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Projects to Enhance and Innovate Learning in the High School English Classroom: A Final Master's Portfolio

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Projects to Enhance and Innovate Learning in the High School English Classroom: A Final
Master's Portfolio

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English
with a specialization in English Teaching
with a certificate in
College Writing: Theory and Practice

August 9, 2020

Dr. Lee Nickoson, First Reader
Ms. Kimberly Spallinger, Second Reader

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Analytical Narrative

As I reflect on my Master's degree journey, I cannot help but notice that I have grown a great deal in my ideas and pedagogical approaches. While I focus on writing in my classroom as an English teacher, through my research, study, and writing, I have learned new ways to teach writing and literature. At the start of my Master's degree, I knew I wanted to earn my degree so that they could have college credit plus classes in my district. Earning a Master's degree was something I knew I wanted to accomplish for myself, but I also thought it was a task I had to do. I did come into the program with fears of failure and dreading the workload. However, as I worked in my various courses at Bowling Green State University, I gained a newfound love for writing and learning. Each course I encountered helped my teaching skills grow, and I learned new tactics and theories that I have already begun to employ in my classroom. It is easy to forget how to be a student. It is also easy to get caught up in doing the same lessons, units, and teaching the same forms of writing each year, so my portfolio is a variety of ways to try different modes of writing and literature units.

The degree program I am completing is the Master of Arts in the field of English with a specialization in English Teaching. I chose this program so that I could teach college credit plus, and continue to learn more about the subject I have been teaching for seven years. I learned so much more than how to be a CCP instructor. I learned that I have a love for writing, but not in the traditional academic way. In my Technical Writing course with Dr. Gary Heba, I learned about technical writing and why I wanted to add more of this type of writing in my classroom. My students have learned that writing is not just used in one academic way. Then in my Teaching of Writing course with Dr. Heather Jordan, I created a Creative Writing Unit, which is one of my projects provided in this portfolio. Through completing this unit, I learned that writing

is sophisticated, and students should have the opportunity to try new modes of writing they possibly have not tried before. When I opened myself to new theories and modes of writing, I noticed that my students wanted to learn more about those types of writing too. With the unit I designed with Dr. Jordan, I created a new Creative Writing course at my school and taught it for the first time in the 2019-2020 school year. It was a successful course that students excelled at, and we all learned a great deal about different modes of creative writing practice. With the projects in my final Master's portfolio, I researched new and innovative ways to teach writing, a literature unit, and a grammar lesson. Each project looks at and provides resources that educators can use right now in their classrooms.

My first project is titled "Technical Writing and Multimodal Composing in the High School English Classroom." This is my substantive research project for my portfolio. The course, ENG 6040 Graduate Writing with Dr. Ethan Jordan, was designed to help us create projects around a study in English. As I was working in Dr. Jordan's course, I had taken the course Technical Writing the previous semester and felt that I wanted to do more research over the topic and tie technical writing to multimodal composing. The theories around technical writing and its growing importance in future careers for students were the driving force for my decision to pursue this paper. I feel that more high school English courses should add technical writing and multimodality into their course work to better prepare students for college or their careers in the workforce.

When revising this piece, I looked at polishing any grammatical errors or unclear sections that Dr. Jordan gave feedback over. I also had received feedback from Dr. Jordan that I needed to add more theory over multimodality, and its importance in my research. So I added two new sources over multimodal composing to better round my research out. I also moved sections of the

essay to help the flow of the paper for the reader. With the help of peers in ENG 6910 and Dr. Lee Nickoson, I also found that my conclusion needed to be strengthened for comprehension and a better review of the work provided.

With the research from this project, I also wanted to provide a few projects that readers could use right away in their classrooms. I researched and used resources that have worked well in my classroom to provide lessons that educators could utilize, which I always appreciate when looking at scholarly articles. I also have pushed for more technical writing in my district and have started new technical writing projects that incorporate multimodal writing in my classroom. Students have learned how to place charts, images, or create infographics to add to research projects or other composing projects. These skills will help students in their futures.

The second project in my portfolio comes from ENG 6800.503 with Dr. Rachel Lee Rickard Rebellino titled “Murder, Witchcraft, and Community Crimes in Girlhood Stories.” This project came into design with Dr. Rebillino’s Curated Girlhood project, where we had to take one of the novels from the course and create a teaching unit or research project around that novel. In my project, I decided to develop a semester-long course that would focus on young women committing crimes or having crimes committed against them. The core novel for my unit is *The Female of the Species* by Mindy McGinnis. I was inspired by McGinnis’ novel and the main character, Alex Craft. Alex serves almost as an anti-hero in the novel but still leaves the reader considering her crimes as justified. Creating this literature unit felt very empowering, and I would like to add the different texts to my current courses. At the end of the semester, students would be required to complete a literary analysis over one or more of the texts from the course and analyze the themes connected between each text. I have never had the opportunity to teach a

selective literature course like the one I have created in this project, but I think students would greatly appreciate and grow as learners in this course.

The revisions for this project came from Dr. Rebellion and discussions from ENG 6910. The unit as a whole needed to have more integration of all of the texts, not just the main novel, *The Female of the Species*. So in each section that focuses on a specific theme, I added more on how the different texts would be used in the unit and how each text connects to the theme provided. In my original draft, I also worked with more themes from the novel, but with the suggestion from my peers, I moved some themes from the novel together and removed a theme that was not working in my research. The result is a more thoughtful coverage of each theme, and the essay's flow feels easier to comprehend as a reader.

Coming back to this project to revise gave me a new source of inspiration for the upcoming school year. I think that this unit would work well with my junior students as they study American Literature, but this unit could give students a modern take on crimes and how there are flaws in how punishments are passed down. Students will analyze, research, and create their own ideas and themes between each text, which are all essential skills for students to acquire. However, I believe I would learn a great deal from my students, as well. This unit covers heavy topics that will create important classroom discussions, and I will have to be willing to listen, research, and create a safe environment for students to engage in a positive way. I look forward to what this unit will bring to my classroom.

For the third project for this portfolio, I have a teaching unit created for Dr. Heather Jordan in ENG 6200 titled “Creative Writing: Awakening a Student’s Authorship, Voice, and Collaborative Skills,” which was a project to end Teaching of Writing. As I stated at the

beginning of this narrative, I was inspired by Dr. Jordan's class to create a Creative Writing course that could be taught in my school district. I was able to use this project to jumpstart my year-long Creative Writing course for the 2019-2020 school year. The course research fell in different pedagogical ideas that helped shape how the writing course would be set up. Students will show expressive pedagogy, process pedagogy, and collaborative pedagogy. All three are essential in a creative writing course, and since I was able to actually teach the course, I learned how each of these pedagogies were utilized in the course and how students responded to each.

A large part of the revision for this project was to update the course since I had now taught the course in full. I was able to update the syllabus to include all of the materials covered, and I also added an appendix to the end of the project with samples of what writing projects students were required to complete. I was also given the feedback by Dr. Jordan to fine-tune some of my arguments for the theory section of my project. With her suggestion and the comments from my peers, I was able to strengthen my reasoning as to why English instructors should provide creative writing in their districts.

Looking at this project after teaching the course gave me a sense of pride in how hard I worked on the initial project to then create the course. Students excelled in the course and enjoyed the different writing modes, like poetry, flash fiction, folklore, and a play format. These writing pieces allowed students to explore their writing in ways they had never done before, but I also learned to teach writing in ways I had not done before. I had to teach myself to write in these modes with my students, and it created a very collaborative environment for all. With students participating in peer review activities for each writing composition, I also learned a lot about giving feedback to students that were more helpful and constructive. I am very thankful

that I completed this project for Dr. Jordan's course and hope to keep teaching Creative Writing at my school.

My final project is titled "Grammar Practice That Sticks: Teaching Grammar in the High School English Classroom," which was created in Dr. Cheryl Hoy's Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing: ENG 6220. This teaching unit covers three different grammar lessons that can be taught before, during, or after a writing project. Students will explore multiple difficult grammar lessons for students to utilize in their writing like active and passive voice, adjectives, adverbs, and punctuation. I chose this project because grammar is something that I have struggled with teaching in a way that students retain what they have learned, and I also see students struggling to understand the grammar lessons. Each lesson is an innovative way to teach grammar while also enhancing students writing. Dr. Hoy's course looked at grammar in a way I had never done as a student or an educator, and I wanted to share what I learned with other educators.

The revisions for this project came from peers in ENG 6910, but also in the fact that I have taught some of these grammar lessons in class now. I wanted to update the timing and flow of the lessons as some needed more time to complete. I also wanted to add to the lessons for clarity and polish each one so readers could use the lessons right away in their classrooms. A note from Dr. Lee also made me re-evaluate my thesis statement for my project, and so I changed the language around for better clarity of purpose for the project.

Dr. Hoy's course took a subject that was not my favorite, grammar, and put it in a context that made sense, but also helped develop my teaching of the subject. Each textbook required for the course helped put grammar under a lens that incorporated writing in ways that I had not

considered. The lessons provided in this project reflect what I learned, but also how I plan to implement new grammar techniques with different writing modes. My goal is for students to learn about grammar in a way that makes sense to them and enhances their writing skills. Most of the lessons have students working collaboratively to help students become more confident in their grammar skills.

My purpose for this portfolio is for each reader to look at teaching in a new and innovative way that will guide students and educators. I have resources in each project that will push ideas for new projects or encourage readers to try a new writing mode or novel that they have never tried before. My portfolio shows how I have grown as a writer and educator. I hope my students are engaged in my variety of lessons and research and feel challenged to push themselves in their own research and writing. I encourage the reader to use the following projects to create a positive writing and reading environment in the classroom.

Technical Writing and Multimodal Composing in the High School English Classroom

I. Introduction to Technical Writing and Multimodal Composing

Modern technology is continually advancing and changing in the 21st century. High school students use cellphones, tablets, and personal computers each day within their classrooms from science courses to the arts; students must learn how to use technology at an early age. Educators and students alike require education that utilizes technology and writing together through technical writing and multimodal projects. Technical writing is defined by Elizabeth Tebequx in “What Happened to Technical Writing?” as “texts focused on content needed for letters, proposals, instructions, reports, and foundation works such as definition papers, technical description papers, and process analysis papers” (4). Technical writing is a way for the writer to communicate to the reader without using phrases with passive voice, adjectives, adverbs, or expressive language that often appears in academic or creative writing. Technical writing is clear, precise, and to the point; that way, the reader can quickly decide on important, often business-related decisions. Technical writing links with multimodality because both modes work with images, videos, audio, and graphics to bring a project to life. While technical writing can be in the form of a report, the report may require an infographic, charts, calculations, instructions, or video demonstrations for the writing to be successful. Students should learn how to use new software online, record video or audio, and put all of these modes together for a successful and persuasive piece at the high school level.

Multimodal composing is consistently used in the high school classroom. Students create PowerPoint presentations, videos, or even posters with images and writing connected in the many different classrooms, not just the English classroom. According to Lisa Dusenberry in “Filter. Remix. Make.: Cultivating Adaptability through Multimodality,” “multimodal

composing [is] not simply about adding in multimedia but rather ‘the conscious manipulation of the interaction among various sensory experiences—visual, textual, verbal, tactile, and aural—used in the processes of producing and reading texts’ (310). Multimodal composing is often a skill students are used to working with by the time they reach high school, even if they have not realized this process. However, technical writing that incorporates multimodal composing will significantly impact high school students in their future careers and careers in higher education. Currently, most colleges and universities require students to take advanced composition for a general education credit, and many have added technical writing for English, business, and engineering degree-seeking students; however, at the high school level, technical writing is not utilized as often as it should. Ohio State Standards that are modeled after Common Core Standards value persuasive, argumentative, and informative writing, which are on end-of-course exams. These exams are requirements for students to pass for graduation. With this in mind, high school English instructors focus mainly on these modes of writing, rather than technical writing projects.

Technical writing links with multimodality because both modes work with images, videos, audio, and graphics to bring a project to life. While technical writing can be in the form of a report, the report may require an infographic, charts, calculations, instructions, or video demonstrations for the writing to be successful. Students should learn how to use new software online, record video or audio, and put all of these modes together for a successful and persuasive piece at the high school level. Students should have the opportunity to work with all writing modes before leaving the high school classroom to higher education or the workforce. The first time students encounter technical writing should not be in the workplace or at a university level.

