).

Label a poster with two categories: "Helpful and Hurtful Conferences." Ask students to silently recall what they remember about conferences from the previous class period and write those down beneath their literary term questions. Call on students to contribute to giving examples of helpful and hurtful conferences. The list should help students to recall the procedure of conferencing a piece of writing.

At the beginning of workshop, record the Status of the Class to determine students' plans and begin to chart progress. If students are having difficulty jumping into a piece, they may choose to revise their summer narratives or choose a writing prompt from the class collection. Then, circulate through the class to answer questions and conference with students.

Warn students with a five minute cushion that the workshop is coming to an end and ask students to return to their seats to write in their journals. Remind students about the expected content and quality of journals. Circulate throughout to assess students' understanding of the task.

Experiencing Through Writing:
A Lesson on Descriptive Devices

Objectives:
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of various descriptive devices (such as simile, metaphor, imagery, etc.) by writing an example of an "Explode a Moment" exercise (Course Objective 2).

Resources:
- Writing utensils and paper
- A set of several large photographs
- A set of cards with several short descriptive prompts written on them

Outline:

Instruct students to take out a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. At five minute intervals, display photographs of various everyday scenes (bus stops, farms, sky scrapers, people waiting in line, etc.). Students should then describe what they see on paper. Write the first description with the students to model what is expected.

Once students have practiced with at least three photographs, select students to read lines from their descriptions. Then, label the descriptive devices as they go. For instance, if a student reads a line, write that line: "It was as big as a city block" and then label next to it "simile." Then, write the definition for that label next to the example. Continue for several sentences/examples. All examples should then be categorized by device. (All sentences that are examples of similes, for example, should be listed with each other and with the definition of simile.) Explain that, since all of these devices serve to describe an image in words, they contribute to imagery. Students should be instructed to label their notes for the day "imagery."

Students should log the various devices in their notebooks as a guide to reference when writing, but assure them that the will not be held accountable for memorizing and perfecting each device. Right now, the focus should be to expose students to many different kinds of imagery and to make them aware that there are methods and labels for these methods behind writing a descriptive passage. Once their writing is assessed, specific devices for imagery should be focused on in more detail. This may occur later in the semester as is needed and appropriate.

To give students practice using these techniques, introduce them to the "explode a moment" writing prompt by sharing with them one that you have written. Then, model the technique in a whole-class activity. To do this prompt, students should either brainstorm everyday things that happened to them or pick from a set of cards with everyday happenings on them (ex: tripping on a shoelace, scoring a free throw, forgetting a locker combination, etc.). Students should then explain the moment in a play-by-play narration. Students should be aware that describing the moment will probably last quite a bit longer than the moment itself would. A good way to describe it is to put an action into slow motion and describe everything. In exploding a moment, challenge students to try to use as many kinds of imagery as possible. Once students have finished their "explode a moment" exercises, they should go back with a different colored writing utensil and label the descriptive devices that they recognize. These should be turned in to

assess students' recognition and use of imagery devices. Once finished, students should then report their status and participate in workshop.

Seeing the World From Many Angles:
A Lesson in Narrative Point of View

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify the characteristics of first person and third person narrators as well as be able to distinguish between the characteristics of third person limited, omniscient, and objective (Course Objective 2).
- Students will be able to use the conventions of various narrative points of view in their own writing (Course objectives 1 and 2).

Resources:
- Writing utensils and paper
- Passages from several different pieces of literature representing an array of narrative points of view
- Poster board or banner paper
- Markers
- Cards with brief scenarios written on them for writing prompts

Outline:

PRIOR TO DAY 1:   Briefly introduce students to a selection of short stories selected for their varying narrative styles and ask them to choose one to read by the next class period. An example list of stories is:

"The Lesson," Toni Cade Bambara

"Where are you going, where have you been?" Joyce Carol Oates

"Everyday Use," Alice Walker

"The Lottery," Shirley Jackson

Instruct students that, while they are reading the passages, they should answer the following questions in their notebooks:
- Who is telling the story?
- How do you know? Underline passages that tell you who is telling the story.
- Do you trust what the storyteller tells you?
- Why or why not? Underline passages that either win or lose your trust.

DAY 1:   Students should have finished reading and answering the guided questions, so they should get into randomly selected groups of four to share their answers. While students are working in groups, circulate to focus groups' observation on the passages' narration. For example, ask questions like, "How do you know that he's a good guy?" or "Who told you that she was afraid?"

Once groups have identified differences in narration, display on the overhead an outline of different points of view including at a *minimum* a differentiation between third and first person (depending on assessment taken while circulating during group work). As detail is added, consider introducing third person limited, omniscient, and objective and be ready to differentiate between subtleties. When introducing first person narration, introduce the question of reliability by recalling students' trust of their narrators during reading. For each different narrator, differentiate between who tells the story (a character in the story vs. some unknown storyteller outside the plot) and list defining characteristics

(i.e. "may be reliable or unreliable," "only knows what one narrator is thinking," "is all-knowing," etc.). Students should copy this information into their notebooks and label it "Narration."

To practice this information, pass out handouts with excerpts of stories with varying narrative styles. Students should then return to their groups to label each passage's narration and underline key lines that differentiate it as such. Once this is done, the handouts should be turned back in to assess students' understandings of the narration styles.

The rest of the class period should be spent in workshop.

DAY 2:   Break students into four randomly selected groups as they enter the classroom. The groups should be acknowledged by color determined by the color marker that they are to use for the following carousel activity. Students should then circulate by group to each poster labeled:
- 1st Person
- 3rd Person Objective
- 3rd Person Limited
- 3rd Person Omniscient

and recall from the last period characteristics exclusive to that narrator. Students should be given only one to two minutes at each poster before rotating. Then, the class should review the posters together and fill in any missing information.

Then, the next 30 minutes should be spent on a writing prompt applying students' knowledge of narration. Each student should pick a card from a box. On each card should be labeled a brief scenario (ex: fender bender, power outage, arrest, championship win, etc.) and students should then write two different accounts of the same scenario from two different narrative points of view. Circulate to ensure students are writing from multiple narrative styles and not only from multiple characters' points of view. Students may choose, then, to extend this activity into their workshop for the day.

The remainder of the class period should be spent recording students' progress and activities and engaging in workshop.

Narrative Points of View

Point of View	Who tells the story?	What's special about it?
1st Person		
3rd Person Objective		
3rd Person Omniscient		
3rd Person Limited		

Additional Notes:

Where Do We Go From Here?
Extending beyond the red pen and into real revision

Objectives:
- Students will be able to evaluate their own writing and make choices that will influence the outcome of subsequent drafts (Course Objectives 1 and 3).

Resources:
- Overhead projector or black/whiteboard and writing utensils
- Paper, pens, pencils
- Highlighters
- Copies of pieces of writing in various stages of revision

Outline:

Ask students to think about what they do to revise a piece before writing another draft. They may turn to a neighbor and talk it over briefly. Once students have put their revision process into words, ask for volunteers to share what they do to revise a piece with the class. Write these down. The list should include things like:
- Re-read
- Peer edit
- Fix spelling mistakes
- Fix grammar and punctuation mistakes

Once a list has been established, make the observation that many of these would not change a piece's meaning very much. Then, write the word "REVISION" on the board and break it into its prefix and root word (re and vision). Tell students that, in order to really revise a piece, sometimes you have to change how you look at it.

Pass to students a copy of an early draft of your own writing. It should not be polished and may contain grammatical and spelling errors as well as larger, developmental problems. If it is a long piece, only an excerpt is necessary. Instruct students to read the piece silently. Once they finish, they should turn their paper over as a cue that they are in fact finished so that you can pass them a second (or later) draft of the same piece. It should have significant changes made in addition to the surface-level corrections made to it. As students are reading, write the following questions/instructions on the board:
- Highlight passages in the second draft that were changed or added since the first draft.
- In the first draft, cross out passages that were deleted in the second draft.
- How did this change how you felt about the character, problem, setting, etc.?
- How did this change the piece's meaning?
- How do you think I (the author of the pieces) might have felt making these changes?

Once students have finished this task, they should get into randomly selected groups and discuss their answers.

Reinforce to students the definition of revision by adding to the previously created list of 'revision' processes in a different color things like:
- Move paragraphs

- Delete paragraphs
- Add dialogue
- Change characters' names

Before commencing a workshop for the rest of the class period, tell students that it is a class expectation that their drafts undergo revision in its whole process. For the next class period, then, type the list that the class made of things to do when revising and pass it out to each student as a reminder.

Discovering Poetry:
A lesson plan in rhythm, rhyme, imagery, and all things poetic

Objectives:
- Students will be able to utilize multiple texts to identify poetic devices such as meter, end and slant rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc. (Course Objective 2).
- Students will be able to incorporate a variety of poetic devices into their own writing (Course Objective 2).

Resources:
- Pencils, Pens
- Paper
- Computer Access
- Copier
- Poetry library (can be a class set or borrowed from local or school library) including a range of poets such as Silverstein, Prelutsky, Lorde, Rich, Shakespeare, Byron, Angelou, Frost, Wordsworth, etc.

Outline:

<u>DAY 1:</u>   Explain to students that the class period will be spent exploring poems. Introduce students to the collection and give students directions for the class period. Every student should have easy access to a writing utensil and paper or computer word processing. Over the course of the class period, they are to read through books of poetry with the focus of finding a minimum of three poems that they like and copying them down onto paper. (If a Xerox machine is easily and affordably accessible, then this would be a wonderful alternative for manually copying the poems.) Students should keep in mind the upcoming assignment (which should be explained at the beginning of the class period) that they will become songwriters.

Students should imagine that they are songwriters in search of the perfect lyrics. They should consult poetry to find the lyrics that will make the next # 1 single. By the next class meeting, students should individually choose one song to put to music and attach to a copy of the 'lyrics' a description of that song aimed at advertisers and record executives explaining the qualities of the song that would make it a number one hit. They should include in their descriptions:
- Audience (Who will like it and why?)
- Tempo (How fast/slow is it?)
- Artist (Who should sing it? What qualities should their voice/performance have?)
- Instrumentation (What kind of a band will play it? Guitars? Brass? Heavy percussion?)
- Music Video (What type of music video might this song elicit? What would you see on the screen? What images, colors, etc. would be included?)