Technical writing and multimodal composing should be utilized in the high school classroom. Students use technology daily, and some students may not even realize how much technical writing and multimodal composing they do on each day or how often they will use it in their future careers. Preparing students at an early age to use technical writing correctly and incorporate multimodality will help them become stronger writers. Learning about technical writing with multimodality composing should be a requirement for all high school English courses to better prepare students for their future careers.

II. The Literature Review: Why Teach Technical and Multimodal Writing?

Technical communication programs have been on the rise, with various institutions offering online degrees in technical communication. Many of these institutions have found that technical writing is a requirement for the modern workplace, and students need help catching up to these requirements. Technical writing is dated back to World War II when specifically factories required workers to quickly become trained on how to manufacture parts for the military, run factory lines, and follow factory standards (Tebeaux 5). Elizabeth Tebeaux notes that Dr. Nelda Larence from the University of Houston worked with companies to create shop manuals “that dotted the banks along the tank parts instead of refrigerators” (Tebeaux 5). These companies needed technical writers to help improve their efficiency, but also to work as guides for the women working in new positions. Technical writing’s requirements have dated back to World War II, but the need for technical writing programs and education is increasing each year. Many colleges and universities are realizing the push for technical writing, but students are not prepared for this mode of writing. Tebeaux argues that “too many students lack practical writing skills that would make them attractive to U.S. corporations” (9). Technical writing is a needed skill that companies desire for new hires, but students are not prepared for the work that is

required in these companies. Technical writing must begin at the high school level, rather than college and university classrooms being the first place students encounter technical writing.

In “Whatever Happened to Technical Writing?” Tebeaux notes that many Eastern liberal arts colleges still require composition and advanced compositions courses as general education courses instead of requiring technical writing, which does not completely prepare students for workplace writing (11). Tebeaux focuses on how students are behind and do not understand why companies do not see them as employable, even with their four-year degrees. Tebeaux states, “they do not understand common workplace issues and the ways in which these affect what has to be included in technical writing” (12). Stuart Blythe agrees with Tebeaux that the need for technical writing is increasing each year. Blythe found in “Professional and Technical Communication in a Web 2.0 World” that his graduates were getting jobs. However, it is becoming hard for educators to know what jobs and skills are needed in the workplace: “For example, the title social media manager did not exist 10 years ago, nor were the requisite skills for such a position on the radars of PTC curriculum” (Blythe 265). Many of the requirements for businesses have changed and will continue to evolve with technology booming.

Blythe completed a technical writing survey with 257 alumni responding from twenty-two different institutions. The study found that alumni are working with many different varieties of writing and communication. The study also found that many participants were finding that they have to train themselves to use software or website designers and wish they had learned more in their undergraduate programs over these types of technology (Blythe 279). The surveyed alumni agreed that email, meeting notes, desktop publishing, collaboration, and design were large portions of their jobs. Blythe found that since technical writing does not follow a singular composing situation, “instructors need to expose students to the increasing range of

composing software required to effectively build content (supporting verbal, visual, aural, video modes) and media channels used to disseminate content (including print, video, Web, social networking)” (281-282). Since technical writing has an increased role in the modern workplace, instructors and students alike have realized the need for technical writing to occur in the English classroom as well. While Tebeaux and Blythe agree technical writing is essential, Tebeaux argues that institutions are not listening to technical writing instructors about the push in technical writing over academic composition. However, this argument is not completely founded.

Bourelle, Bourelle, Spong, and Hendrickson are educators currently teaching at the University of New Mexico and have found an increase in all of the technical writing courses they teach over the years. In their article, “Assessing Multimodal Literacy in the Online Technical Communication Classroom,” they discuss how each year the course has grown as it has become a requirement for English, engineering, and business major degree-seeking students. Together these authors decided that they should begin online technical writing courses, and in their article, they discuss the success of that first-year online course. With the course created by these authors, they asked students to create a variety of technical writing and multimodal projects. These educators argued that instructors teaching distance programs must provide “curriculum that asks distance students to both analyze and create multimodal documents for a dynamic and evolving workforce” (Bourelle 223). Workplace writing is always evolving and changing, and instructors should let students know that the medium they choose for communicating has many rhetorical choices. Bourelle quotes Cargile Cook’s discussion on the importance of technical writing and multimodality working together:

Cargile Cook's (2002) discussion of layered literacies purports that the rhetorical skills emphasized with multimodal projects should be accentuated in technical communication as well, encouraging 'students to understand and be able to analyze, evaluate, and employ various invention and writing strategies based upon their knowledge of audience, purpose, writing situation, research methods, genre, style, and delivery techniques and media' (p. 10).' (Bourelle 224)

Technical writing with multimodal composing can teach students a great deal about workplace communication as well as teaching students to consider the rhetorical reasons behind their choices like audience, purpose, and best mode needed for their communication. Instructors can model these communications for students by then responding to their work with audio, video, or screen grabs to use forms of scaffolding for students (Bourelle 225-229). Bourelle stated that they were successful in teaching students online about technical writing with multimodality, and students developed successful projects (236). The modern workplace needs students with the skills acquired in technical writing courses with multimodal composing, as Steven Fraiberg found in his study.

Steven Fraiberg's workplace study agrees with Bourelle's course study in that they both found that workplace communications are changing, and employees have to keep up with the changes quickly. Fraiberg's article "Reassembling Technical Communication: A Framework for Studying Multilingual and Multimodal Practices in Global Contexts" focused on a high-tech Israeli company that worked with social media polls. Communication was a critical skill in this company, and it occurred through emails, video chats with companies in other countries, meeting notes, and consistent social media postings. Fraiberg found that on a daily basis, employees had to create web pages that used "weaving (knotting) together of conversations, stock photos, and

boilerplate material. This process shapes (and is shaped by) the positions, orientations, and alignments of the actors and objects” (12). Employees had to figure out formatting quickly as they would post polls in real-time on current issues, so employees had to be quick and precise with their postings online. Shane Wood found that “Multimodal pedagogy continually emphasizes process by asking students to become aware of the rhetorical choices they make through the creation of multimodal projects” (Wood 246). Much like companies must make very careful choices about what they publish and produce to best represent their products. Just as Fraiberg found, Wood notes that multimodal composing helps students with “an opportunity to understand the relationship of space, the positioning of images or texts in a lens through process, and multimodal pedagogy allows the ability to reposition images to create new meaning and emphasize process as a means of furthering exploration” (Wood 247). Lisa Dunsenberry’s discussion on multimodality shows a similar connection to Fraiberg’s findings. Dunsenberry teaches students that collaborative workplace communications are vital skills that required keen listening, empathy, and technical knowledge (301). Dunsenberry quotes Johnson-Eilola in saying that “the only constant in [technical communication] is change” (302). Fraiberg and Dunsenberry both pointed this out by showing that modern workplaces have to be clear, precise, and efficient in their writing, which is a skill technical writing improves.

So why would English instructors be nervous about using more multimodality in their classrooms or online platforms? Jessie Borgman stated in the article “Dissipating Hesitation: Why Online Instructors Fear Multimodal Assignments and How to Overcome the Fear” that: “Using multimodal assignments is scary and exciting; however, it is beneficial to students to use such assignments in order to expand their understanding of composing” (Borgman 44). Teachers are afraid to use multimodal composing activities in their classrooms, especially if the courses

are held online. Borgman found that many of their coworkers stated that working with students and multimodal composing were scary to them because of the following reasons. Teachers are in fear of logistics, “fear of attempting multimodal assignments because of the widely held belief that they must be big and bold or complicated, fear that students will not “get it”..., [and] fear of being judged by students and faculty peers” (Borgman 49). However, this is a disservice to students that will work with multimodality in their futures careers. English instructors should help students recognize the importance of multimodal composing and “expand their definitions of what writing is; and we must give them the knowledge and tools to support their consumption of the multimodal texts they already digest daily” (Borgman 58). Many students create and compose multimodal texts daily in the classroom and at home without realizing it. Shane Wood in “Multimodal Pedagogy and Multimodal Assessment: Toward a Reconceptualization of Traditional Frameworks” agrees with Borgman and furthers the discussion of multimodality by saying:

Multimodal pedagogy provides a bridge: it values social media compositions; it opens the possibility for students to see how much they read and write daily; it provides new means for discussing the composing and thinking process; it invites another purpose, audience, and situation to be explored in the writing classroom; it fosters new means of critical thinking and textual analysis; and it affords a study of cross-cultural contexts.” (Wood 251-252)

As English teachers learn more about technical writing and multimodal possibilities in the class or online platforms, they should feel confident that students are still learning how to write in new and innovative ways. Multimodal compositions help students express themselves through their writing, but also in their decisions to include images, charts, and publish their work online.

Traditional writing or academic essay writing is common in the English classroom and can make some students feel that their voice or opinions are not as important. Traditional writing also focuses on Standard American English (SAE), which can marginalize student voices. However, multimodal projects have “Rhetorical flexibility through multimodal pedagogy allows students the affordance of approaching projects in their own way—through their own language, their own voice, their own style, and with their own backgrounds” (Wood 249). By allowing students to write in ways they are more comfortable with, they are more willing to take academic risks and focus on the process of writing. Wood found that “Traditional frameworks limit student agency by further cultivating cultural hegemony and marginalize already marginalized voices” (244-245). So, by allowing students to create multimodal projects in the English classroom versus a more traditional academic writing style, opens students to expressing their voice and learning how writing will possibly occur in their future careers.

Based on the arguments and discussions of a variety of authors working in the modern workplace or instructing at current universities, technical writing with multimodality should have a higher value in the English classroom. Students will use the skills acquired in technical communications for their future careers. However, taking on new modes of writing and teaching can be overwhelming and frustrating in the high school classroom. High school English teachers have high state standards that often are tested for graduation requirements, which make teaching a new composing mode seem unimportant. In the proposal section of this essay, I will provide examples and lesson strategies to help current English instructors take on technical writing with multimodality in the English classroom to set students up for success in the modern workplace or higher education course.

III. The Proposal: Ideas to Bring Technical and Multimodal Writing into the High School English Classroom

The writing taught primarily in English classrooms today falls under academic or creative writing. In the Ohio State Standards, the writing standards for grades nine through twelve covers persuasive, argumentative, informative, and creative narrative composing. Technical writing does possibly occur in the high school classroom with resume and cover letter writing, which is essential to students, but more technical writing should be encouraged. Stuart Blythe stated in “Professional and Technical Communication in a Web 2.0 World” that the types of writing that are most underrepresented “appear to be largely visual (instructions, promotional materials, newsletters), which supports...that we need to be doing more to integrate visual design instruction into our curricula” (281). So the question arises, “how do English educators integrate technical writing and multimodal composing in the high school English classroom?” The following will include lessons and material proposals for teaching technical writing with multimodal composing in the high school English classroom.

Students should use technical writing and multimodal composing in the English classroom, but it is a difficult task. At my current teaching position, the agricultural instructor, Rob Schnippel, and I have done just that; we require students in English 12 and Agricultural Business to complete a business plan and presentation. This plan combines technical writing, multimodality, and business techniques to guide students in the process of creating their own small business. Students are given the business plan prompt (see Appendix 1) where they are tasked at creating their own business plan with sections covering executive summary, opportunity, market analysis, execution, company and management summary, and a financial plan based on Tim Berry’s outline plan (see Appendix 2). The plan will use technical writing in

that each section must be precise, clear, and easy to follow along. Students are tasked with applying writing and multimodal composition, especially in the market analysis and financial plan, which must include charts, calculations, and real-world applications. These sections are mostly covered in the Agricultural Business course. Students are graded with the business plan rubric (see Appendix 3).

Once students have created their business plans, they are then tasked at remixing their plans into presentations given to local small business owners in Waynesfield, Ohio. Students must create presentations lasting at least seven to fifteen minutes (see Appendix 4) and persuade the investors to fund their plans. Students create websites, infographics, charts, PowerPoint presentations, Prezi, and some bring in actual products from their business. For example, a student from the class of 2019 created a coffee shop business plan and created t-shirts, coffee cups, and business cards with logos from their proposed small business. The student handmade these products in the schools “MakerDen,” an area with 3D printers, t-shirt presses, and much more. This area was funded by area local businesses, STEM grants from Ohio, and hard-working educators in our district. Students are graded on their presentations (see Appendix 5) by the local business owners and given feedback on successful their business truly could be in the real-world market. This plan takes students all of quarter four of their senior year with in-class work time occurring in their English and business courses. Students have created outstanding business plans in the past year, with one student using their plan to create a small woodworking business after graduation.

The business plan approach is a large undertaking for students and instructors. So, the following are smaller and more manageable lessons ideas for integrating technical writing with multimodality in the English classroom. Infographics are significantly easier to produce in the

age of technology with websites like Canva, Piktochart, and Google Sites. Authors Ball, Dunsenberry, and Tebeaux all create infographics as successful examples of integrating technical writing and multimodality. Dunsenberry claimed that “Students who create infographics, for example, engage with the processes of summary, data analysis, storytelling, and audience engagement that they need to perform in their traditional writing, but the multimodal components of an infographic make students willing to think about the processes differently” (304). Infographics can be used in any classroom, but I have, for example, had students create infographics for debate projects, persuasive essays, and have had students use them for portfolios showcasing their work at the end of the year. For my eleventh grade students, I had them complete infographics after viewing “Making a Murderer,” a true-crime Netflix series (see Appendix 6). Students learn to manipulate images, text, and the importance of using space wisely. Students also learn how their rhetorical choices with these infographics can also be impacted if the viewer agrees with their stance. An infographic must show its purpose clearly and precisely, which is an important skill in technical writing.

Other lesson concepts for technical writing with multimodality are software demonstrations, scriptwriting, board game instructions, and Lego building instructions. Authors Blythe and Dunsenberry both suggested students create software demonstrations to have students work with technology they have worked with, but present it to the class as a demonstration of how to use the technology. This activity gets students working with software through a new lens. Board game and Lego building instructions can also get students working with technical writing with multimodality. Ball suggested in “Writer/Designer A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects” that students should analyze their design choices and how the audience would understand those choices. With game and Lego instructions, students would need to discuss

emphasis, contrast, color, organization, and alignment (Ball 44). Finally, scriptwriting may seem like it would not fit in technical writing, but Blythe found that it is needed in the modern workplace, “in our survey, for example, play and scriptwriting were common types of text. We assume this is in part because of the growth of video, which often requires a script” (Blythe 281). Many businesses post on social media with live videos, commercials, ads, or post product releases. All of these modes need scripts to make sure the business and their products are viewed in the correct manner. Having students create scripts over a product they have created or even taking one of their software demonstrations and making it into a “postable” videos could help students understand the importance of their rhetorical choices. All of these lesson concepts and practices are ways that English instructors can integrate technical writing and multimodality into the high school English classroom to get students prepared for the workplace and higher education composing.

IV. Conclusion: The Possibilities with Technical Writing and Multimodality

In conclusion, technical writing and multimodality can fit into the current English classroom with instructors teaching high school students how to engage in and utilize new technology and writing online in new modes. Students are already creating online through social media and expressing their creative voice. So why not give them the opportunity to do so in the classroom? Imagine students creating online websites or infographics that are well researched, argumentative, and that contain writing with images, charts, and other graphics. Students would create these pieces and could publish them to share their voice with other classmates or on social media. Students will begin to see the importance of technical writing and, if continuing their education, will encounter technical writing in higher education. However, they will be prepared for this composing. High school students can join the workforce with background knowledge of

how to manipulate and create technical writing pieces for their future employers, making them more marketable. However, I still see the need for high school educators and even universities to see the importance of technical writing. Not all universities or colleges require technical writing, and not all English teachers feel that they are suited well enough to teach technical writing.

To teach technical writing with activities and lessons that are engaging could require technology or resources that not all school districts can obtain. At my district, all students have Chromebooks with our one-to-one initiative and the MakerDen, which allows students to work with technology in new innovative ways. This is not the case for all districts, and that can seem like overwhelming odds against teaching technical writing in the high school classroom. Other issues arise when looking at standards set for English instructors, which do not include technical writing, with this mode of writing also not being tested. This again makes it so it does not seem like a critical subject to cover in the high school English classroom. However, if instructors can find ways to help students express their voices in a non-traditional way, students will feel heard and will be more prepared for workplace writing skills.

Through my research and experience, now with technical writing, I argue that technical writing should be a requirement for juniors and seniors in English courses. The first time that students encounter technical writing should not be in the workplace or at their future universities. I believe it is a disservice to students if they do not work with technical writing and multimodality at least once in the high school English classroom. It may take teachers longer to plan or request funding for their lesson concepts, but students will gain a wealth of knowledge and skill for their future careers. Technical writing and multimodality connect seamlessly with students learning real-world writing skills, which is why these modes should be taught in the English classroom.

V. Appendix

Appendix 1: Business Plan Prompt

Business Plan Prompt

Select a small business to research and develop into a business plan and presentation. Students will learn to format a business plan, create charts, visuals, calculations, and presentations for their small business. Students will use technology to produce, analyze, process, and publish their business plan.

Task:

- Audience: Your instructors as well as financial investors.
- Purpose: To present a researched, fully-funded small business in Ohio with mixed media throughout.
- Length: 8-10 Full Pages This length does not include the Works Cited or Appendix.
- Sources: The plan could include evidence from **credible sources**. Consider the “Helpful Websites” section that could enhance your plan. You will need to evaluate the sites you choose based on reliability and credibility.
- You will develop your plan into a presentation for a request in funding.

Keys to Success:

1. Use the following websites to compile the information for your report:
2. Each section of the Outline should be clearly marked and addressed in your Business Plan (most business plans require 8-12 pages to include this information effectively). Click on each section for more detailed information:
 - a. <https://articles.bplans.com/a-standard-business-plan-outline/>
3. Refer to this Sample Car Wash Business Plan, your plan should resemble this format:
 - a. https://www.bplans.com/car_wash_business_plan/executive_summary_fc.php
4. Refer to these Samples you model your type of plan:
 - a. https://www.bplans.com/sample_business_plans.php?_ga=2.30944957.362204953.1511960096-803322015.1484831901
5. Be sure to include the following in your Appendix:
 - a. <https://articles.bplans.com/what-to-include-in-your-business-plan-appendix>

Helpful Websites for Business Plans:

1. Rhodes State College provides links with helpful cash flow and business plan ideas:
 - a. <http://www.rhodesstate.edu/en/Workforce%20and%20Economic%20Development/Small%20Business%20Development%20Center/Tools%20and%20Resources.aspx>

1. Census.gov shows data on age, sex, education, income stats, etc for all U.S. states and counties:
 - a. www.census.gov
2. Ohio Department of Transportation (Use to find how often people travel the road or your business)
 - a. www.irs.gov (Look at schedule "C" for business Expenses)

What Constitutes Plagiarism?:

- Purposeful Plagiarism: Purchasing an essay; copying entire sentences, paragraphs, or pages from a source; taking credit for sections or the entirety of another student's paper; not providing in-text citations, not providing works cited.
- Accidental Plagiarism: Incorrect in-text citations; incorrect MLA format in works cited
 - **Both instances of plagiarism will be given Zeroes. Purposeful plagiarism will also result in disciplinary action and whatever portion of the essay was plagiarized (outline, rough draft, or final draft) will have lost the right for revision. Accidental plagiarism will still result in a zero, but the writer has the option of serving a Tuesday or Thursday school writing conference with me to revise.**

Graded Stages of the Essay:

- Small Business Proposal - **20 Points**
- Outline - **100 Points**
- Rough Draft - **150 Points**
- Final Draft - **300 Points**
- Presentation - **150 Points**
- Peer Review: You will evaluate a peer's essay at all stages of the drafting process. This will provide you with the opportunity to evaluate how other students are approaching the writing process, and also allow you to gain feedback on your essay. - **50 Points Each Time**
- Workshop: Since so much class time is allotted for the researching and drafting of this essay, I will be assigning weekly workshop grades. This grade will come from your organization, preparedness, focus, and time management skills while working in class. - **Range from 10-25 Points**
- Note: I will assign smaller assignments throughout the unit to practice the writing and researching skills necessary for the essay. These will also be graded.

Grading Policy:

- Revision literally means to "see again," to look at something from a fresh, critical

perspective. It is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper: reconsidering your plans, reviewing your evidence, refining your purpose, reorganizing your presentation, reviving stale prose.

- So, all stages of the business plan are able to be revised.
- But...
 - If the assignment is turned in late, you forfeit your right to revise.
 - All late assignments will be docked 5 points for every day that it is late.
- Since I give so much class time to research and draft these essays, there will be no tolerance or exceptions for late work (except in extreme cases of illness or family emergency).

Appendix 2: A Standard Business Plan Outline (Berry)

The screenshot shows the Bplans website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with logos for Palo Alto Software, LivePlan, outpost, Mplans, and Bplans. Below this is a search bar with the text "Starting a business made easy" and a search icon. A secondary navigation bar lists categories: BUSINESS IDEAS, BUSINESS PLANNING, PITCHING, FUNDING, STARTING, MANAGING, TOOLS, and TEMPLATES.

The main content area features an article titled "A Standard Business Plan Outline [Updated for 2019]" by Tim Berry. The article is categorized as "FUNDING" and has 113 shares. Below the title is an image of a calculator and a pen on a document. The article text begins with: "This article is part of our 'Business Planning Guide'—a curated list of our articles that will help you with the planning process!" and includes an "Editor's note" stating "We've updated this article for 2019." The text continues: "Start from the very beginning understanding that your business plan ought to be specific to your business needs and objectives. There are many reasons why every company should have a business plan, but not every business needs a full formal plan with carefully crafted summaries and descriptions." and "If you don't have a specific immediate need to show a formal business plan to a banker or investor, then you are probably better off doing just a lean business plan, for your internal use only."

On the right side of the article, there is a "Bplans' Top Picks" section with a list of links: "How to write a business plan", "Get a sample business plan", "Why you need a business plan", "How to start a business", "How to get startup funding", and "Tools to help you get started". Below this is a "LivePlan" advertisement with the text "Create your plan in half the time with twice the impact" and a "Get started" button.

<p>Describe the nature of your business and list the marketplace needs</p> <p>Explain how your products and services meet these needs.</p> <p>List the specific consumers</p> <p>Explain the competitive advantages</p>	
<p>Section One X5 _____ = _____ /100</p>	

<p><u>Product and Service Plan</u></p> <p>Description of the product/service, why it is needed and what makes it unique.</p> <p>Describe the company's position and pricing strategy.</p> <p> Details of the product's life cycle.</p> <p> Intellectual Property</p> <p> Research and Development Activities</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p><u>Mission and Vision Statement</u></p> <p>Guiding principles by which the sandwich shop functions – goals and purpose of the company being open. Focuses on the customers' needs and serves as a powerful guide by which the sandwich shop is open. Found in Executive Summary, but should be apparent throughout the business plan.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p><u>Market Analysis & Competitive Analysis</u></p> <p>Industry Description and Outlook</p> <p> Information about target market</p> <p> Distinguishing Characteristics</p> <p> Size of the primary target market</p> <p> How much market share can you gain</p> <p> Pricing and Gross Margin Targets</p> <p> Competitive Analysis</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>

<p>Regulatory Restrictions</p>	
<p><u>Marketing & Sales</u> Fully Developed Market Penetration Strategy Fully Developed Overall Strategy Thoroughly explained why the choices made will work for your business and ensure success.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p><u>Organization and Management</u> Who are the managers? What is their area of responsibility? Who are the owners? What days/ hours will your business be open? Will you follow local, state, and federal laws regarding your business?</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Section Two X5 _____ = _____ /100</p>	
<p><u>Financial Projections</u> Clear financial objectives. Able to explain how these will be met. Historical Financial Data. Prospective Data Clear research has been explained and integrated into the section. Thorough description of how this information will be utilized into the business</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p><u>Funding Request</u> Your current funding requirement Any future funding requirements over the next five years How you intend to use the funds you receive Any strategic financial situational plans for the future Type of Loan needed Realistic loan requirement explained</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4 0 1 2 3 4</p>

<p><u>Report Mechanics</u> Check for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure. Formatting for margins is critical and overall paper must be neat.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Section Three X6 _____ = _____ /100</p>	
<p>Total = _____ /300</p>	

Appendix 4: Business Plan Presentation Prompt

Business Plan Presentation

You will take your research paper and develop a presentation over your Business Plan.