<u>DAY 2:</u>   Before students arrive, arrange the room into groups with large pieces of poster paper and markers set up at each table. The posters should be labeled with imaginary radio call signs such as:

- 100.1, Country Countdown
- 100.2, Rappin' Radio
- 100.3, Bubblegum Pop
- 100.4, Breezy Ballads

As students walk in, instruct them to take a seat at the radio station most likely to play their 'song.' Once seated, students should take out their poems and descriptions. As the groups convene, they should designate the following roles to enhance group productivity and cooperation:

- Recorder
- Time Keeper
- Artist
- Discussion Motivator
- Discussion Moderator

All students should assume the roles of "contributors."

Students should decorate their poster as an advertisement for their radio station. Included on the poster should be:

- A slogan describing the kind of music listeners will hear
- Key words and phrases found in the 'songs' that distinguish the genre
- Feelings those words and the songs should elicit

Once the posters have been created, a discussion (led by the teacher) should encourage metacognition. The discussion should be run by asking each group to present to the rest of the class their radio station. The teacher should then ask students to explain why they chose to put their songs on these radio stations and why the songs made them feel the way that they do. The teacher should then rephrase and recall students' answers to illuminate devices discovered and write these devices on the board or on an overhead projector. For example, if one student says that her song made her feel sad because it used words like "blue and lonely," then the teacher would reply that she was looking at the words in the song and would write something like "word choice" on the board. Connections can be drawn on the board, then, to illustrate choices influencing the feeling/meaning of a song/poem. An example diagram might look something like this:

Word Choice		**Audience**
Sounds	**Meanings**	**Subject**
Onomatopoeia	Adjectives	Speaker
Rhythm	Direct images	Purpose
Rhyme	Metaphor	
Alliteration		

Students should keep the chart along with terms' definitions and examples in their notebooks for reference. Terms may overlap with those covered during additional lessons, but examples and additional definition may be added for clarification. As is

determined through continuous assessment, some of these devices may require more in-depth teaching at a later date.

Before leaving class, students should individually fill out exit cards explaining using at least three terms on the board why they chose to categorize their song the way that they did. The cards should be turned in along with the posters and 'songs.'

For homework and in writing workshop in the next class period, students should label in their writing (either in a different color pen or with a sticky note) devices used to create meaning. They should be as specific as possible. If a student knows that he/she has a method behind a section of the writing, he/she should be encouraged to make a best guess as to what device it is most like and should label that section with a "?" to be explored during the next conference session. For example, if a student realizes that he/she is creating an image using a comparison, he/she might write "comparison ?" or "imagery ?" and later refine that to "metaphor" or "simile."

What Is This "Genre" Stuff, Anyway?
An Introduction into the Study of Genres

Objectives:
- Students will be able to apply their prior knowledge to the definition of 'genre' in order to start a class reference list of genres (Course Objectives 2 and 3).

Resources:
- Paper
- Pencils, pens, etc.
- Several selections of literature sampling the following genres: fiction, poetry, newspaper article, letter
- A class set of five index cards for each student with five assigned group numbers
- Five boxes or trays for collecting index cards

Outline:

Before class begins, the room should be arranged into stations labeled by numbers one through five. At each station should be several samples of a genre. For example, table one should be devoted to fiction and should therefore have several samples of excerpts from novels, short stories, and children's books in various forms (photo copied packets, tradebooks, etc.). The stations should ONLY be labeled by numbers.

As students enter the classroom, they should receive a bundle of five index cards with a number (1-5) assigning them randomly to a group. While waiting for all students to arrive, they should begin to put their names on the back of each index card in their bundles. Students should report first to the station corresponding to their numbers to skim and read through the samples provided. They should get about five minutes of reading time at each station before they are given a warning to take out their index cards. Once the warning is given, they are to answer the question: "How are the materials at your station similar?" on the index card. Index cards (with students' names on the back and answers to the question on the front) should be placed in the corresponding station's box before a verbal or non-verbal clue (flickering the lights, ringing a bell, etc.) is given to rotate stations. Students may then rotate in any order they wish, but must stay reading at each station for the allotted period of time. Student participation in each station will be monitored by the collection of index cards.

Once students have visited each station, read select answers from the box (without singling students out who contributed the answers) aloud to the class. Since it is likely that students' prior knowledge will allow them to observe similarities and categorize the pieces, tell them that the trend you notice is that they are categorizing what they read. Then, inform them that, when applied to literature, categorization has a special term. Display the word 'genre' and its definition on the board or overhead and instruct students to copy the information into the reference section of their notebooks.

After the students have copied the definition, ask them to quickly brainstorm with their group genres other than the ones covered in the class stations. To help facilitate groups' discussion, it may be helpful to prompt students to break the stations up into more specific categories. For example, the group sitting at the 'letter' station could generate the following genres: business letter, informal letter, memo, email, journal entry,

etc. Then, bring students back into class discussion and ask group reporters to share with the class the genres they brainstormed. As they share, record on a large sheet of poster paper the genres. Once the class has created a substantial list of genres, label it "genre reference" and remind the students that they may continue to add to it as they think of more genres. Hang the poster prominently near the fiction and poetry posters already created and draw students' attention to the fact that, since they have already identified two genres and listed their characteristics, they were already aware of this system of categorization but that they now have a name for it.

As the lesson closes, direct students' attention back to the class projects (either in the newsletter or on the syllabus). Inform them that, starting with this class period, they will focus on some more unconventional genres and that they will be encouraged to try as many new genres out for their drafts as possible. Students should be reminded that, for their final portfolio, final drafts must represent a minimum of two genres.

This lesson should be extended and retaught as new genres are introduced. To do this, students should list characteristics of genres, break them up into further detailed genres, and continue to add to their reference lists of genres and characteristics of the main genres studied in class. The exploration of genre characteristics should be expanded upon through close readings of the text and discussion about author's craft, writing exercises and activities that approximate an author's style, and through practice with various styles unique to a specific genre. These activities may be done through mini-lessons or journal-writing prompts.

Webster's Dictionary definition of GENRE

Genre: *n*

1. a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content
2. kind, sort

Comic Books in an English Class?!?
An Introduction to the Graphic Novel Genre

Objectives:
- Students will be able to, through the identification of similarities and differences between text written in the genre of conventional fiction and of graphic novels, identify characteristics of the corresponding genres (Course Objectives 2 and 3).
- Students will be able to develop strategies for reading and writing in the genre of graphic novels (Course Objectives 2 and 3).

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, etc.
- Overhead projector
- Copied selections of Kafka's "The Metamorphosis"
- Copied corresponding selections of Kuper's graphic adaptation of "The Metamorphosis"
- Group worksheet on finding differences and identifying characteristics
- Select transparency copies of selections from Maus

Outline:

DAY 1:   Assign students into randomly selected, cooperative learning groups of approximately four or five members. Students should each take on cooperative learning roles (reader, recorder, questioner, task-manager, mediator, etc.).

First, distribute to each group one copy of the worksheet. Each group should then receive one copy of an excerpt from Kafka's "Metamorphosis." (A good selection to use is the opening segment in which Gregor Samsa first wakes up to discover that he's turned into a bug.) The reader should read this selection aloud to his/her group-mates. Once he or she is finished reading, the group should engage in discussion based on the worksheet's questions. The group's recorder should record the group's consensus on the worksheet.

After students have wrapped up discussion on the Kafka excerpt, distribute to them the corresponding section from the graphic novel adaptation of the text. Because of its visual nature, each student in the group should get access to a copy. Students should follow similar procedure in discussing and answering the questions.

Once all groups have finished their worksheets, start a class genre poster on graphic novel and lead discussion in identifying characteristics of the genre to list on the poster. Guide students toward finding the characteristics in reading their answers regarding the similarities and differences between the two genres of fiction and graphic novels.

DAY 2:   Place on the overhead projector a transparency with a selection from Maus. The selection should be one that students have read independently already through homework reading assignments. Demonstrate to students a "Think-Aloud" activity by reading aloud through a portion of the text and verbalizing all thought associated with the reading. For example, if there is a sentence with a difficult vocabulary word, the teacher should read the sentence and then say his/her thought process: "I wonder if I said that

word correctly. What does it mean, anyway?" This demonstration could be extended by then asking for student volunteers and guiding them through the activity's roles. Both volunteers should either sit together or stand at the front of the class to participate in the activity. One volunteer should receive the job title, "think-aloud." The other should take on the role, "interrogator." (It may be helpful to ask the students to wear title name tags. In this case, there should be enough name tags for each student to wear a title once they have broken into groups.) Explain that the "think-aloud" student will read the section on the overhead aloud and will also say everything that he or she is thinking aloud – whether it makes sense or not. Readers are not allowed to think silently; every thought should be spoken. "Interrogators," then, are in charge of asking the readers for answers. When a reader makes a statement, the interrogator may ask "why?" or "how did you know that?" or "when did you learn that?" Silence should not exceed five seconds. (To encourage this, a points system may be awarded to turn the activity into a game.) For the first few practice activities, the teacher may choose to take one of the parts or may coach the students while they gain an understanding of the process.

Once the class understands the process and has practiced significantly under direction, break students up into pairs and distribute name tags if in use. Students should perform this activity in pairs with samples that they choose from <u>Maus</u>. They should take turns with the roles of "think-aloud" and "interrogator."

Once students have practiced the activity with a few sections from the book, direct their attention to class discussion. Point out on the board or overhead some of the strategies that you saw them using when reading a graphic novel. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Looking at clues in the pictures:
  - Facial expressions
  - Background activity
  - Character appearance
- Reading the words:
  - Accents/dialects
  - Narration
  - Quotations
- Asking questions
- Answering the questions by looking back
- Answering questions by looking at what's around it
- Finding inconsistencies
  - Pictures don't match what is being said
  - Plot or setting jumps around

For the next class period, then, copy this list of strategies and distribute it to the class to include in the reference section of their notebooks. It may be repeated in groups or as a class during difficult sections of the text or for practice, reteaching, and extension.

Group Members: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part One:
Read the first selection aloud and then answer the following questions.
1.   Who is the main character and what is he/she experiencing?

2.   How did you know that?

3.   Cite three (3) passages, words, sentences, etc. that you think get the author's message across the best.

Part Two:
Read the next selection aloud and individually, then answer the following questions.
4.   Who is the main character and what is he/she experiencing?

5.   How did you know that?

6.   Cite three (3) passages, words, pictures, sentences, etc. that you think get the author's message across the best.

Part Three:
Refer to both selections to answer the following questions.
7.   How was your interpretation of the first passage different from the second?