Goals:

- Persuade your Judges to FUND your business as a new local hotspot.
- Present a professional and well-organized presentation.
- Develop presentation skills that will be used later in other career fields.
- Utilize a visual (of your choice) to support and better illustrate your topic.

Requirements:

- 7-15 minute presentation
- Practice answering questions to support your research and numbers (your judges will be questioning your business, research, and reasoning; you must be able to respond and continue to support yourself)
- Must have a visual (you will be graded on your choice of visual and ability to utilize visual in your presentation)
- Dress in business casual or business formal (No jeans, hoodies, sweats, t-shirts, shorts, etc.)
- Use good presentation and speaking skills

Appendix 5: Business Plan Presentation Rubric

Business Plan Presentation Rubric

Student's Name: _____ **Judge's Name:** _____

(20%) (40%) (50%) (60%) (70%) (80%) (90%) (100%)

Area One: Content

1 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5

Introduction- student introduced self and Business effectively								
All business information included: company name, logo, address, contact								
Organized structure to presentation								
Clearly showed Market analysis, Sales plan, and Competitive Analysis								
Strong organization and management plan presented								
Clear funding request; type of loan; realistic loan request								
Conclusion- appropriate, effective								
Student was persuasive and presented a strong business plan that you would invest in.								

Total for Area One _____ X2 = _____/80

(20%) (40%) (50%) (60%) (70%) (80%) (90%) (100%)

Area Two: Delivery

1 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5

Eye contact								
Posture								
Rate and Volume of Speaking								
Avoided vocalized pauses- “um, like, you know...”								
Appearance- Professional, neat, appropriate								
Audio/Visual aids are appropriate, able to be seen/heard								
Effective use of audio/visual aids								
Time within 7-15 minutes Time:								

Total for Area Two = _____/40

(20%) (40%) (50%) (60%) (70%) (80%) (90%) (100%)

Area Three: Question and Answer **1** **2** **2.5** **3** **3.5** **4** **4.5** **5**

Impromptu skills – articulate, confident								
Quality of responses								
Demonstration of knowledge								

Total for Area Three X2 = _____/30

TOTAL for all three areas = _____(150 possible)

Comments:

Appendix 5: “Making a Murderer” Infographic Prompt

Explanatory/Argumentative Infographic

English 11 – *Making a Murderer* Unit Final

Prompt:

AFTER viewing season one of “Making a Murderer,” write an explanatory/argumentative infographic which answers or addresses the following questions:

1. What problems with the American justice system does the series address?
2. What can be done to solve, rectify, or diminish these problems?
3. Do you believe Steven Avery and Brendan Dassey are guilty of murdering Teresa Halbach?

State explicit examples from the documentary, as well as from primary documents from the case to support your claim.

Guidelines:

- FOCUS: Focus on answering the prompt questions to maintain a clear topic/central idea and purpose (to inform your audience).
- ORGANIZATION: Include sections that equal introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs.

- SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: Use examples from the series, as well as outside examples to address the problems in the justice system and Steven Avery's case.
- STYLE: Use a formal style and format.
- DOCUMENTATION: Cite your evidence using the proper MLA format.
- CONVENTIONS: Use proper grammar and mechanics.

Infographic: The Infographic should be between 500-700 words and include 4 visuals that you created or found online and then cited in your Works Cited page and integrated into the infographic.

Utilize one of the following websites:

- Piktochart: <http://piktochart.com>
- Infogr.am: <http://infogr.am>
- Canva: <https://www.canva.com>

Links to Primary Documents:

[Trial Transcripts](#)

[Exhibits & Additional Docs](#)

[Police Interrogations](#)

[Calumet Co. Investigative Report](#)

[Police Reports](#)

[Manitowoc CO. Investigative Reports](#)

**Adapted from Tracee Orman's "Making a Murderer" unit.

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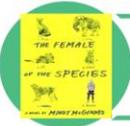
Murder, Witchcraft, and Community Crimes in Girlhood Stories

Visual Representation - Join Mrs. Welch for a new Literature Survey Course titled “Murder, Witchcraft and Community Crimes in Girlhood Stories”! The course will cover themes and characters in “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, *The Female of the Species* by Mindy McGinnis, movie clips from *The Hunger Games*, “The Examination of Sarah Good,” an episode from “Chilling Adventures of Sabrina,” and an episode from *Lore the Podcast*.

Join Mrs. Welch for a semester of:

Murder, Witchcraft, and Community Crimes in Girlhood Stories

This course will include:

-  **THE LOTTERY BY: SHIRLEY JACKSON**
-  **THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES BY: MINDY MCGINNIS**
-  **THE HUNGER GAMES BY: SUSAN COLLINS**
-  **THE EXAMINATION OF SARAH GOOD**
-  **CHILLING ADVENTURES OF SABRINA**
-  **LORE THE PODCAST**

Email Mrs. Welch (kayla.welch@wgschools.org) today if you are interested! You will not want to miss out!

powered by  **PIKTOCHART**

Syllabus

Murder, Witches, and Community Crimes Unit

Instructor: Kayla Welch
Email: kewelch@bgsu.edu

Office: D18
Office Hours: TBD

Unit Description

This unit will focus on multiple different texts, video clips, and audio clips surrounding murder, witches, and community crimes. The issues of violence, revenge, assault, and crime will be discussed throughout this unit.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to

1. Apply curiosity in academic reading and writing.
2. Practice openness to new perspectives.
3. Practice creativity in approaches to reading and writing.
4. Read across multiple genres.
5. Generate example-based feedback to others' perspectives and writing.
6. Develop strategies for revising writing projects across drafts.
7. Use documentation, syntax, grammar, mechanics, and formatting strategically.

Consider the following questions throughout the unit:

1. Should communities commit "crimes" to deal with criminal offenders?
2. How do crimes affect young women in their coming of age journey?
3. What are the issues surrounding community traditions that surround public executions?

MLA Formatting and Documentation Style

Please follow these format requirements for submitting your work:

- Papers should follow MLA format. We will discuss MLA format in greater detail during class.
- Essays must be word-processed, double-spaced, and have standard 1" margins on the right and left sides, top, and bottom of the page.
- The font used for all drafts should be 12-point Times New Roman or other similarly proportioned and sized fonts.
- Pages must be numbered with your last name and page number in the upper right-hand corner, as per MLA specifications.

Classroom Etiquette

This classroom is a place for learning, and learning requires a respectful and appropriate environment.

Therefore, as a community, we should:

1. Be focused on class; meaning you should not be on social media, cell phones, email, or any electronic device that could be distracting to classmates or the instructor.
2. Please sit in your assigned seat daily, you must wear your mask in class, and avoid touching your face. Wait for your desk to be cleaned before sitting down.
3. Do not touch other classmates or items around the room. Do not share pens/pencils or trade Chromebooks. Please use hand sanitizer after touching anything that does not belong to you or blowing your nose.

4. Be BRAVE! Be willing to participate and take academic risks. This also requires hard work along with being prepared for class by bringing all your required materials.
5. Be willing to collaborate and work together with other students.
6. Have respectful class discussions. Listen to one another, ask questions, and explain any disagreements without attacking others.

Unit Schedule

Please note: The unit schedule may change due to cancellations, advanced or slowed progress through material, or the class's needs. Changes will be announced during regular class meetings in ample time for the class to adjust.

Week	In-Class Activities/Readings
Week 1	Complete pre-unit questionnaire Read "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson
Week 2	Watch "Chapter Seven: Feast of Feasts" from <i>The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina</i> Complete compare/contrast paper
Week 3	Read <i>The Female of the Species</i> by Mindy McGinnis; Pages 1-50 Complete discussion packet
Week 4	Read <i>The Female of the Species</i> ; Pages 51-103 Complete Discussion packet
Week 5	Read <i>The Female of the Species</i> ; Pages 104-169 Complete Discussion packet
Week 6	Read <i>The Female of the Species</i> ; Pages 170-242 Complete Discussion packet
Week 7	Read <i>The Female of the Species</i> ; Pages 243-304 Complete Discussion packet
Week 8	Read <i>The Female of the Species</i> ; Pages 305 - end Complete Discussion packet
Week 9	Watch "The Hunger Games" movie clips Read "The Examination of Sarah Good"
Week 10	Listen to <i>Lore the Podcast</i> episode 12 "Half-Hanged"
Week 11	Complete Literary Analysis

Rationale: Why Teach About Crimes and Communities?

“Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones.’ ‘It isn't fair, it isn't right,’ Mrs. Hutchinson screamed, and then they were upon her” (Jackson). This quote from “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson shows that communities are willing to commit murder or crimes against their members because of rituals or even forgotten reasons. While students may consider some crimes to be only in the past, this teaching unit will show students that crimes continue to rip apart communities today. The “Murder, Witches, and Community Crimes” unit will be used in a teaching unit for eleventh or twelfth-grade students taking English courses. Students will wrestle with the reasons and themes surrounding why crimes are committed by young women or why communities commit crimes against young women. The following questions will be considered, “How do crimes affect young women in their coming of age journeys?” “Does the punishment always fit the crime committed?” and “How are community crimes today similar or different to crimes in history?” The primary text for the unit will be *The Female of the Species*, written by Mindy McGinnis, and it will serve as the anchor full novel for this teaching unit. The texts, movie clips, and podcast used in this unit will cover female characters encountering crimes that they commit themselves or that were committed against them by their communities; from this unit, students will analyze theme, character development, and the advancement of crimes in each text.

The Female of the Species is a novel that covers controversial topics that young adults are dealing with within their communities. The novel follows Alex Craft, Claire “Peekay,” and Jack Fisher as they experience and witness crimes in their small rural town. The first major trauma in this novel is the murder, rape, and mutilation of Alex’s older sister, Anna. The murder of Anna pushes Alex to kill Comstock, who was tried for Anna’s murder but was found not guilty.

However, Alex lives in a small rural community and is still in high school as a senior, she is faced with her sister's death almost daily, as the community avoids her or mistakes her for Anna. Her mother is an absent parent and alcoholic, while her father left the family altogether. Alex, Peekay, Jack, and other classmates journey through this novel while encountering many obstacles like toxic masculinity and increasing crimes in their community.

Themes of Trauma, Crime, and Revenge in “Murder, Witchcraft, and Community Crimes” Unit

For this unit over “Murder, Witchcraft, and Community Crimes,” there will be other short story readings, movie clips, and a podcast for students to engage and learn about. Each reading, movie, video, or podcast will have students analyzing multiple themes and characters. The unit will cover “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, *The Female of the Species* by Mindy McGinnis, movie clips from *The Hunger Games*, “The Examination of Sarah Good,” an episode from “Chilling Adventures of Sabrina,” and an episode from *Lore the Podcast*. There are many themes that students may pull from each text, but the main themes will be trauma, crime, and revenge. As students read or view each text, they will be looking at character development and theme development. The issues of drug abuse, rape, assault, and underage drinking are strong in *The Female of the Species*, but these themes will push across all of the texts in this unit. Students will begin to see these themes with the short story “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson and the Netflix series “Chilling Adventure of Sabrina,” which are the first two texts to be read and viewed in this unit both relating to community crimes and public executions. After reading *The Female of the Species*, students will watch movie clips from *The Hunger Games* so that students see the connection of community crimes to revenge with Katniss Everdeen. Then students will listen to *Lore the Podcast* and read the court documents from “The Examination of Sarah Good,” which

will both focus on community crimes performed against women considered to be witches during the Salem Witch Trials. Students will begin to connect and analyze how the themes are related or how the characters develop across all of the texts in this unit.

Trauma

To begin with the theme of trauma in *The Female of the Species*, trauma surrounds this novel and the characters in it. The novel opens with the reader learning that Anna, Alex's older sister, was missing, but her body was found spread around in the woods after her murder and rape. It shakes the community and Alex's already unstable family. The trauma of Anna's death leads Alex to take justice into her own hands and murder the man that was found "not guilty" for Anna's murder, even though he was guilty. Later in the novel, Alex also kills to protect Sara, a classmate, when she finds out that her uncle had molested Sara's little sister. Alex wanted to save Sara and her sister from the trauma of a failed trial, like she had to endure.