8.   What did the two authors do differently to convey meaning? Feeling?

Passage One

The Metamorphosis
Franz Kafka

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect. He was lying on his hard, as it were armorplated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his dome-like brown belly divided into stiff arched segments on top of which the bed quilt could hardly keep in position and was about to slide off completely. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes.

What has happened to me? He thought. It was no dream. His room, a regular human bedroom, only rather too small, lay quiet between the four familiar walls. Above the table on which a collection of cloth samples was unpacked and spread out – Samsa was a commercial traveler – hung the picture which he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and put into a pretty gilt frame. It showed a lady, with a fur cap on and a fur stole, sitting upright and holding out to the spectator a huge fur muff into which the whole of her forearm had vanished!

Gregor's eyes turned next to the window, and the overcast sky – one could hear rain drops beating on the window gutter – made him quite melancholy. What about sleeping a little longer and forgetting all this nonsense, he thought, but it could not be done, for he was accustomed to sleep on his right side and in his present condition he could not turn himself over. However violently he forced himself towards his right side he always rolled onto his back again. He tried it at least a hundred times, shutting his eyes to keep from seeing his struggling legs, and only desisted when he began to feel in his side a faint dull ache he had never experienced before.

Oh God, he thought, what an exhausting job I've picked on! Traveling about day in, day out. It's much more irritating work than doing the actual business in the office, and on top of that there's the trouble of constant traveling, of worrying about train connections, the bed and irregular meals, casual acquaintances, that are always new and never become intimate friends. The devil take it all! He felt a slight itching up on his belly; slowly pushed himself on his back nearer to the top of the bed so that he could lift his head more easily; identified the itching place which was surrounded by many small white spots the nature of which he could not understand and made to touch it with a leg, but drew the leg back immediately, for the contact made a cold shiver run through him.

When Gregor Samsa
awoke one morning from
disturbing dreams,
he found himself
transformed . . .
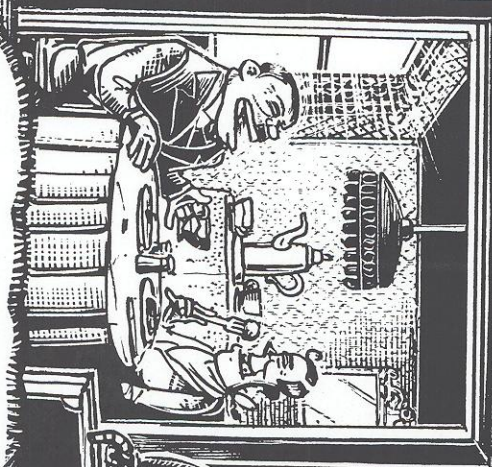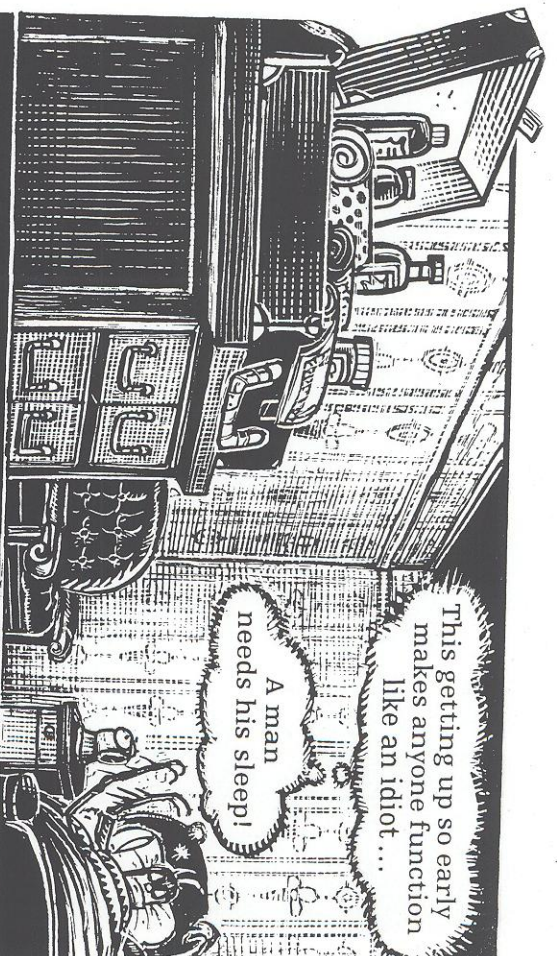
ONLY THREE HOURS A NIGHT?

AND A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE EXAM, *NO* SLEEP AND *NO* FOOD...

GOOD BOY—JUST A LITTLE MORE COFFEE!
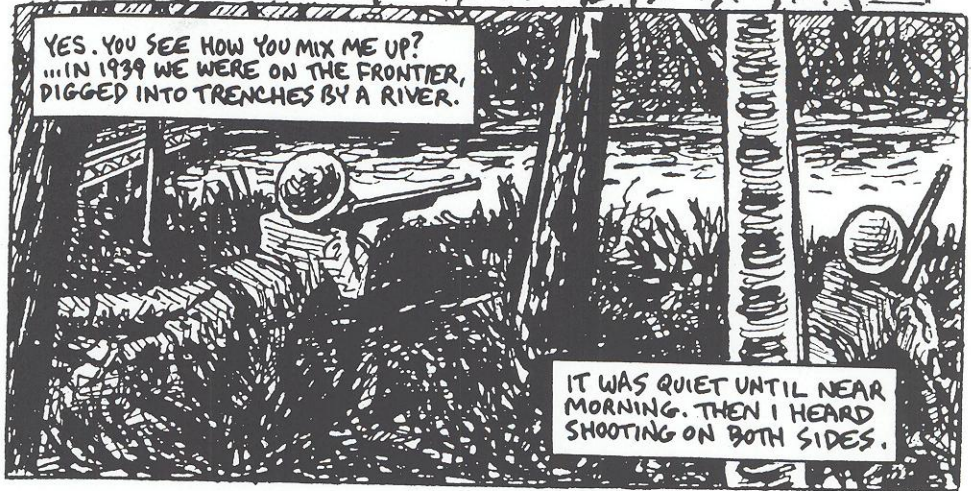
ONLY A GALLON COFFEE A DAY FOR MY HEART.

ERE SEEMS TO BE HING WRONG WITH HIM.

D YOURSELF UP FOR A YEAR, G MAN, AND WE'LL REVIEW CASE AGAIN.

...THE NEXT YEAR FATHER WANTED I WOULD AGAIN DO THE SAME THING. BUT I *BEGGED* HIM AND WENT IN 1922 TO THE ARMY...

BUT LET'S GET BACK TO 1939!

YES. YOU SEE HOW YOU MIX ME UP? ...IN 1939 WE WERE ON THE FRONTIER, DIGGED INTO TRENCHES BY A RIVER.

IT WAS QUIET UNTIL NEAR MORNING. THEN I HEARD SHOOTING ON BOTH SIDES.

AN OFFICER SNEAKED OVER TO ME.

DIG IN DEEPER. YOU'LL GET KILLED.
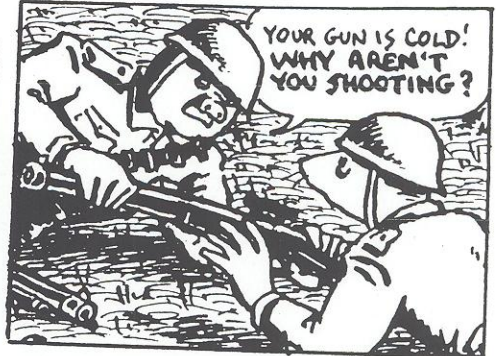
YOUR GUN IS COLD! WHY AREN'T YOU SHOOTING?
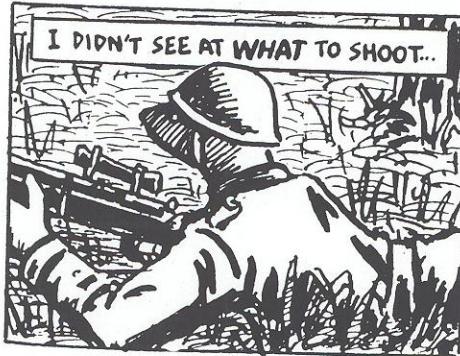
I DIDN'T SEE AT *WHAT* TO SHOOT...

KPOK! KPOK! KPOK!
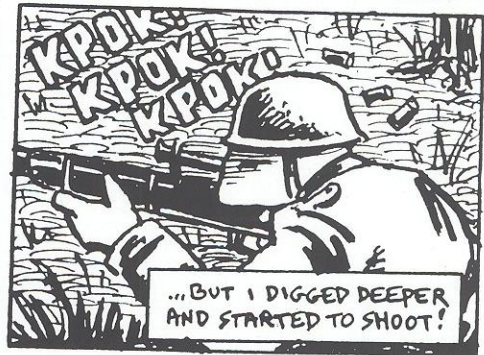
...BUT I DIGGED DEEPER AND STARTED TO SHOOT!

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Painting a Picture:
A Guide to Imagery

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify examples of imagery in writing (Course objective 3).
- Students will be able to apply aspects of imagery to their own writing (Course Objective 2).

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, etc.
- Maus, by Art Spiegelman
- Poster or summary of list created on poster during the "Discovering Poetry" lesson

Outline:

Turn students' attention to the list generated earlier in the course, during the "Discovering Poetry" lesson. The list should be comprised of literary devices that contribute to the tone or feeling of a piece of writing. To refresh students' memories, ask them to turn to their neighbors and ask questions about the list and attempt to answer classmates' questions about the vocabulary. After a few minutes of questioning has passed, bring students' attention back to the class discussion and ask what questions have not been answered. Refresh definitions of terms, but do not dwell on going into great detail as this is something that can be done further in extension lessons and in individual conferences. Students should have the basic terms and definitions in the reference section of their notebooks.