Alex's trauma is deep, and it started before her sister's death. Her father left the family, was abusive toward her mother, which then led her mother to drink. After Anna's death, Alex notices that sometimes she forgets about her sister for a second, but then it hurts. "It's a different kind of pain than the constant, the weight that hangs from my heart. It swings from twine embedded so deeply...my whole body is suffused and pain is all I am and ever can be" (McGinnis 55). Alex has a deep trauma that she thinks will be cured by committing the crime of murder, but it only makes the trauma deeper. Trauma also occurs for Peekay, as Ray Parson, a heroin addict, almost rape her. Alex saves her, but the morning after Peekay is in shock. She says, "The softest parts of my skin are under a stranger's dirty fingernails, my DNA embedded there along with fast-food grease and his own dandruff. Some of my cells are with him right now

and I don't want them to be. I want them back" (McGinnis 152). Peekay has this horrible trauma, but she chooses not to report the crime, which leads to Ray Parson's attempted rape of another classmate later in the novel.

Trauma will be a theme between many of the texts in this unit. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen deals with the trauma of living in a dystopian world disguised as "perfect." Katniss is picked to fight for her life in the Hunger Games arena, where she will have to murder other players to "win." On top of all of those events, Katniss has already experienced the death of her father and is the sole provider for her family, so without her, they may starve. Students will also connect the theme of trauma to "The Lottery" as well since the community picks one member to be stoned to death by a lottery system of picking names from a box. Each year a random community member dies, but no one can explain why this has to happen. The trauma from these events leads some of the characters to more acts of violence and crime. Trauma will be a theme in all the texts because crime occurs in each text, causing each character to experience some source of trauma in their lives.

Crime

The theme of crime is heavy in *The Female of the Species*. Of course, the murders occur, but there are also drug crimes and sexual assaults on the rise as well. Heavy crime is happening in the small Ohio community; even Officer Nolan states, "Only two murders ever committed in this town and we haven't solved either of them" (McGinnis 65). Nolan is questioned at a school assembly about the murders, but Officer Nolan is one of the only adults that is willing to show the young people that crimes are occurring in their community, and he wants to stop them. The community seems to be in disorder. The small community having two murders, which Alex will

turn into five, shakes the community. Students will have to ask themselves, “Does crime influence how a community responds?” Community members are scared and acting out, especially when thinking about how this small community is being torn apart by so much heinous crime. Peekay’s parents also show that crimes are increasing in the community. They are giving Peekay a lecture and say, “there’s been an influx of heroin in the county...Bad heroin...A handful of people overdosed last week...It’s out there, along with meth - which in some ways is even more dangerous...” (McGinnis 75). Since I teach in a small Ohio community as well, the hope is that this novel will help students learn about increased crime in the community as well and how they can avoid or help stop these crimes. The crime of rape is also happening in the community, and both Nolan and Peekay’s parents warn the girls to report whatever happens to them, which they do not, and this leads to more violence in the novel.

Increased crime leads to increased violence, like the violence of Anna’s murder, Alex’s violent revenge, and the raping of the young women in the town. The murders of Comstock, who murdered Anna, and the murder of Sara’s uncle, who was a pedophile, both happen by the hands of Alex’s violence. One example of violence is when Peekay is drinking at “the church,” which is the teen hangout spot. Ray Parsons drugs Peekay and begins to take her out of the building to rape her. Alex notices and stops the act and says, “by which you mean I should let you rape my friend,’...All around us people flinch at the word rape, and it’s so ridiculous I [Jack] almost start laughing. Peekay is unconscious, her body flowing like water through Branley’s arms...Her shirt is torn open so far I can see her bra. Her jeans are unbuttoned...Yet the word rape still jolts people” (McGinnis 142). Then Alex attacks Ray Parsons and rips his nose ring and part of his ear off in her rage. Peekay is saved by Alex, but she falls into the silent victim script. In “Silence and the Regulation of Feminist Anger in Young Adult Rape Fiction” by Aiyana Altrows,

Altrows discusses some of the harmful storylines in YA literature when covering the topic of rape. One harmful script, as Altrows calls it, is the silent victim script in which “the victim is unable to disclose her rape and spends the novel agonizing over this” (2), which can be seen in this text with Peekay.

Peekay, who is sexually assaulted by Ray, does not report him. Later in the novel, he is about to rape Branley, a classmate, and Peekay feels responsible for not reporting him earlier. In chapter 60, Peekay says, “My life is a list of things I didn’t do... I didn’t call the cops after Ray Parson tried to rape me, so he tried again on someone else. I didn’t tell Branley she’s more than tits and ass and legs, so she still believed it” (McGinnis 325). She is full of guilt, and Altrows says this places the blame on the victim when trauma is involved (2-3). Altrows also states, “Rather than presenting it as a shockingly common violation, fictional rape stories often undermine their subversive potential and, instead, naturalize rape as an expected and accepted cultural backdrop” (2). Alex even states in chapter 41 that “I live in a world where not being molested as a child is considered luck” (McGinnis 239), which shows the “normal” and “expected” nature of sexual assault. Just in this novel alone, the reader is exposed to four rapes or attempted rapes. The violence in the novel is intense, but rape is a subject that should not be stuffed away from young adults. This text will allow students to share and discuss the reality of sexual assault and hopefully prevent the horrible cycle of its occurrence.

Since this is a unit that is covering crime, the theme of crimes will be in every single text in this unit. While this novel covers the most amount of crimes in one text, all of the texts have at least one major crime, usually leading to death. The following two texts will have students answer the major question: “How are community crimes today similar or different to crimes in history?” *Lore the Podcast* is a podcast that covers strange lore or historical stories in the United

States, but also around the world. Students will listen to episode twelve titled “Half-Hanged,” which covers how the people in New England attempted to find and then execute witches, along with the attempt to hang Mary Webster in Massachusetts in 1685 (“Half-Hanged”). This podcast covers major community crimes committed against women in the 1600s. The connections will continue with the reading of the court transcripts of “The Examinations of Sarah Good,” which covers the witch trial of Sarah Good. In 1692 in Salem, she was accused of causing three young girls to have seizures, with her execution to end the reading. Students will discuss how these two texts connect, but also how they are similar to our other discussions of community crimes. Students will also look at how communities today accuse their members of heinous crimes they did not commit.

Revenge

The last theme that students will focus on for this novel will be revenge. The rage that Alex feels often leads her to take revenge. In Marion Brown’s article titled “The Sad, the Mad and the Bad: Co-Existing Discourses of Girlhood,” Brown discusses how boys and girls are given different ideals during adolescence. Ideals of masculinity are “independence, risk taking, troublemaking, and autonomy are the markers of successful passage” versus ideals of “femininity are those of cooperation, compliance, dependence and service to others” (108). For example, in chapter 34, Alex sees a classmate acting like he is having a sexual encounter with a basketball. Teachers, students, and Alex notice this young man’s disgusting act, but no one stops him (McGinnis 202). Alex notes that if she did the same action that she would be sent to the office and everyone would ask what was wrong with her as a young woman acting in such a way. Alex states, “But *boys will be boys*, our favorite phrase that excuses so many things, while the only thing we have for the opposite gender is *women*, said with disdain” (McGinnis 202).

The idea that boys will misbehave versus young women will be cooperative is the idea that this novel pushes against. There are many times that a character underestimates Alex by thinking she is weak or unable to stand up for herself since she is young and a woman. However, she quickly shows them that she should not be messed with by using violence against them.

Brown continues in her article that in modern texts, “the bad girl commits violence, ranging on a continuum from indirect and verbal aggression, to direct and physical expressions. She is nasty and she is rough” (113). For example, Park, a classmate, comes very close to Alex acting like he is going to kiss her. As he goes in, Alex “drops her shoulder to gain some momentum as she takes a jab at his crotch..and he goes down like a box of rocks” (McGinnis 30). Alex is full of female rage that leads to her revenge, but she is not alone. Peekay also exhibits revenge and rage in the novel, but because of her nickname, “preacher’s kid,” she is thought to be “better than that.” Brown notes that “Pervasive Caucasian—Christian cultural disapproval drives female anger beneath the surface, reinforcing the message that ‘nice girls’ don’t feel rage, much less verbalize or physically demonstrate it” (113). However, Peekay has rage, and she has a moment of rage against Branley, who stole her boyfriend. In class, Peekay goes to hit Branley, but Alex stops her. Alex tells Peekay, “Venting your primal self in an emotional moment can be more than your socially constructed self can handle after the fact...Look at you. Your hands are shaking. Your voice is weak. And your conscience is reasserting itself” (McGinnis 99-100). Alex knows that rage cannot work for everyone and stops Peekay from allowing herself to get to that place of rage.

The rage Alex feels is everywhere. Early in the novel, Alex notices where she has made dents in the ceiling tile at school and other marks on walls where she had to let her rage out. Alex states, “I used my markers as I go from place to place. Seeing evidence of my small

rebellions, spots where my wrath was allowed to vent and has impacted the world around me...My violence is everywhere here. And I like it” (McGinnis 36). However, Alex knows that her crimes and revenge have to be balanced. She states, “In my mind there is a scale. I do not know how many small lives add up to a big one, or if there is a formula to work it out” (McGinnis 277). Alex knows that the crimes and murders she commits are wrong, so she tries to make up for her faults by caring for the animals at the shelter. These discoveries in the text will have students work with the following important points that will be addressed in this unit: Are some crimes worse than others? Does murder, in the case of revenge for the loss of a loved one, not feel as heinous? Is Alex Craft a form of hero, or is she just a murderer? Is the idea of “an eye for an eye” mentality appropriate in today’s society? Students will have to work with these questions and will have strong opinions on each, but that will help them work at analyzing for their final project of the unit, which will be a literary analysis.

The final act of revenge that Alex has is when she shoots Ray Parsons at “the church” before he has the chance to rape Branley. Alex is pushed and hits her head on a rock, causing her death (McGinnis 322). Alex’s death is an impactful end for this novel. Alex had stated earlier in the novel that “I am a wolf that my sister kept in a cage, until her hand was removed...I’m out, and awake, and afraid I won’t be easily put back in” (McGinnis 166). Is Alex’s death part of her “punishment?” Did Alex deserve to die? Students will have to grapple with these questions during this unit. Alex Craft took revenge for her sister, Anna, and she stood up for classmates and saved their lives. If Alex had lived through shooting Ray, she would have gone to prison for the murder of two other men. How would that change the ending of this novel? The positive impact of Alex’s efforts is not ended, in any case. After her death, Peekay and other female classmates work to change the narrative. They go around erasing penises drawn in the hallway

and negative comments written in the girl's restroom (McGinnis 339-340). Peekay goes to the boy's restroom to find the words "Rest in peace Alex" drawn on the stall door, and she is filled with hope that Alex really is now at peace (McGinnis 341). Students will have to decide for themselves if Alex's death was justified, if they thought there could have been another successful ending for Alex, or if they felt Alex's "punishment" fit her crimes.

Revenge will be a common theme found throughout multiple texts in this unit. In "Chilling Adventures of Sabrina" episode seven titled "Chapter Seven: Feast of Feasts," Sabrina Spellman is faced with an old coven tradition of sacrificing one witch each year. Sabrina takes revenge out on her coven and tries to stop the sacrifice, which makes them very angry because they have to fast for the week leading up to the feast. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss will show her revenge, by not killing a young girl in the games. Katniss becomes friends with the girl and even buries her body in an act of revenge against the Capital. At the end of the movie and novel, Katniss gets her revenge as well by not killing the last contestant Peeta, who was from her district and had become someone she loved. Two people had never won the games before in the history of the event. Students will discuss the revenge and answer the unit question, "How do crimes affect young women in their coming of age journey?"

Conclusion: The Impact of the Unit

My hope for this unit is that in the end, students will notice that communities can create crimes against the members of their communities. Students should question traditions, especially if they feel inappropriate or wrong. The young women in the texts for this unit go through trauma, violence committed by them, or to them, but most are able to rise against the pain and rage to make a change. The change does often happens after their death or because of their death,

which makes this unit impactful to the reader. Students will analyze the main themes, but will also create their own ideas and themes from each text. In their literary analysis, the final project of the unit, students will make connections and answer the main questions presented at the beginning of the unit to show what they have learned. Students will be challenged to think about crimes in different ways than they maybe have before. Students may begin to question “normal” traditions in the future and will hopefully fight for justice for themselves or each other.