Once students' memories have been refreshed about the devices, give them a detailed definition of the term 'imagery.' Then, ask students to consider which of the devices might relate directly to imagery, or to creating a picture with words. As students consider this, they should jot their ideas down in their notebook. Circulate to make sure that students understand the directions and are writing down which terms might be examples of how we use imagery in writing, then ask for volunteers to share their imagery terms with the class. One at a time, consider each of the suggestions and give examples in writing. (The class may create the examples together on the board or the teacher may use pre-selected of his/her own writing to share.) If a student's suggestion is not an example of imagery, explain why or why not and give counter-examples to illustrate why it is not. For example, if a student says that onomatopoeia is an example of imagery, explain that onomatopoeia is sounds in writing and, by itself is not an example of imagery. If we write "drip, drop" on the board, we can hear the words more than we can see them. If we were to explain, however, that the room was so soggy, we could practically hear it dripping, then this exaggeration and inclusion of onomatopoeia would be an example of imagery.

Once a substantial list of terms relating to imagery has been constructed, post it prominently in the room for reference. (The list should also be copied into students' reference section of their notebooks.) Ask students to turn to their neighbors and discuss, in groups of two or three, how imagery changes in graphic novels like Maus. Once

groups have engaged in discussion and have raised questions, ask them to take out their books and use examples from the text to decide how imagery is used differently in <u>Maus</u>. Ask them also to consider ways in which it is used the same. Write on the board the following questions:

- How is imagery used differently in graphic novels like <u>Maus</u>?
- How is imagery used similarly or the same in graphic novels?
- Which of the imagery terms that we discussed can you see being used in <u>Maus</u>? On what Pages? (Find specific examples.)

Then, circulate through the groups' discussion to ensure that students are staying on task and to prompt further thought. Show them additional passages and ask students to identify which of the terms of imagery is being used.

To transition the period into writing workshop, ask students to get back to their seats and choose a minimum of two panels in <u>Maus</u> to rewrite without pictures. Remind them that, without pictures, they will have to rely on devices of imagery discussed in class and return to the terms on the poster or list if necessary. Leave the list posted prominently and ask students to, once they have finished rewriting the panels of <u>Maus</u>, label in the margins which devices they used and where. They may underline, highlight, or use a separate color if necessary. Collect the rewritten sections to allot daily participation points and assess students' understanding and application.

Getting to Know Metaphors:
A Guide to Making Comparisons

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify examples of simile, metaphor, and extended metaphor in written literature (Course Objective 3).
- Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of metaphor by writing their own examples (Course Objective 2).

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, etc.
- <u>Maus</u>, by Art Spiegelman
- Several visual images and written ideas on index cards

Outline:

Define for students the terms 'metaphor' and 'simile' on the board or overhead projector and ensure they copy these definitions into the reference section of their notebooks. Explain that both metaphors and similes compare two things or ideas, but metaphors do so directly and similes do so by connecting them with the words "like" and "as." Put an example list of sentences on the board and ask students to write in their notebooks whether each is a metaphor or a simile. An example list might look something like this:

1. It was as hot as an oven.
2. He was really just a big teddy bear.
3. The water was so smooth, it was like glass.
4. It was like a breath of fresh air.
5. She was as cold as ice.
6. Your room is a pig sty!

Then, present the students with the definition of 'extended metaphor.' Provide each student with a copy of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and display a copy on the overhead projector. Introduce it by telling students that Robert Frost uses an extended metaphor to compare two roads with a choice. Read the poem aloud, but ask students to follow along and then read one more time silently to themselves. They should underline or circle areas where they see the metaphor being extended. Share answers as a class and make underlines/circles on the overhead transparency.

Break students up into randomly selected groups of four or five and explain that they are going to work on examining how Art Spiegelman uses metaphor. Students should take on cooperative learning roles such as recorder, reporter, text-connector, mediator, task-manager, etc. Each group should receive a slip of paper with a character, situation, or image from <u>Maus</u> written on it. The group is responsible for deciding whether or not this is a metaphor, if it is an extended metaphor or not, why or why not, and, if so, what the metaphor is comparing. (Remind students of this task by writing instructions on the board or posting them on the overhead projector.) For example, one group might receive a slip of paper with the word "cats" written on it. They might choose that yes, cats are metaphors for oppression and that yes, it is extended because the

comparison reoccurs throughout the novel. They would also be responsible for explaining their reasoning.

Students should receive approximately ten minutes of group discussion before being asked to join a class discussion. Reporters or presenters from each group should present their group's potential metaphor to the class and explain their discussion and answers to the questions. Once they have presented their group's stance, the potential metaphor is up for debate/discussion for all students in the class. For example, once the abovementioned group presented that they believed the cats were a metaphor for evil and explained why, another student from any group might choose to agree and explain his/her reasoning or disagree and explain as well. Remind students that there are many possible answers, so every question might not have a right or wrong answer. Limit discussion to a few (3-5) minutes.

Once all groups have gotten a chance to present their opinions, tell students that they will get a chance to write some metaphors of their own. Distribute index cards with words, and pictures on them. (For example, one student might get a magazine picture of a baby on it while another might get a newspaper clipping with the words "father implicated in murder" on it.) With these, they are to describe their image or situation using a metaphor. Explain that the metaphor may be simple or extended but that they must label it as such. As students finish their metaphors, they should turn them in for participation points and assessment of their understanding before reporting their status of the class and commencing workshop activities.

This lesson should be extended into students' current writing by asking students to read through their current drafts, circle or underline descriptive passages, and rewrite them by incorporating metaphors. This may be done through journal prompts or through guided activities in class or as homework. Before being assigned, the activity of rewriting description using metaphor should be modeled in class. The teacher should post an example of a descriptive passage, and students should brainstorm words, phrases, or sentences that may be better explained through the use of metaphor. The teacher should guide the class in rewriting descriptive passages using metaphor before asking students to do so independently.

The Road Not Taken
Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

What's Your Problem?
A Lesson on Conflict

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify similarities and differences between internal and external conflict both in isolated examples and within examples in the text (Course Objective 3).
- Students will write their own creative examples of internal and external conflict (Course Objectives 1 and 2).

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, etc.
- <u>Maus</u>, by Art Spiegelman
- Writing prompt cards with photos and magazine pictures on them

Outline:

Provide students with the definition of conflict and ask students to discuss possible examples in movies, television shows, and books with their neighbors. Then, explain that we can get even more specific when evaluating conflict by differentiating between conflict that happens to us physically and that we handle emotionally. Provide students with the definitions of external conflict and internal conflict.

Once students have copied these definitions into the reference section of their notebooks, display panels of <u>Maus</u> on the overhead projector one at a time and ask students:
- What is happening in these panels?
- What is the conflict?
- Is it internal or external?

Once students can differentiate between the two kinds of conflict, break students up into randomly selected cooperative learning groups. They should take on cooperative learning roles such as reporter, recorder, text-connector, task-manager, etc. Distribute one copy of discussion questions and directions to each group. Each group should pick three characters from <u>Maus</u> (two major characters and one minor character) and list for each of those characters one internal conflict and one external conflict. Circulate throughout group work to help students differentiate between the two and to help them in understanding that internal and external conflict are often very intertwined. The worksheets should be turned to earn participation points and to be assessed for understanding prior to reporting the status of the class.

WHEN WE WERE INSIDE, GESTAPO WITH MACHINE GUNS SURROUNDED THE STADIUM.

LINE UP BY FAMILY AT THE TABLES TO REGISTER! QUICKLY!

AH, YOU WORK AT THE CARPENTRY SHOP. GO TO THE RIGHT.

ME AND ANJA CAME TO THE TABLE WHERE MY COUSIN WAS SITTING...

THEN WAS A SELECTION, WITH PEOPLE SENT EITHER TO THE LEFT, EITHER TO THE RIGHT.

OLD PEOPLE, FAMILIES WITH LOTS OF KIDS, AND PEOPLE WITHOUT WORK CARDS ARE ALL GOING TO THE LEFT!

WE UNDERSTOOD THIS MUST BE VERY BAD.

EVERYONE CAME VERY NICE DRESSED. THEY TRIED SO THAT THEY WOULD LOOK YOUNG AND ABLE TO WORK, IN ORDER TO GET A GOOD STAMP ON THEIR PASSPORT.

SO WE GOT STAMPED OUR PASSPORTS AND CAME QUICK TO THE GOOD SIDE OF THE STADIUM. THOSE THEY SENT LEFT, THEY DIDN'T GET ANY STAMP.

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WE WERE SO HAPPY WE CAME THROUGH. BUT WE WORRIED NOW—WERE OUR FAMILIES SAFE?

LOOK! THERE'S POPPA, WITH LOLEK AND LONIA.

WE SAW WOLFE AND TOSHA. OUR FAMILY SEEMS TO BE OKAY.

BUT LATER SOMEONE WHO SAW HIM TOLD ME... HE CAME THROUGH THIS SAME COUSIN OVER TO THE GOOD SIDE.

SPIEGELMAN!... TO THE RIGHT.

DID YOU SEE MY FATHER?

I COULDN'T SEE ANYWHERE MY FATHER.

HER, THEY SENT TO THE LEFT. FOUR CHILDREN WAS TOO MANY.

MY DAUGHTER! HOW CAN SHE MANAGE ALONE—WITH FOUR CHILDREN TO TAKE CARE OF?

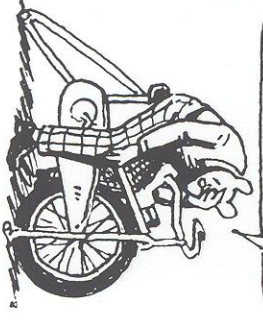THEN CAME FELA TO REGISTER...

AND, WHAT DO YOU THINK? HE SNEAKED ON TO THE BAD SIDE!

FELA!

THOSE WITH A STAMP WERE LET TO GO HOME. BUT THERE WERE VERY FEW JEWS NOW LEFT IN SOSNOWIEC...

AND THOSE ON THE BAD SIDE NEVER CAME ANYMORE HOME.
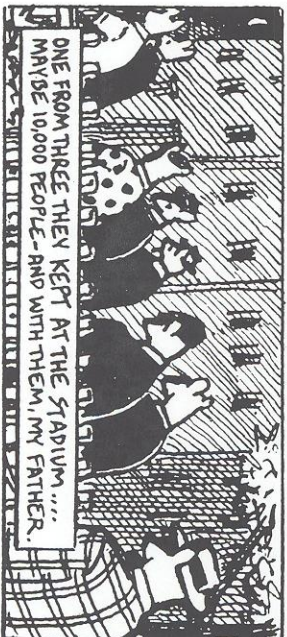
ONE FROM THREE THEY KEPT AT THE STADIUM... MAYBE 10,000 PEOPLE—AND WITH THEM, MY FATHER.