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Creative Writing: Awakening a Student's Authorship, Voice, and Collaborative Skills

Introduction

“Narratives evoke the imagination, opening students’ minds to unfamiliar places and contexts outside the frame of their limited adolescent experiences” (Kitt 52). Creative writing in the high school classroom is important and can awaken a student’s mind, voice, and ability to learn how to use language in ways they may not have had the chance to use before. In the creative writing classroom, students will be presented with a variety of units and pedagogy to encourage growth in the process of their writing skills, collaborative skills, and finding their expressive voice. In her article “Creating connections between senior and middle years: Perceptions on teaching the art of creative writing,” Bree Kitt stated creative writing “has the capacity to awaken students’ identities as writers and their ability to empathetically story human experience” (51). Kitt found that if students were presented with the ability to write creatively at a younger age, then they could become well-rounded writers with a strong vision of self.

Students at Waynesfield-Goshen High School have not been offered a creative writing course in several years. While students are encouraged to write creatively in the typical English classroom, a creative writing course will open up new opportunities. Creative Writing will be a semester-long course open to grades nine through twelve and equaling around fifteen weeks of material. The course will be made up of five units consisting of a literacy narrative, poetry unit, folklore unit leading to a short story unit, and then a ten-minute play unit. The final product will be a portfolio of what the student believes to be their best work from the course. Throughout the semester, students will also be required to keep a handwritten or digital journal over daily class writings and a monthly precept inspired by R.J. Palacio’s “365 Days of Wonder Mr. Browne’s Precepts.” Creative Writing is a classroom workshopping opportunity for students to learn

through expressivist, process, and collaborative pedagogy along with learning interpersonal relationships through peer review and revision to acquire a powerful voice.

Why Creative Writing?

While many courses could have been chosen for an elective class to teach, creative writing came as a new and exciting opportunity for Waynesfield-Goshen students. Writing will be the primary purpose, but reading from literature, poetry, and flash fiction will occur during the course. A large portion of the class will be a workshop style curriculum where students will be collaborating and working together to discover more about the characters and worlds they will be creating. Students will also learn more about the importance of their voice as the author of the various pieces created in class. According to Bree Kitt, a student finding their voice is a huge piece to creative writing pedagogy. A student's voice is made within their writing and can be expressed through the characters, world, and plots created by the student. A student finding their creative voice can allow them to be playful with language, experiment with their voice, and expand their imaginative abilities (Kitt 52). This classroom style and curriculum will cater to students stretching their writing to include plot development, character relationships, and learning how to create themes within the writing as well. Within this creative writing unit, I will use three different pedagogical approaches, expressive pedagogy, process pedagogy, and collaborative pedagogy, to encourage writing growth in students by self-expression and trusting in the classroom community that will be created with peer groups and collaboration.

Expressivist Pedagogy: Finding A Student's Creative Voice

Employing expressive pedagogy in the creative writing classroom will require students to express themselves in multiple genres. Students will have the opportunity to express themselves

through journals, freewriting, and self-reflection. Students will look into their own experiences or could incorporate collaboration among other classmates with different tasks or through peer review situations that will occur (Burham and Powell 113). Essentially, expressive pedagogy to Chris Burham and Rebecca Powell, “encourages, even insists upon, a sense of writer presence [or voice]” in that students look deeply into their own experiences or imaginations to write about their topics in different mediums (113). With each unit in this creative writing course, students will be exposed to genres they have experienced before, like poetry and short stories, but will also learn about flash fiction and folklore pieces, which may be a new genre to them. Each of the different units will challenge students in their writing and learning to express their voice through characters, plot, symbolism, and theme. Each unit will begin with the students exploring the different pieces of literature with hyper documents (see appendix example) to analyze how different authors develop characters, plots, or even how to correctly use dialogue.

Writing from the perspective of a character or narrator will be a new experience for most students, and the process will teach students to be the character, not themselves. Christian Knoeller wrote in “Imaginative Response: Teaching Literature through Creative Writing” that using a character’s voice “invites student readers to explore a work from perspectives situated within a text. When assuming “textual voices,” imaginative writing provides students with a variety of vantage points from which to examine and interpret a work” (44). The idea of a writer’s voice and character’s voice being different, yet still the same, will be an interesting concept for students in this course. Who is truly speaking in the writing piece? When is it appropriate to be the “author” or the “character” will be a balancing act for these new writers to overcome within their pieces. Another interesting, and important, aspect of writing in different voices will be the new challenge of being someone the student may not be in real life. For

example, Knoeller cautions his students that to write in a character voice “requires a kind of empathy and must be handled respectfully, avoiding clichés, stereotypes, and prejudice, especially when assuming voices of others whose social identity or cultural background differs from one's own” (44). Reminding students to express themselves, but keeping the reader and the world of the characters in mind will help them create a habit of mind or a way of seeing the world and then to also engage in that world (Burham and Powell 122). Getting students to express themselves through their writing will be a critical point for this course. However, it will also be important for students to learn the process of producing their writing with process pedagogy.

Process Pedagogy: The Importance of Prewriting Activities

Process Pedagogy focuses on the “process” of writing like prewriting activities, outlines, peer review, and revision. While creative writing may be thought, by students, to have more of an “on the fly” quality where they pull ideas from pop culture, journals, or conversations and write whatever comes to mind, the writing process should still be followed for quality writing. Students will be encouraged to follow a prewriting, writing, and rewriting process (Anson 216). The process should push students to make up their own ideas with the student deciding where their writing should go. However, they need to learn the process of writing to guide them, meaning the teacher is a guide of the proper writing process to follow. In process pedagogy according to Chris Anson in "Process Pedagogy and Its Legacy," students should be encouraged to create “multiple drafts [and] allowed to encourage the act of discovery; mechanics are relegated to the end of the process; students need plenty of time to refine their papers; and there are no rules or absolutes” (217). Creative writing courses should allow students to work with their projects in multiple revisions to create the best product that they can. As Anne Lamott

stated in “Shitty First Drafts,” “The first draft is the child's draft, where you let it all pour out and then let it romp all over the place, knowing that no one is going to see it and that you can shape it later” (93). Lamott encourages the reader to get something down and write free-flowing with the intention of going back and changing almost everything. In this course, students will turn in a final draft for a grade, but students will also pick multiple drafts to perfect and put in the final portfolio.

In this course, students will be encouraged to engage in prewriting activities like graphic organizers, webs, researching, or interviews to prepare for the writing piece. Students will also be graded through outlines, proposals, a first draft, peer review, and then the final draft. Each unit will have a different assignment sheet along with a different rubric (see appendix). These processes will help students be prepared for the multiple drafts that will be created with rough drafts and possibly multiple final drafts. In the proposed textbook for this class, “Creative Writing Four Genres in Brief,” by David Starkey, he tells the reader that “A thorough revision of your story might mean reconceptualizing both the protagonist and the plot or deleting the first three paragraphs of your six-paragraph essay” (9). Story writing is difficult, and many writers know that many drafts will be needed. Lamott gave even more encouragement for multiple drafts when she called the first draft the “down draft” where the writer gets something, anything, written down (96). Then the second draft is the “updraft” where the writer fixes the draft up and makes corrections. The final draft is called the “dental draft” by Lamott, suggesting that the final draft is like the dentist checking “every tooth, to see if it's loose or cramped or decayed, or even, God help us, healthy” (96). Lamott gives this allusion as a guide, and students will be encouraged to read her article in this course to help them with their writing process and know

that all writers use multiple drafts. A large portion of the process of writing that will help a student grow will also be their collaboration in the classroom community.

Collaborative Pedagogy: Creating Within a Community of Writers

Collaborative pedagogy will be an essential piece of this creative writing classroom. Most of the work completed in class will be in a workshopping style with students working together to complete ideas, stories, or even to help in peer review situations. Students should be prepared to work together in a variety of situations to guide each other through the course. The teacher will be the leader, but a student could present themselves as skilled in a specific field if they have previous knowledge in a genre unknown to other students. This will be encouraging and exciting to have students leading the way on the creative writing journey. Krista Kennedy and Rebecca Howard present two types of collaborative pedagogy in their article “Collaborative Writing, Print to Digital,” which are dialogic collaboration and hierarchical collaboration. Dialogic collaboration is where a group of students work on the whole project as a group. Hierarchical collaboration relates to the group taking sections of the paper, and each writes their own ideas (Kennedy and Howard 40). Students have most likely taken on both collaboration techniques in their classroom experiences, but in a creative writing classroom, it can look a little different.

Collaboration in the creative writing classroom will be a mix of idea sharing, peer review, character mixing, and even mixing of worlds. Students will be encouraged to share ideas and even work on story ideas together to then create their own versions of their work. Ryan Rish and Joshua Caton wrote “Building Fantasy Worlds Together with Collaborative Writing: Creative, Social, and Pedagogic Challenges,” where they discussed a creative writing class that focused on a large collaboration piece of science fan fiction writing. Students were assigned to work

together on many aspects of the piece. The collaboration encouraged students to work through conflicts. Both Rish and Caton, along with Kennedy and Howard, stated that students had moments of conflict and compromise on what should be written. “Successful collaboration, say Lunsford and Ede, allows not only for ‘good cohesion’ but also for ‘creative conflict’...” (Kennedy and Howard 42). Both articles stressed the idea that students learned quickly what to argue about at length and when to let go of conflict to keep the collaboration moving forward. Kennedy and Howard found that it was “important for students to anticipate in advance that dissent and conflict will arise and to be ready to respond to it productively rather than wasting time trying to suppress reform, or eject dissenters” (42). Students are learning how to resolve conflicts and compromise in an English classroom, whether they realize it or not. In Rish and Caton’s research, they found that “One argument for the use of collaborative writing in our classrooms is that ‘collaboration is an important skill to learn in preparation for working with others in schools and the workplace’ (Beach et al. 71)” (28).

Along with learning to deal with creative conflicts and working together to breakthrough ideas for plot, characters, or the storyline in general, students will also guide each other in peer review workshops. Workshopping ideas as a class and borrowing ideas from other writers or pop culture is something students do and should remind each other to be careful to avoid. Is their writing too close to a movie or favorite video game? (Rish and Caton 24). By students helping each other revise their work, a classmate can help the writer see if their storyline or plot is too close to another piece of writing. Revision in creative writing is different from “normal” revision and peer review in formal writing. Revision is often thought of as a time to correct grammatical errors or surface proofreading to catch punctuation and capitalization errors. However, peer

review and revision in creative writing will help students hone in on their ideas, plots, and characters.

Peer review may be in small groups, pairs, or even around the room stations where students will work on different aspects of their work together. Peer review, as stated by Wendy Bishop in her article “Helping Peer Writing Groups Succeed” stated, “The collaborative method [of peer review] allows students to develop audience awareness, to check their perceptions of reality, to strengthen their interpersonal skills, and to take risks; the entire process results in improvement in writing and students’ ability to revise” (309). By having students review each other’s writing pieces, they can be inspired, bounce off of each other’s work, or even see what plot lines are working and which should be removed. Like Lamott stated in “Shitty First Drafts,” a draft can go through many different drafts before becoming anything worth reading. Lamott recalled multiple times where she wrote five or six pages to then cut the writing piece down to only two pages worth publishing for her blog (95).

In a creative writing course, collaborative writing and idea-sharing are encouraged, but some students may still feel that an idea is theirs only and no one else can use it. Grading, when collaboration is encouraged, can be challenging to gauge, but grading on the individual’s writing is still needed. Joshua Caton stated it was difficult to grade for collaboration, so he had “...students receive grades based on the thoroughness of their writing. Though my primary goal was to help students write with more specific detail and vivid description, I had no mechanism in place to assess how the sharing, borrowing, or recasting of ideas contributed to their writing” (Rish and Caton 25). So having students peer review and be each other’s guide to great writing will be the critical portion of workshops, as well as, helping in the grading process. Teacher conferences with students, as well as listening to peer review processes, will help the teacher

know how to gauge student grades. Students will receive grades for their peer review, collaboration, writing processes, and final products for each unit that is introduced. The above pedagogies have been pieced together for a course syllabus to guide students in the creative writing semester course at Waynesfield-Goshen.