WELL... IT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY, YES, ARTIE?...

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Group Members: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What's Your Problem?
Finding Conflict in <u>Maus</u>

Directions:
Choose three characters (2 major characters and 1 minor character) and list them below. For each character, list with examples from the text one external conflict and one internal conflict that he/she faces. Turn the worksheet in when you are finished.

Character 1: _____

External Conflict:

Internal Conflict:

Character 2: _____

External Conflict:

Internal Conflict:

Character 3: _____

External Conflict:

Internal Conflict:

From Screen to Script:
An Introduction to the Characteristics of Drama

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify characteristics common to the genre of drama (Course Objectives 2 and 3).

Resources:
- Writing utensils
- Paper
- Markers
- Poster board or banner paper
- Excerpts from plays such as *Death of a Salesman*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, etc. and the corresponding video/DVD versions of those excerpts (For the purpose of this example lesson, *Death of a Salesman* will be used.) If preferred and if time is constrained, the excerpts may come from the same play that will be studied in its entirety.
- One play to read and study in its entirety (For the purpose of this example lesson, *A Raisin in the Sun* will be used.

Outline:
(Note: This lesson plan should take at least two class periods to complete. It has not been broken up into specific days to allow for appropriate focus and reteaching according to individual classes' needs. If students reach an appropriate breaking point, but have not yet reached the end of a class period, remaining time may be spent in workshops. Activities may also be rearranged as needed. For instance, the class text of *A Raisin in the Sun* may be distributed on the first or second day.)

Students should be assigned into randomly selected groups of four or five when they first enter the classroom. Pass to each member of the groups excerpts of *Death of a Salesman*, Act I. Students should each take on roles in the excerpt to read/act aloud within the group. If there are more people in a group than there are parts, assign the additional roles of director, acting coaches, etc. Given time allowances, Act I may be further cut in length to focus on scenes involving Willy's whole family.

Once the groups have finished reading through the excerpt, show them the corresponding scene in the 1985 version of *Death of a Salesman* with Dustin Hoffman. After the screening is finished, groups should work to complete a set of questions focusing their attention on characteristics of drama. Questions asked may include (but are certainly not limited to) any of the following prompts:
- How did the actors in the film play the characters differently than you read the characters in print?
- What assumptions did you make about the characters before you saw them in film?
- What caused you to make those assumptions?
- How closely did the film follow the written script?
- What differences were there?

- Before you watched the film version, how did you know what an actor would physically do?
- When did Arthur Miller designate exactly how a line should be said and when did he leave room for interpretation? How can you tell?

Students should take on cooperative learning roles such as recorder, time keeper, group leader, encourager, etc. Throughout the time designated for cooperative group work, circulate to answer questions and direct students' attention to focus on the text and stage directions.

Once students have finished group work, they should take out their notebooks and record notes from the direct teaching of some unique characteristics of drama, particularly on those that they seemed to have trouble with during group work. For example, write on the board or overhead projector the definition of stage directions, then highlight on the excerpts examples of stage directions so that students can see concrete examples of it used within the context of the genre.

One concept that should be taught is that of performance decisions. Use the group work to enforce the idea that the meaning of the written text may change according to decisions made while transferred into performance. As this is a characteristic unique to the genre, it may require a greater deal of teaching. Explain, then, that all the differences that students witnessed in the film version (expressions, tones of voice, etc.) were due either to the fact that stage directions were not there or were interpretable in multiple ways. For example, write on the board or overhead projector the definition of stage directions, then highlight on the excerpts examples of stage directions so that students can see concrete examples of it used within the context of the genre. To reinforce the concept of performance decisions, it may be helpful to brainstorm or construct a concept map of possible performance decisions, including:

- Lighting
- Costume
- Set/Props
- Vocal tone, volume, etc.
- Facial expressions
- Movement/Blocking

Then, use the definitions that were directly taught to start a poster outlining the characteristics of drama. Encourage students to volunteer further characteristics. The characteristics may be unique to drama as a genre (stage directions, for one example) or may be true of many forms of creative writing (has characters, conflict, etc.). Display the poster along with the fiction and poetry posters and, as with the fiction and poetry posters, allow students to add characteristics as they think of them.

Keeping in mind the characteristics of drama, students should begin to read *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry. Students should use sticky notes to mark questions and observations throughout their reading. For example, they might note the lack of stage directions in a particular scene or the abundant descriptions in another. They may also choose to use the sticky notes to ask questions about the play itself. "Why did he do that?" or "Where are they going?" are equally relevant questions as "Why doesn't the author give stage directions for this line?" Like with most major reading assignments in this class, the majority of the reading will take place at home, and questions will be examined during class.

Getting To Know You:
A Lesson on Characterization

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify character development in a well-known text (Course Objective 3).
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of characterization by writing character sketches (Course Objective 2).

Resources:
- Primary Text (*A Raisin in the Sun*)
- Writing Utensils
- Paper, Notebooks, etc.
- Overhead projector or blackboard

Outline:
Assign students to characters in the primary text at random. It may be helpful to number students off by four or five and then explain, for example, that all ones are to examine Ruth and twos are to look at Beneatha. Once students are assigned a character, they should quickly list on a piece of paper as many things as they can remember that they know about that character. They may include appearance, actions, wishes, behavior, attitudes, etc. Limit the time to a few minutes before explaining that what they have been examining is called 'characterization.' Then, write the new term on the board or overhead projector along with its definition. Students should copy this information into their notebooks along with examples that students provide from their set activities. The instructor should elaborate on these examples as is appropriate for the given definition and detail of characterization.

Next, instruct students that, before commencing workshop, they need to complete one character sketch. Explain, then, that a character sketch is a description of a character but without a necessary plot or conflict. At least one character sketch should be modeled for students before the commence working on their own to ensure that they understand and have a frame of reference for the project. Students may choose to write a character sketch of a make believe character, of someone they might know or encounter frequently, or of a character prompt. Example character prompts may come from a scrapbook, photo album, or newspaper. Once they have given their characters personalities, students should get their work checked in before reporting their status of the class and beginning to workshop for the rest of the class period.

Because this is only a fundamental introduction into characterization, some extension may be necessary. Subsequent mini-lessons could include visually graphing out the concept of character development in a time-line fashion or debating the complexity of protagonists and antagonists. This lesson should be applied to their own drafts in that students should be required to provide character development through the inclusion of character description, dialogue, decisions made, and reactions had by other characters.

Complicating Matters:
A Lesson on Subplots

Objectives:
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the function of subplots by creating a graphic organization of the plot of *A Raisin in the Sun* (Course Objectives 2 and 3).

Resources:
- Primary text (*A Raisin in the Sun*)
- Writing Utensils
- Colored pencils or markers
- Paper, notebooks
- Overhead projector or blackboard

Outline:

Ask students to silently think of their favorite television show or movie. Once they have a show or movie in mind, they should cross their arms or give some other visual signal to show that they are ready. Then, ask students to raise one finger if they could explain the main plot of that show or movie. Once students have raised fingers, ask them to then raise another finger if they could explain another, smaller plot. Wait again for students to remember their shows and movies, then ask the same question again. When the activity seems to be winding down, remind students to look around the room and notice that there are many fingers raised.

Then, write the term "subplot" on the board or overhead projector and ask students to copy it and its definition into their notebooks. Explain that subplots are smaller plots happening at the same time as larger plots. Students may observe that the subplots often support the main plots or that they eventually become entangled as one. While teaching the concept of subplots and asking for examples from the media, circulate throughout the room to ensure that students have understood and recorded the definition appropriately.

Once there have been several student examples discussed, assign students to randomly selected groups of four or five and explain that they should take on the usual cooperative roles (recorder, reporter, encourager, etc.). Blank paper and colored pencils or markers should be distributed. Explain to students that they should outline visually (in storyboard form or timeline form) the basic plot of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Whenever they think they have encountered an example of a subplot, they should denote it with a different symbol or color. Students should include a key of symbols/colors with their plot analysis. All group members should include their names on the activity and turn it in for assessment before reporting statuses and commencing workshop.

To extend this learned concept into students' writing, before turning in their genre draft, students should include a concept map that outlines the plots and subplots of their draft and illustrates how these all work together. Concept maps should be explained and modeled in class either manually on the board or through a software program like "Inspiration." Students may practice by going back through past drafts and mapping out the plots. Their current draft, however, must include a concept map with at least one

We Can Use More Than One?
An Introduction to a Multi-Genre Publication

Objectives:
- Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of a multi-genre approach by determining situations in which a multi-genre publication would be effective/appropriate (Course Objective 3).

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, etc.
- Class-generated reference list/poster of genres
- Examples of multi-genre presentations
- <u>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</u>, by Joyce Carol Oates

Outline:

Bring the class-generated list of genres to the class' attention. (Reposition the poster if necessary.) Reflect on the fact that the class has studied a few of the genres in depth and have determined characteristics of some of them as well; point out that students have probably experimented with others in their drafting. Then, pose the question, "Could we use some of these genres together in the same piece?" Ask students to think about this quietly, then ask volunteers to share contexts in which using multiple genres might be effective.

Introduce students to the term 'multi-genre' and ask them to copy it into the reference section of their notebooks. Then, if there students in previous classes have created multi-genre presentations, show students some examples. If there are no student examples available, show self-written examples of multi-genre presentations for various purposes (fiction, research, etc.). Examples should remain in the classroom for reference for the rest of the semester. Instruct students to get into cooperative groups and assign each group one of the following questions to discuss, debate and answer:
- What are the benefits of using multiple genres in the same piece?
- When might you NOT want to use a multi-genre approach?
- What are some subjects that would lend themselves well to multi-genre writing?
- What ideas can multi-genre writing get across that straight fiction, for example, can't?
- How do you think we might go about choosing which genres to incorporate?

Once the groups have discussed their questions and have chosen a group-member to present their decisions, answer and discuss the questions in a class discussion to establish a class definition of multi-genre writing.

When students are discussing possible purposes, if students do not volunteer the prospect of research, introduce to students the terms 'creative non-fiction' and 'historical fiction' and instruct students to copy the definition of each into the reference section of their notebooks. Characteristics of multi-genre writing that should be established include:
- Tells multiple perspectives
- Offers variety

- Different genres have different impacts, purposes

Explain that at least one subsequent class period will be spent in the library. Class will continue as usual with mini-lessons being taught if necessary and students may continue workshop procedures as usual or they may choose to research people, places, historical events, ideas, etc. to write about from multiple perspectives in a multi-genre approach. Spend time explaining library protocol if necessary and, depending on students' prior knowledge, teach basic research techniques or bring in a librarian or library assistant to do so.

Then, distribute <u>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</u> and explain that Joyce Carol Oates uses a few genres (among employing other tactics) to deliver multiple perspectives. Explain that, although she uses only a few, it will expose the class to using multi-genre in fiction. Throughout lessons, discussion, and assignments in this unit, focus on Oates' use of using multiple perspectives, voices, and genres to tell a whole story.

Blending Voices:
Extending the Concept of Multiple Perspectives

Objectives:
- Students will be able to debate the concept of a narrator's reliability (Course Objective 3).
- Students will be able to identify characters' personas and explain the author's techniques in conveying them (Course Objective 3).
- Students will be able to compile a list of the ways in which the author was able to convey various points of view (Course Objective 3).
- Students will be able to identify characteristics and motivations of different characters and personas and will be able to justify and defend those characteristics and motivations (Course Objective 3).
- Students will be able to make judgments about characters and their decisions by choosing a genre and style by which to represent them (Course Objectives 1, 2, and 3).

Resources:
- Writing utensils, paper, etc.
- Big Mouth and Ugly Girl, by Joyce Carol Oates
- Blackboard, overhead projector, etc.
- Line art masks
- Crayons, colored pencils

Outline:
DAY 1:   Direct students' attention to chapter two of Big Mouth and Ugly Girl. Read together pages 8 through 13 (stop at the break in the page). Then, ask students to turn to their neighbor and decide whether they believe everything Ursula says. Give them the following questions to guide discussion:
- Do you trust Ursula as a narrator?
- What do you trust that she tells you? Why?
- What don't you trust that she tells you? Why?

Then, bring the class together and introduce the term "reliability." Students should write this term and its given definition in the reference section of their notebooks. Then, explain that a third person narrator (like in chapter 1) is always reliable because, since the narrator is not directly involved in the story's action, he/she has no motive for dishonesty. (We also don't tend to question the psyche of third person narrators as often as we do with first.)

Explain, then, that the class will have a debate regarding whether or not they believe Ursula is a reliable narrator. To do this, divide the class in two by numbering students accordingly and assign to one group the task of arguing that she is reliable and to the other the task that she is not reliable. The debate should follow standard debate rules (point, counterpoint, counterpoint alternating for each side) which should be taught in a

direct lesson form in which the teacher uses volunteers and a mock situation to model a standard debate. Students may watch a video or a school debate class or team as further model if needed. While students are debating, write down observations about their arguments. At the end of the debate, present them with a summary of what a reliable narrator does/does not do. An example list might look like this:

Reliable Narrator	Unreliable Narrator
- Tells when he/she is wrong	- Always seems to be right
- Doesn't judge too much	- Judges others unequally

Tell students to consider this debate while reading Big Mouth and Ugly Girl. Whenever reading a first person account, they should always keep in mind how much they trust what the narrator says.

DAY 2:   Present students with the term and definition for "persona." Explain that the word is derived from another meaning 'mask' and that it is helpful to remember personas as putting on different masks to complete different activities.

      Then, ask students to discuss with their neighbors different personas that they take on during everyday life. It may be helpful to share a personal example: "For example, when I'm at home, I take on the persona of wife and of mother. When I come to work, I have the persona of teacher. When I take college classes, I take on the persona of student." When they discuss these, students should also decide what each of those personas entails. An extension of the personal example would be, "When I'm a student, sometimes I get frustrated when I don't understand what the teacher is asking. I'm not always self-confident, but I try to be a hard worker. I know that I have to be on time and conscientious." To organize discussion, give students the following outline of questions to follow:

- What are some of your own personas?
- During each of these,
  - What do you know?
  - How do you feel?
  - How do you act?
  - What is expected of you? (What do you have to do?)

      Circulate throughout class discussion to ensure that students understand the application of the term. Once students have gained understanding of the concept through considering personal examples, introduce them to Ursula's two personas: Ursula Riggs and Ugly Girl. Distribute to each student a set of two paper masks. They should label one for each persona, decorate it as that persona would, and write in and around it how that persona feels, what she knows, how she acts, and what she thinks is expected of her. They may do this creatively and may choose to work in small groups or individually. The masks should be turned in for participation points and assessment when complete.

      Before leaving, students should fill out exit cards answering the question "How are personas portrayed differently in fiction than they may be in poetry, graphic novels, or drama?" This will require students to recall characteristics of past genres and will assess their application of the concept learned. In their journals, they should also at some point examine their use of personas in their own personal writing. If they cannot find any

evidence in their writing, they should engage in a writing exercise extending the concept into a current draft.

<u>DAY 3:</u>   Ask students to brainstorm on a piece of paper all of the different voices narrating in <u>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</u>. Because many people participate in dialogue (which is fairly common in fiction), students should focus on narrators of entire chapters or who have entire genres devoted to them. While they are doing this, circulate through the room and help remind students of characters' voices. A sample list might look something like this:

> Ursula
> Matt
> Big Mouth
> Ugly Girl
> 3rd Person Narrator
> Newspapers (NY Times, etc.)
> Neil
> Skeet
> Russ
> Mr. Parrish

Once students have created a substantial list, observe how many different voices get heard during one piece of writing. Then, using wait time techniques, ask students to think about and share answers for the following questions:
- What kinds of narrators does this book have?
- What genres are included in this book?
- What effect does having many points of view tell the story have?

Before beginning workshop activities for the day, students should then begin to brainstorm characters in the book whose voices were not heard as prominently as others. This will be picked up in the following day's lesson.

<u>DAY 4:</u>   As students enter the room, each should receive a nametag displaying the name of one of the characters in <u>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</u>. (Multiple personas of the same character may also be included.) They should each also receive a 'hint card' with words and phrases reminding them why that character was important, what he/she did, etc.

Students should take their seats to begin the activity. Explain to them the directions for an "interrogation." Each student will have a turn to be interrogated by another student. The process starts when one student is chosen to be an interrogator. That student should stand and find another student in the class to interrogate. He/she is then faced with the task not of interrogating a classmate, but of interrogating the character from the book that the classmate represents (according to nametags.) The interrogator may ask three questions to the character regarding action, motive, or feelings and the student being interrogated should answer as though he/she was his/her character. An example exchange might look something like this:

INTERROGATOR: Why did you email Matt?
STUDENT/URSULA: Because I didn't think that it was right that he was being accused of something I knew he didn't do!
INTERROGATOR: But didn't your parents tell you not to get involved?
STUDENT/URSULA: I didn't care! I'm not even that close to them. (They like Lisa better.) Besides, I knew that emailing him was the right thing to do.

Once one student has answered three questions that the interrogator asks, it is his/her turn to be the interrogator. He/she may choose to do this in the role of "interrogator" or as another character. For example, Ursula Riggs may end up asking questions of her other persona, Ugly Girl.

If there is a time limit, this may be done by splitting the class in half and performing two sets of interrogations at the same time. Students should focus on using specific examples to justify characters' decisions, actions, and motives.

Once the interrogation is over, students should return to their brainstorms from the previous class period (characters with less prominent voices) and complete an assignment asking them to extend their ideas of point of view and multiple genres into their own creative writing. The assignment should be turned in for participation points and, for extension, students may choose to do a similar project with friend, members of their family, or historical figures.

Name:_____

Represent Yourself!

Directions: *Complete the following questions and turn in when you are finished. Attach additional paper as necessary.*

1.   Choose one character whose voice was not heard prominently in Big Mouth and Ugly Girl: _____

2.   What might he/she have to say? What perspective would he/she offer?

3.   What genre would you use to represent this character? Why?

Extra Credit:
Now, on additional paper, write an account from another character's perspective in whichever genre/genres best fit your purpose. This may count for one of your drafts.

Or, if you'd prefer, do the same for a friend, family member, celebrity, or historical figure.

Journal Prompts

General, Fiction, Poetry

- Summarize two different conflicts that you've encountered in fiction that you have read. Who/what was involved? How did you know that it was a conflict? How was it resolved? When in the plot was it resolved?

- Read the following poem (*either on a handout or a page in a textbook*). What do you know about the speaker? Male or female? What is the speaker doing or addressing in this poem? Is he/she talking to anyone in particular? Who? What are the speaker's intentions? Are these intentions the same as the author's? Explain.

- Choose one of the poetic devices discussed in class. How can this be used effectively in fiction? Can it? Are there any other ways in writing that we might use this device?

- Read the following paragraph (*on a handout – it should be a paragraph from a novel or a short story*). Now, write the paragraph that should come after this one. In writing your subsequent paragraph, try to imitate the author's style (word choices, sentence structure) and ideas. When you're reading the paragraph to yourself, ask yourself the following questions to help you write the next paragraph: What words might this author be likely to use? How does he get his ideas across to the reader? What is the tone of this paragraph? (*Note: this style may be approximated with poetry as well.*)

Graphic Literature

- Go through last night's reading assignment, and find one panel that particularly moved you. What about this panel was so effective?

- Art Spiegelman chose to use animals to represent his ideas through metaphor. What other choices might he have used to portray the different people involved?

- Choose one panel from last night's reading and write new captions for it. How can pictures lend themselves to multiple interpretations/actions?

- Choose one panel from last night's reading and, keeping the same dialogue, draw new pictures.

- Choose one panel from last night's reading and redesign it. For instance, instead of having three cells in a comic-book style, how else could you depict this plot pictorially?

- Review last night's reading. Explain in paragraph form some of the imagery that Spiegelman used to get his ideas across. The imagery may come from dialogue or from the pictures themselves.

- How does Spiegelman portray setting in graphic literature? Give specific examples (page numbers, description, etc.) What techniques does he use? How is this different from general fiction? How is it similar?

- How does Spiegelman portray conflict in graphic literature? Give specific examples (page numbers, description, etc.) What techniques does he use? How is this different from general fiction? How is it similar?

Drama

- Re-read the opening stage directions. What do they tell you about the play? Now, imagine that you are putting on an adaptation of this play to be set in an entirely different setting (the rural South, Mexico, Italy, America during the 1800's, etc.). Keeping in mind that the overall theme must still be the same, rewrite the opening stage directions.