Syllabus

Creative Writing Syllabus

Instructor: Mrs. Welch

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Email: kayla.welch@wgschools.org

Classroom: D18



“You have to resign yourself to wasting lots of trees before you write anything really good. That's just how it is. It's like learning an instrument. You've got to be prepared for hitting wrong notes occasionally, or quite a lot. That's just part of the learning process. And read a lot. Reading a lot really helps. Read anything you can get your hands on” stated by J.K. Rowling.

Course Description

The Creative Writing course is designed for students who are interested in expressing their feelings through art and creating a community around the written word. In this course, students will write creative writing pieces in multiple genres of poetry, short stories, fairytales, journals, and plays. My goal, as the instructor, is to guide each of you through the genres, to help you become better writers and to get you excited about writing in new forms! Students will be required to engage in pre-writing activities, peer review collaborations, revision work, and publishing activities. The course will be broken into multiple units with a final unit where students will collect their best pieces from the semester in a portfolio.

Required Course Materials

- Notebook (spiral, journal style, any size with lined pages)

- Red and blue pens
- Chromebook (Charged and ready to go each day!)
- Folder and/or three-ring binder

Unit Title	Description
Journals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily prompts ● Monthly precepts inspired by R.J. Palacio's <i>365 Days of Wonder Mr. Browne's Precepts</i>
Why do I write?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Literacy Narrative ● What is writing? What do good writers do? ● Sharing our writing experiences, the good, the bad, and the powerful.
The Poet Who Didn't Know It	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poetry (variety of models) ● Coffee Shop sharing of final products from the unit
Cinderella, Rapunzel, Bigfoot, Oh My!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Folklore readings including myths and fairytales ● Create your own folklore morals
Short Stories in a Flash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flash Fiction ● Short stories with an emphasis on plot and character development
So you think you are William Shakespeare?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ten-minute Play productions ● Stage directions, dialogue, script production
Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Created and designed as the semester advances ● Final project showing off your best work through Google Sites ● Students may also choose a favorite unit to develop extra work to turn into the Portfolio as their best work.

Grading:

Grading will rely on classroom participation and collaboration, writing processes, journal entries, and final drafts created for each unit. Grading will be set on a point system, but each section has a different weight, which can be seen below. Excellent work and participation in the course will guarantee a high scoring grade.

Grading Weight:

- Class Participation (Peer Review; Workshops; Selected Lessons): 15%
- Process (Pre-writing; Revisions;): 30%
- Journal Entries (Daily prompts; Monthly precepts): 25%
- Final Drafts (Portfolio): 30%

Classroom Etiquette

This classroom is a place for learning, and learning requires a respectful and appropriate environment. Therefore, as a community, we should:

1. Be focused on class; meaning you should not be on social media, cell phones, email, or any electronic device that could be distracting to classmates or the instructor.
2. Please sit in your assigned seat daily, you must wear your mask in class, and avoid touching your face. Wait for your desk to be cleaned before sitting down.
3. Do not touch other classmates or items around the room. Do not share pens/pencils or trade Chromebooks. Please use hand sanitizer after touching anything that does not belong to you or blowing your nose.
4. Be BRAVE! Be willing to participate and take academic risks. This also requires hard work along with being prepared for class by bringing all your required materials.
5. Be willing to collaborate and work together with other students.
6. Have respectful class discussions. Listen to one another, ask questions, and explain any disagreements without attacking others.

Discipline Policy

- This year is going to be great! However, it does depend on your attitude and respect in the classroom.
- Disruptive behavior, rude attitudes, disrespect toward the teacher or other students will not be tolerated.
 - 1st Offense will be a verbal warning
 - 2nd Offense email/call to parents/guardians with possible after-school detention
 - 3rd Offense head straight to the office
- You can jump to the 3rd Offense depending on the issue at hand.

Homework Policy

- If you miss a day of school it is your responsibility to get your missed work. You will have as many days to get it turned in as you missed.
- Late homework will result in:
 - After School Academic Assist: 3:05-4:00 Monday – Thursday

Computer Policy

In the Student Handbook, it states, “**students are encouraged to use the Network for educational purposes. Use of the Network is a privilege, not a right.**” Use your Chromebook responsibly and for classroom purposes **only**.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are to powered off and put away during the school day except at lunchtime. Students are not to use their cell phones during class or in the hallway unless given permission

by a teacher for school-related purposes. Phones will be sent to the office and students will be issued an afterschool detention for EVERY violation.

Plagiarism/Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating are not permitted in this course. I begin the year with complete trust and faith in each of you. Please do not abuse that trust by being dishonest. Collaboration will be a large portion of this class with ideas being shared often. When you sit down to complete an individual assignment, however, let the work be yours alone. **The consequence for plagiarism or cheating will be an automatic zero and a detention to be served after school.**

Works cited:

“Quote by J.K. Rowling.” *Goodreads*, Goodreads, 2019,
www.goodreads.com/quotes/54876-you-have-to-resign-yourself-to-the-fact-that-you.
Date Accessed 14 Apr. 2019.

Unit Rationales: Why Teach A Four Genre Creative Writing Course?

Each unit for this creative writing course has been researched and used from a variety of sources. The main source being “Creative Writing Four Genres in Brief” by David Starkey. This text will be the primary reading for the course. The four genres discussed are poetry, short stories, non-fiction, and the ten-minute play, with each chapter ending with anthology readings for students to get inspired by each unit. Each unit will be filled with lessons teaching students how to create the pieces they intend to write, and each unit will have multiple stories or poems to read, as seen in the hyper document example. Some students may find that they are skilled in a particular genre and could become leaders in that section, meaning they will share their writings out more often with the class, or they may lead peer review with classmates. Students that are skilled in a particular unit may also feel that they want to write a more extended piece or write multiple pieces in that unit.

Students will be encouraged to push themselves no matter if they feel skilled in an area or not. While other units may be more difficult for the students, each unit will have pre-writing

activities, graphic organizers, and collaboration through peer review, conferences, or publishing work on Google Sites. Each unit will end with students sharing their pieces in a publishing manner through a coffee shop style like the idea from Kristen Ferguson in her article "A Poetry Coffee House: Creating a Cool Community of Writers." She suggests allowing students to read their work aloud in class while students listen and enjoy warm drinks (210). Ferguson suggested dimming the lights, having students present, and hopefully creating an atmosphere of sharing and encouragement with classmates. I would like students to share something they have written every Friday in front of the class, which could be a journal prompt writing, their written piece in progress, or something in between. Each unit will challenge students in new ways within the creative writing classroom to become better writers.

Conclusion

Creative Writing is a new and exciting course at Waynesfield-Goshen High School that will encourage students to grow in their writing, explore the importance of their voice, and learn to collaborate in a community of writers. Students will be encouraged to use process pedagogy, expressive pedagogy, and collaborative pedagogy to become active writers in multiple genres that are presented throughout the course. The course will be made up of five units consisting of a literacy narrative, poetry unit, folklore unit leading to a short story unit, and then a ten-minute play unit. The final product will be a portfolio of what the student believes to be their best work from the course. Throughout the semester, students will also be required to keep a handwritten or digital journal. Creative Writing is a classroom workshopping opportunity for students to learn through a variety of pedagogies along with learning interpersonal relationships through peer review and revision to acquire a powerful voice.

Appendix
Hyper Document Example:

Folklore Unit

Hansel and Gretel		
STEP 1 5 MIN	EXPERIENCE	ENGAGE
	What do you already know about <i>Hansel and Gretel</i> ?	Record 3 things you already know: 1. 2. 3.
STEP 2 35 MIN	Read Hansel and Gretel	Record at least 5 facts: the characters, the plot, mood, or any other notes that will help guide your writing: 1. 3. 4. 5.
The Little Mermaid		
	Read The Little Mermaid	Record at least 5 facts: the characters, the plot, mood, or any other notes that will help guide your writing: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
	Watch The Little Mermaid Trailer	Compare/Contrast the video to the story we just read:
Rapunzel		

	Read Rapunzel	Record at least 5 facts: the characters, the plot, mood, or any other notes that will help guide your writing: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
--	-------------------------------	--

	Watch: Disney Rapunzel	Compare/Contrast the video to the story we just read:
--	--	---

Cinderella

	Pick two Cinderella Versions to read here . If you want to listen: “Cinderella” by Charles Perrault “Ashputtel” by Brother’s Grimm	First Story: Record at least 5 facts: the characters, the plot, mood, or any other notes that will help guide your writing: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Second Story: Record at least 5 facts: the characters, the plot, mood, or any other notes that will help guide your writing: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
--	---	---

		Compare and Contrast the two stories:
--	--	---------------------------------------

Example Assignment Sheet adapted from Mariely Sanchez:



Write a Fairy Tale Story Project



Your assignment is to create your very own fairy tale. You must follow the guidelines below as well as the "Elements of a Fairy Tale" in order to receive a passing grade. Please read the instructions below and follow them.

Remember that you must have the "Elements of a Fairy Tale" stated in your story. The elements that are in **BOLD** writing **MUST** be included in your story:

ELEMENTS OF A FAIRY TALE

1. Fairy tales usually begin with "Once upon a time..."
2. Fairy tales happen in the long ago.
3. **Fairy tales have fantasy and make believe in them.**
4. Fairy tales usually have royalty.
5. **Fairy tales have a good and an evil character.**
6. Fairy tales may have magic, giants, elves, witches, or fairies.
7. **Fairy tales have a problem that needs to be solved and very often it will happen in three tries.**
8. **Fairy tales have happy endings.**



You must also follow the guidelines below in order to complete your Fairy Tale:

1. All Fairy Tales **MUST** have a Title Page. Your Title Page **MUST** also include the Title, Author, and Illustrator (if applicable).
2. Your story Title must be creative, should spark interest, and it needs to be related to the story.
3. Illustrations are not mandatory but are welcomed in order to bring your story to life.
4. When typing your story you must follow these guidelines.
 - You need to use a font size no smaller than 12 and not over 16.
 - You should use a font that is **EASY TO READ.**
 - Your story **MUST** be double-spaced, not single-spaced.
 - Your story should be about 4-7 pages long.
 - You **MUST** have a Title Page for your story.

You are also reminded about "The Writing Process." In order to have a really good story you must follow the correct steps when writing, please look at the following steps in order to help you with your writing.



1. Prewriting
2. Writing
3. Revising
4. Editing
5. Publishing





Write a Fairy Tale Story Project Rubric



Category	4 (A)	3 (B)	2 (C)	1 (D)
Title Page	Title page has a graphic or fancy lettering, has the title, author's name, illustrator's name, and the year.	Title page has the title, author's name, illustrator's name, and the year.	Title page has the 3 of the 4 required elements.	Title page has fewer than 3 of the required elements.
Title	Title is creative, sparks interest and is related to the story and topic.	Title is related to the story and topic.	Title is present, but does not appear to be related to the story and topic.	No title.
Writing Process	Student devotes a lot of time and effort to the writing process (prewriting, drafting, reviewing, and editing). Works hard to make the story wonderful.	Student devotes sufficient time and effort to the writing process (prewriting, drafting, reviewing, and editing). Works and gets the job done.	Student devotes some time and effort to the writing process but was not very thorough. Does enough to get by.	Student devotes little time and effort to the writing process. Doesn't seem to care.
Characters	The main characters are named and clearly described in text as well as pictures. Most readers could describe the characters accurately.	The main characters are named and described. Most readers would have some idea of what the characters looked like.	The main characters are named. The reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are.
Problem	It is very easy for the reader to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem.	It is fairly easy for the reader to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem.	It is fairly easy for the reader to understand the problem the main characters face but it is not clear why it is a problem.	It is not clear what problem the main characters face.
Setting	Many vivid, descriptive words are used to tell when and where the story took place.	Some vivid, descriptive words are used to tell the audience when and where the story took place.	The reader can figure out when and where the story took place, but the author didn't supply much detail.	The reader has trouble figuring out when and where the story took place.
Solution	The solution to the character's problem is easy to understand, and is logical. There are no loose ends.	The solution to the character's problem is easy to understand, and is somewhat logical.	The solution to the character's problem is a little hard to understand.	No solution is attempted or it is impossible to understand.
Spelling & Punctuation	There are no spelling or punctuation errors in the final draft. Character and place names that the author invented are spelled consistently throughout.	There is one spelling or punctuation error in the final draft.	There are 2-3 spelling and punctuation errors in the final draft.	The final draft has more than 3 spelling and punctuation errors.
Organization	The story is very well organized. One idea or scene follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The story is pretty well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used.	The story is a little hard to follow. The transitions are sometimes not clear.	Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged.
Creativity	The story contains many creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has really used his imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has used his imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story. The author has tried to use his imagination.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story. The author does not seem to have used much imagination.