- List three characters. For each, what do you know about them? Then, for each piece of information that you know about the characters, decide if you got that information from 1) what they say, 2) what they do, or 3) both.

- How does the dialogue in *A Raisin in the Sun* differ from the dialogue in Maus? Form a three – four sentence hypothesis about why these differences exist.

- Choose an event that has happened to you today. It may be as mundane as getting up and brushing your teeth or as exciting as missing the bus. Write a scene from a play about this event. Keep in mind that it must include dialogue and stage directions.

Multigenre

- Make a list of as many genres as possible. Then, star the genres that you think could best represent you and your personality.

- Using the list of genres that you starred to represent yourself, choose one and try to express an idea about yourself to someone who doesn't know you. You may choose to express the way that you speak, ideas that you have, things you like to do, your values, etc.

- Add another genre to the one that you previously wrote to express yourself. Build on to it. You may choose to express the same concept or a different concept, but it must be done in a new genre.

- Choose an item found within the classroom and describe it using three or more genres. For instance, you may write a poem, email, and letter to the teacher about the lesson schedule that is written on the board today.

- In your current draft (or in any past drafts), did you portray multiple personas for one character? When? How? What specific techniques did you use to do so?

- Which genres were used in <u>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</u>? Form a hypothesis about how different genres represented different ideas.

- Add a genre to <u>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</u>. Write at least two instillations of this genre as it would be incorporated in the novel. Who would use this genre? How? Why? When would it appear in the book?

<u>Writing Craft and Process</u>

- Take out the draft you are currently working on. What goals do you have for this draft? Set a minimum of three specific goals, and outline specific plans for achieving these goals.

- Reflect on the goals that you set for your current draft. What are they? Have they changed at all? What have you been doing to reach these goals? What have you accomplished? What do you still need to do in order to reach them before the deadline?

- Reflect on your conferences. Have you been getting all that you need out of conferences? What could you (individually) or we (as a class) do to make conferences more productive for you? What are some strategies that you have been using that have been helpful either to you or to your conferencing partners?

- Take out the draft that you are currently writing, and read through it. As you are reading, circle words that are particularly effective or powerful. Why are these words particularly powerful? What images/tones do they create? Then, read through your draft again and underline words that could stand to be more powerful. Make a list of possible words that you could substitute to get your message across more clearly and effectively.

Section Five:
Assessment

The Grading Guru:
A handbook for students and their parents

Assessment: An overview for the course

Because this is a creative writing course, you can probably guess what it is I expect you to do a lot of: WRITE! We'll have lots of time in class for writing, but in order to get a good grade in this class, you'll have to do a significant amount of writing on your own time. You'll also be expected to do some reading outside of class. You're probably thinking, "Read, in a writing class?" But remember, it's difficult to have one without the other!

For this course, you'll be graded on the following items:

- Participation
- Reflection
- Quantity of Writing
- Quality of Writing
- Publication

Read more about how to get your grades in these categories in this newsletter and remember, don't ever hesitate to ask questions!

You may schedule appointments to talk with me before or after school or during lunch. During Tuesday and Thursday lunches, I'll be in the classroom (unless otherwise announced) for drop-in questions and conferences.

Feel free to call me at (248)555-5555 or email me at: mmyers4@emich.edu.

I look forward to reading and writing with you!

Organize Your Notebook:

- Journals
- Drafts and Conference Notes
- Class Notes
- Reference (Vocab Glossary and Genre guide)
- Handouts

Classroom Community

Everyone likes to work where they feel comfortable. Businesses and corporations are starting to learn this and are hiring designers and personnel in charge of ergonomics, so why shouldn't schools be concerned, too?

I'd like to keep this classroom as comfortable and conducive to hard work as possible, but I'll need your help to do it!

For one extra credit point each, you may bring in to contribute to the classroom supply:

- A box of tissue
- Pack of bottled water
- Pack of granola bars
- Unscented hand lotion

You may earn up to five total extra credit points for the course by bringing in supplies to share.

The Daily Grind

In this class, we will frequently conduct workshops. While in workshop, it is your responsibility to use the time to your advantage. During this time, you may work on a draft, revise, conference with other students or with me, or get caught up on work.

During workshops, I'll be available for conferences and questions. I'll circulate throughout the room to make sure that everyone is getting the most out of their time. Please be ready to show me your work and report to me how it's going.

To grade your participation in workshops, at the beginning of each one, I'll conduct a quick survey called a "status of the class." When I get to you, please tell me how you plan to spend your time in workshop. Be ready to tell me what activity you'll be doing (writing, revising, conferencing, etc.). I'll also record what piece you're working on, so be ready to tell me what genre and subject you're doing.

In order to get full participation points, you must be working and making good use of your time for the ENTIRE time. If you need a break from what you're doing, switch to another piece, conference, or journal. You should participate in an average of one conference per week.

Once a week, I'll check your journals for the following items:

- 1 draft
- Daily reflection journals
- Class notes and reference section

Portfolio Fever

We'll do a lot of writing in this class and, by the end of the semester, that will be VERY tangible to you.

Why? Because you'll put it all together in one heavy folder called a working portfolio. On January 6, you will turn into me in manila envelopes (that I will supply to you), a copy of all the work you've done in class. It should include all drafts at various stages of completion and revision as well as the brainstorming and conference notes that go with them. All in all, you should have at least 15 drafts at varying levels of completion. (If you plan to write longer-than-average pieces or have questions about the quantity of work expected, please schedule a conference with me.) You should also turn in all of your reflection journals with your working portfolio.

For your final portfolio, due on January 12, you will pick at least three of your favorite final drafts. The drafts must include at least two genres and should exhibit a variety of techniques and characteristics that you've learned in class. Along with this portfolio, please include a letter written to me explaining why you chose the pieces you did. We will develop a rubric to grade the portfolio together in class, so you'll know exactly how I'll be grading.

Making Up for Missed Time

If you've missed class, it is YOUR responsibility to make up the work that you missed.

Whenever you return, check the file cabinet folders for the date you missed. In each folder, there should be an outline of what we did for the class period. If there were handouts, they'll also be in there. If we learned a new concept or vocabulary, I'll also include a copy of the notes. Please copy the notes into the appropriate sections in your notebook and return the folder to its cabinet.

If you are absent on the day that I check notebooks, it is YOUR responsibility to see me ON THE DAY YOU RETURN to get credit.

If you are absent on a scheduled due date (portfolios, genre drafts, journals, etc.), you must have an excused absence (call, note, etc.) and you must turn in your work on the day you return. If the absence is not excused or you do not turn in work on the day you return, you will have points deducted from that assignment's grade.

Think About it: Reflection Journals

On October 1, November 12, and again on January 6 with your working portfolios, I will collect reflection journals. You should write reflections for approximately every class meeting. You may choose to write these during the end of class or on your own time.

In your journals, please reflect on how you've spent your writing and workshop time, what you're writing, what troubles you're having and

Reflect on what you write!

questions about how to deal with the troubles, and how your writing is progressing. Don't just write that you like a piece or you don't. Explain *why* you like it or you don't and what you think you could do to make it better. Explain what you're thinking when you're writing the piece and how you go about doing so.

To get your ideas across clearly, be sure to use the terms we learn in class.

For example, don't write that "the story is boring," explain that "the plot development is slow" or that the characters don't have enough conflict.

I will grade your journals on the basis that you participated and wrote them and on the complexity of your reflection. In order to get a good grade on your journals, remember to be specific and use specific terms!

Getting Published: A Writer's Dream Come True!

Because the writing process wouldn't be complete without having someone read what we've written, you will have the opportunity to get published three times in this course!

Each month, I will compile a literary magazine full of your writing to distribute to the community.

You will be required to submit one piece to publication, but you may earn

extra points by submitting more than one piece or to more than one deadline. To submit, attach a submission form (found in the file cabinet) to your final draft. The deadlines for publication are:

- September 29
- October 29
- November 29
- December 21

The magazines will be available for purchase in class, at the school store, in the community, and through the purchase of subscriptions.

Creative Minds Subscription Form
(Fill out and return to Ms. Myers in Rm. 101)

_____ Yes! I'd like to subscribe to receive 4 issues of *Creative Minds* for only $10.00.

_____ I'd like an additional subscription sent to another address for the low price of $8.00

Subscription 1:   Name: 2:   Name;

                Address: Address:

Please make checks payable to Anyday High School.

Creative Writing

Ms. Myers
Anyday High School
1234 Woodward
Detroit, MI 48000

• • • • • • • • •

Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555
E-mail:
someone@example.com

► I look forward to
hearing from you!

Let's work for a great, creative semester!

Dates to Remember and Point Break-Down:

Participation (2 each day):	90 Total
10/1, 11/12, 1/6 Journals	15 Points each
9/27, 10/21, 11/22 Genre drafts	10 points each
1/6 Working Portfolio	30 Points
1/12 Final Portfolio	70 Points
9/29, 10/29, 11/29, 12/21 Submission Deadlines	15 Points*

*15 points may only be earned on first submission. Additional submissions are worth 5 extra credit points each.

Please complete this form, tear it out, and return it to Rm. 101

Student Name:

Yes, I have read the articles outlining grading and policy in Creative Writing. I agree that I understand these policies and accept them as stated. I will keep this handbook for future reference and know that, if I lose it, I can get additional copies in the file cabinet in class. If I have any questions, I will contact Ms. Myers as soon as possible through conference, email, or telephone.

Questions/Comments:

Student Signature:_____ Date:_____

Parent Signature: _____ Date:_____

Phone:

Email:

Submission For Publication

Name:

Title of Piece:

Genre:

Why should this piece be included in the class publication?

Working Portfolio:

	Credit (6-10)	Partial (1-5)	No Credit (0)
Drafts: A minimum of 15 drafts (or the equivalent) should be included. Drafts should include a variety of genres and should exhibit a variety of levels of completion and revision.			
Journals: Daily process journals are included.			
Organization: Portfolio is organized to such an extent that a reader can easily distinguish between drafts, journals, and genres. If necessary, a table of contents or key should be included.			

Comments:

Showcase/Final Portfolio Rubric

Directions: *This is the rubric that we worked to create as a class. Before turning in your work, please rate your own writing in your final portfolio on the following characteristics. For each numerical rating, include in the comments section why you believe you have achieved it. When you turn in your portfolio, please staple your self-assessed rubric, your reflective letter, and a blank rubric (for me to use) together and put them at the back of your portfolio.*

Part 1:

	Credit (6-10)	Partial (1-5)	None (0)
Number of Drafts: There should be a minimum of three drafts included.			
Inclusion of Genres: There should be a minimum of two genres exhibited.			
Reflective Letter: A letter reflecting on your work in class and exhibited here should be included in this portfolio. It should examine at minimum: likes/dislikes, progress, process, how/why you chose your final pieces.			
Directions: Portfolio should be completed on time and according to directions outlined in the syllabus and in class.			

Comments:

Points: _____ /40

Part 2:

	Advanced(10)	Proficient(7)	Practicing(5)	Emerging(3)	Not Present(0)
Genre Understanding: Pieces should include characteristics of their respective genres.					
Writing Quality: Writing is engaging and complex. It should exhibit a variety of literary devices discussed in class to convey meaning.					
Careful Editing: Work has been edited for sentence structure, organization, and punctuation as discussed in lessons and conferences.					

Comments:

Points: _____ /30

Total Points: _____ /70

Part 1:

	Credit (6-10)	Partial (1-5)	None (0)
Number of Drafts: There should be a minimum of three drafts included.			
Inclusion of Genres: There should be a minimum of two genres exhibited.			
Reflective Letter: A letter reflecting on your work in class and exhibited here should be included in this portfolio. It should examine at minimum: likes/dislikes, progress, process, how/why you chose your final pieces.			
Directions: Portfolio should be completed on time and according to directions outlined in the syllabus and in class.			

Comments:

Points: _____/40

Part 2:

	Advanced(10)	Proficient(7)	Practicing(5)	Emerging(3)	Not Present(0)
Genre Understanding: Pieces should include characteristics of their respective genres.					
Writing Quality: Writing is engaging and complex. It should exhibit a variety of literary devices discussed in class to convey meaning.					
Careful Editing: Work has been edited for sentence structure, organization, and punctuation as discussed in lessons and conferences.					

Comments:

Points: _____/30

Total Points: _____/70

Section Six:
Personal Reflection

Reflection

As a student teacher, I've learned more than I ever expected to learn. Among the many lessons that I've learned both inside the classroom and out, I have internalized one thing for sure: learning comes in many shapes and sizes. When teaching a unit during my student teaching semester, I learned to look everywhere for resources. Instead of only getting my lessons from the curriculum-required textbook, I learned to ask my peers, to observe classes, to attend workshops on developing methods, and to do research on my own and with my students. This thesis project has been no exception. All that I have learned from designing this project has come from a combination of observations, classes and workshops, discussions with practicing teachers, and research on methods that others have tried and studied.

Most of my beliefs have been shaped by both my experiences as a writing student and as a student in the college of education. Many of the beliefs that I have today regarding classroom management, structure, and pedagogy come from my curriculum, assessment, and methods classes in the EMU College of Education. There, I learned about workshop and conference methods. Some of the ideas that I was exposed to – rubrics, for example – came from my methods classes originally, but sparked me to research further on the subject matter. So, rather than resorting to pouring over a bookshelf full of books this semester, I did research (mostly in education journals on the internet and by getting additional resources from willing professors) as I found a specific need.

I also did some of my own research by making a commitment to developing my own creative writing over the course of the semester. This caused me to put myself in my future students' shoes and take on a creative writing endeavor while balancing an additional course load. (Granted, though, my course load was probably significantly more strenuous with full time credit hours and at least 20 hours of work a week.) From writing and journaling on my own time, I realized that any naïve assumptions that I might run a creative writing class in an open-ended and "free-spirited" way or that I might simply provide students with ample writing prompts ("inspiration") were just that: naïve. I learned that I needed to set deadlines for myself and require specific times set aside each day (or every couple of days) if I hoped to accomplish anything. I tried to give myself writing prompts and found that they helped to get thoughts flowing, but that most work of any significant quality was independently motivated. Come to mention it, motivation was another factor that I learned a lot about when focusing on my own writing habits. If I really wanted to accomplish something, I knew that I had to have an external motivation of some sort. This could come in the form of telling someone about it (setting external due dates) or by anticipating publication. It was because of this realization (I did not strive for publication this semester and realized from my lack of material completed that this was a mistake) that I decided to incorporate a student publication in the class. This will provide for my students an authentic assessment that not only gives them a 'real-life' purpose to write, it gives them an external motivator to complete quality work for a real audience.

Some of my naïve assumptions were also quashed when I attended an English education conference hosted by Eastern Michigan University. There, I listened briefly to

Cathy Fliescher speak about her theories of immersion. Until this point, I had never even considered incorporating reading in a creative writing class! I then observed a high school writing class at Ann Arbor's Community High School and witnessed a similar philosophy of immersion under the guidance of Tracy Roswarne. Soon after getting a feel for this theory of immersion, I began to change my genre-focused curriculum to incorporate readings and examples centered in the genres taught in class.

Once I decided to incorporate immersion texts in my plan, I spent a considerable amount of time deciding which texts to use as examples. I wanted to incorporate a wide range of diversity (gender, class, and ethnic) to give students a wide range of experiences and to provide a platform of prior knowledge for a possibly diverse classroom. (Students coming from a Jewish background, for example, might learn about symbolism more easily when the symbolism used in class is related directly to the culture they have grown up with at home.) I also wanted to make sure that the immersion texts would provide ample opportunities to teach craft through example. Those that I did end up choosing fulfill both of these requirements.

Because this is a writing class and not a literature class, I did have difficulty deciding how to incorporate the assessment of reading. Without some kind of points awarded, students would not be sufficiently externally motivated and therefore would most likely not read the material. However, I did not want to spend a great deal of our workshop-oriented time on testing for comprehension and retention of the lessons. Therefore, I decided to incorporate the assessment of the immersion texts largely with the notebooks. Here, I can monitor students reading and understanding of the texts and can require assignments if needed. (They would keep reading journals outlining questions, summaries, and new vocabularies in addition to regularly updating the reference section of their notebooks.) I would then assess the crafts learned through the study of the immersion texts in the application of them in their writing.

After designing the class in this fashion, I had some serious doubts about whether it would work or not. I asked myself over and over if this would work or not. My biggest doubts lay in my experimentation of immersion and incorporating both reading and writing into a creative writing class. I worried that I didn't have enough reading and that the texts would become token texts used for the sake of having an immersion-centered classroom. At the same time, though, I was conflicted because I also worried that I spent to much time with the texts and not enough time teaching the actual process of writing.

This worry was supported when I received feedback from my thesis advisor, Dr. Rebecca Sipe. She noticed that there was not enough time spent on teaching craft and process. I experimented for a while, then, with my lesson plans and schedule and considered giving up the block schedule altogether for the sake of adding additional days in the classroom. I realized, though, that this was not the answer. As I started breaking down my calendar, I admitted that abandoning the block schedule would be giving up on a challenge.

Once I started my student teaching, I had the opportunity to observe another creative writing class. The class at Warren Woods Tower High School was very different from the class that I briefly observed at Ann Arbor Community High School. Mr. Eric Martin had recently taken over what had long been known among the students to be the "blow-off" class of creative writing. He was determined to quash this notion, and

attempted to do so by taking a similar immersion-based approach. He distributed a several-hundred page 'creative writing' textbook to each of his students on the first day of class. He, too, designed units based on genres, although he chose genres with which students were far more familiar: short story and poetry. For each, he inundated students with more homework than they were likely to see in their Honors English class. I spoke with several students, and they felt as though they were so busy writing definitions and answering questions about their reading that they didn't have any time to focus on their own writing. When they did get a chance to do writing of their own, they complained that they were forced to work on such specific skills, they felt as though they were merely writing for a grade and not to better their practices. I took this as a significant clue to assume that I did not need to add too much additional writing into my curriculum.

I didn't know what exactly to do with this information. While I felt as though I wasn't spending enough time with either reading or writing, I was learning that too much of either one thing would not provide an effective learning environment. I had the difficult task ahead of me of designing a class with a balance that I had not yet achieved. The answer, then, came in further feedback from my thesis advisor. Dr. Sipe also noticed that my genre studies lacked cohesion. I wanted the class to be so unrestrictive that I think I may have been ironically restricting my make-believe students by not giving them enough direction.

I re-worked some of my lessons to focus around very specific aspects rather than to try and cover a lot of ground. Each genre-centered unit would work to achieve a few tasks specific to the corresponding genre. Once those tasks were achieved, they would be assessed in final draft due dates interspersed throughout the class. All students would be allowed the opportunity to revise before their submission deadlines for the class paper, then, and would have the chance to authentically share their achievements with the community. Adding additional genre deadlines did not inhibit the freedom that I had hoped to attain with the submission deadlines for the class publication, then, because although I would be looking for specific things during the genre deadlines, I would accept a wider range of material for the submission deadlines.

The most challenging part of creating this class was without a doubt not having a class to reference. Because I believe in adapting lessons and plans for my students' needs, the fact that I actually had no students while writing this meant that the entire course is hypothetical. It took a while to accept this because I wanted so badly to focus on details that would only really be necessary if I were to teach this directly to a group of students (for example, seating charts, etc.). For instance, without having an actual class as a frame of reference, I had no idea how to design social-skills-based lessons. Some students may need to be taught and retaught procedures for turning in homework, working in cooperative groups, and meeting independent deadlines. Others, however, may have received so much of this in previous classes that to teach it again would be redundant to say the least. For this reason, I left a significant amount of social-skills lessons out of the basic plan. This is NOT because I do not expect to encounter a need to teach them, but rather because it is impossible to anticipate which social skills need to be taught to any one class. Once this course is applied in context with an actual class, lessons teaching participation, group-work, and other social skills should be included as needed. In general, they should be taught as recurring mini-lessons that offer students practice in achieving expectations throughout the semester.

Once I accepted that this was merely an exercise in compiling my beliefs into a sample class, though, I was able to switch my mindset to look at this project as being a good source for reference. It is for this reason that the lessons in this course outline should be treated as a lesson bank from which I can take basic lessons as they may or may not be needed depending on the actual students. It is also for this reason that the calendar should not be taken as the word, but should be a fluid guide for setting pace. In the future, if I am lucky enough to get to plan my own creative writing elective course, I certainly will not teach this class verbatim as if from a teachers' manual, but I will use it as a guide and will use the materials in it as a starting point for reference in my planning.

Section Seven:
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