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Grammar Practice That Sticks: Teaching Grammar in the High School English Classroom

Rationale

Grammar is a part of the English classroom that is expected but often dreaded by students and even English teachers themselves. Each year it seems that students struggle with the same fundamental grammar skills that are needed for future careers and especially higher education. So the question arises, “how can I teach grammar for comprehension, but also retention?” The following lesson plans will cover punctuation, active and passive voice, and adjectives and adverbs, which can be added to any reading or writing unit if students are struggling with these concepts. Each unit will focus on how students can look at grammar within writing, literature, or a combination of both to guide their understanding of different grammar skills. Each of the units covered are requirements for the Ohio State Standards in place for grades tenth through twelfth grade. The standards are indicators for what will be on each Ohio State AIR Test for tenth-grade students taking ELA II. Each year Ohio testing has held grammar as an important skill along with an essay writing section for students to complete with grammar set as a standard on the rubric. The grammar units provided will not just serve tenth-grade students, but could also transfer to eleventh or twelfth grade, if students are struggling in a specific grammar skill.

The rationale behind teaching multiple grammar lessons comes from research that finds that “grammar conventions taught in isolation seldom transfer to writing” (Weaver 35). Constance Weaver, author of *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*, has found that grammar must be taught alongside writing units with students utilizing the skills taught right away, rather than an instructor teaching a lesson over adjectives and adverbs, but then moving on to another unit without having the students use the new skills they have just learned. Another issue comes from the fact that traditional grammar is “inconsistent and confusing” and “focus[es] too much

attention on grammatical form and analyzing language, but not enough on employing the grammatical structures that can convey precise descriptions and clarifying information” (Weaver 15). Again, Weaver finds that grammar without direct and precise instruction from teachers leaves students feeling confused and often unsure of how to use grammar skills correctly. The lessons provided will look at a specific grammatical skill that students often struggle to apply to their writing. The lessons will guide students in instruction and then an application to a written piece.

Teaching English grammar is not only for testing requirements for the state or learning to become a better writer; language also holds power. Language has power in many different ways. The power in language can come from the dialect spoken, which is not always fair. Students should learn that Standard American English (SAE) is often preferred in certain social situations. If someone is not able to speak in SAE, that could be pointed out as low education, laziness, or inexperience. Authors Crovitz and Devereaux in *Grammar to Get Things Done* stated that “we must make sure that we don’t elevate Standard English beyond its reasonable place - a common dialect that offers access to the mainstream power structures in America. Standard English is not right, good, or proper - it is just a variation of English with a lot of social capital” (21). Crovitz and Devereaux point out that SAE is not the only way to speak English or even the proper way to speak it, but because of the social and political structures in the U.S., people can be looked down upon because of their dialect in English. Students should be provided with the skills to practice SAE, but also know that their dialect is not wrong or incorrect. Students still need to know that their voice is important in the classroom and that their voices hold a great deal of power.

So now these lessons are to guide students in understanding a grammatical skill, applying it to writing or literature, and adding their own voice, which in turn teaches them the power of

language. These lessons will help students meet Ohio State Standards and testing questions that may appear on ELA II. As Crovitz and Deveraux stated, “only through understanding the social constructions of language, power, society, and identity can we teach grammar ethically, without silencing our students - their thoughts, words, and worlds” (19).). **Grammar is a difficult subject for many students because of the continually changing rules and the inability to connect grammar to writing practice. Applying the skills to actual writing and letting students play with the power of language can increase retention for high school students in the English classroom.**

Grammar Lessons

I. Lesson 1: Punctuation

II. Lesson Preparation:

- A. Grade level: 10th grade
- B. Supporting Theory/Theorist:
 - 1. “Punctuation in actual communication” from Crovitz and Deveraux.
- C. Standard(s) to which this lesson adheres/supports:
 - 1. L.9-10.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - 2. L.9-10.2.a. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
 - 3. L.9-10.b. Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.

III. Lesson Plan:

- A. Materials and Technology Needed:

1. Reading from *Grammar to Get Things Done* by Crovitz and Devereaux pages 194-202; 215-218.
2. “Boardworks” PowerPoint with Smart TV interactions and manipulations.
3. Students may take notes on their Chromebooks that are provided for each student.
4. See appendix for all the materials needed.

B. Student Objectives:

1. Students will correctly use commas, semicolons, colons, and end punctuation.
2. Students will write in a variety of forms to practice using correct punctuation skills.

C. The number of class sessions needed: 3-5 sessions

D. Descriptions of activities for each class period:

1. Class Session # 1: Read from *Grammar to Get Things Done* pages 194-196 over colons. Students will complete the “Boardworks” PowerPoint over colons with a “Boardworks” worksheet to follow along. Students will then work in pairs with “Experimenting with Colons” on page 197-198 in *Grammar to Get Things Done*, where they will select two scenarios from “Power of Lists,” “Defining a Term,” or “The Final Reason.” Students will share their sentence examples with one other group, then turn in their sentences.
2. Class Session #2: Read from *Grammar to Get Things Done* pages 198-201 over semicolons. Students will complete the “Boardworks” PowerPoint

with a “Boardworks” worksheet over semicolons to follow along. Students will select a new partner to complete “Experimenting with Semicolons” on page 201-203 of *Grammar to Get Things Done*, where they will select two scenarios to complete together. Students will share their sentence examples with one other group, then turn in their sentences.

3. Class Session #3: Read from *Grammar to Get Things Done* pages 215-218 over commas. Students will complete the “Boardworks” PowerPoint with a “Boardworks” worksheet over commas to follow along. Students will create actual communication sentence examples on their own using commas then they can work with a partner to peer review their ideas. Students will turn in their sentence examples.
4. Class Session #4-5: Since this lesson is a supplemental, it can be used before, during, or after a writing unit. Students should now look at a piece of writing they are in-process or finished writing. Students should add in colons, semicolons, commas, and end punctuation where needed. They will focus their writing on correcting or adding appropriate punctuation. Students will be graded on their correctness in punctuation usage.

E. Describe this lesson’s assessment strategies

1. Type(s) of assessment: Students will be completing formative assessments by filling out their “Boardworks” worksheets and doing example sentences for each experimenting in actual communication scenarios. Students will also work on a written piece that will be graded as a summative assessment from the unit.

2. Tool(s) used for assessment: Classroom observations, completion of worksheets, actual communication examples from students, sample writing from students with focus on punctuation.

IV. Lesson 2: Active and Passive Voice

V. Lesson Preparation:

A. Grade level: 10th Grade

B. Supporting Theory/Theorist:

1. “The Passive Voice” by Kolln and Gray

C. Standard(s) to which this lesson adheres/supports:

1. L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. W.9-10.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

VI. Lesson Plan:

A. Materials and Technology Needed:

1. *Rhetorical Grammar* by Kolln and Gray pages 40-43.
2. <https://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/george-orwells-advice-on-how-to-tweet-effectively.html>
3. <https://www.businesswriting.com/tests/activepassive.htm>
4. See appendix for all the materials needed.

B. Student Objectives:

1. Students will learn and practice the difference between active and passive voice.
2. Students will edit sentences and previously written work to make it more precise and clear.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of active and passive voice and how it can impact the author's voice.

C. The number of class sessions needed: 3-5

D. Descriptions of activities for each class period:

1. Class Session # 1: Bellringer: Have students read the following Twitter Status: "The Rochester Hairy Gorillas were beaten by the Miami Beach Pink Sparkly Dolphins at the championship soccer match at my high school on Sunday." This status is too long for Twitter, so students need to change the sentence to fit the 130 character rule (Flocabulary). Discuss if students changed the status from passive to active voice. Students will then read *Rhetorical Grammar* by Kolln and Gray pages 40-43. Students should complete Exercise 9 on page 41. Once completed with the exercise, students will discuss their answers as a whole class discussion. Then with a partner, students will complete "For Group Discussion" on page 41 of Kolln and Gray; students will turn in their final results.
2. Class Session #2: Bellringer: Students will complete the activities on "Write Strong, Active Voice Sentences" from BuisnessWriting.com as a refresher for active versus passive voice. Students will then look at Geoffrey James' article "George Orwell's Advice on How to Tweet

Effectively” to learn about clear and precise tweets using active voice.

Once students have completed reading the article, they will work with a partner on the Flocabulary activity. They will change these sentences to active voice and get them to fit on Twitter with 130 Characters only. For homework, students will need to come to the next class session with at least three twitter profiles that must be verified accounts to work with in class tomorrow.

3. Class Session #3: Students will come into class with at least three celebrities, politicians, sports figures, or public figures that are on Twitter. Students will be given six spaces from the “Vocabularize” worksheet by Rehbein. Students will need to come up with at least six tweets from their three figures chosen where they will take something that they have written in the passive voice and change it into active voice. They may also change any grammatical errors that are used in the tweet. Students will also need to state a rationale for why they made specific changes. By the end of class, we will come together to discuss what students found.
4. Class Session #4-5: Since this lesson is a supplemental, it can be used before, during, or after a writing unit. Students should now look at a piece of writing they are in-process or finished writing and look for moments when they used passive voice and change it to active voice. They will focus their writing on correcting any voice issues. Students will be graded on their correctness in active voice usage.

E. Describe this lesson’s assessment strategies

1. Type(s) of assessment: Students will complete formative assessments from bellringers and Kolln and Gray activities. Students will complete a summative assessment with the Twitter Activity. Then students will also complete a summative assessment by revising a recent written work to change passive voice to active voice.
2. Tool(s) used for assessment: Bellringers, Kolln and Gray activities, “Focabulary” activities, “Vocabularize” worksheet, Twitter, and student essay samples.

VII. Lesson 3: Adjectives and Adverbs to enhance writing

VIII. Lesson Preparation:

A. Grade level: 10th Grade

B. Supporting Theory/Theorist:

1. “Five Basic Brush Strokes” by Harry Noden

C. Standard(s) to which this lesson adheres/supports:

1. L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. L.9-10.1.b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
3. W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

4. W.9-10.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

IX. Lesson Plan:

A. Materials and Technology Needed:

1. “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe
 - a) Text from Poetry Foundation:
www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48860/the-raven
 - b) Audio from YouTube “The Raven (Christopher Lee)”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BefliMIEzZ8>
2. Exquisite Corpse Writing Gallery Walk (McEvoy) with Chromebooks
3. *Image Grammar* by Harry Noden pages 4-13
4. “Five Brush Strokes” Gallery Walk with Chromebooks:
<https://deanramser.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/image-grammar-brushstrokes.pdf>
5. See appendix for all the materials needed.

B. Student Objectives:

1. Students will observe and mimic tone, style, and mood from Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven.”
2. Students will use the “Five Brush Strokes” technique to enhance a piece of writing with adjectives and adverbs.

C. The number of class sessions needed: 7-8 sessions

D. Descriptions of activities for each class period:

1. Class Session # 1: Students will listen and read “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe. Students will then discuss the mood, setting, plot, and tone of “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe. Students will pull out adjectives and adverbs that made the story extra creepy and mysterious to them.
2. Class Session #2-3: Students will begin the “Exquisite Corpse Writing” Gallery Walk. Walking around the room to the different stations, students will use their Chromebooks to write a short story or poem based on the corpse writing activity prompts. Students should end up with 2-3 pages of writing.
3. Class Session #4-5: Students will then look at the presentation over “The Five Brush Strokes” from Noden. Students will work with a partner on a gallery walk with “The Five Brush Stroke” activity set around the room. Each brush stroke will be at a different station for students to read about and learn if they would like to use that new technique in their story. Students will be looking at their “Exquisite Corpse Writing” piece that they completed the day before. Students must enhance their written piece with at least two or three of the brush strokes provided by Noden.
4. Class Session #6: Students will work with a partner to peer review each other’s “Exquisite Corpse” pieces. Students will read the story aloud and comment directly on the Google Doc with comments. They will also check for enhanced adjectives and adverbs usage along with the application of two or three “Brush Strokes” in the written piece.

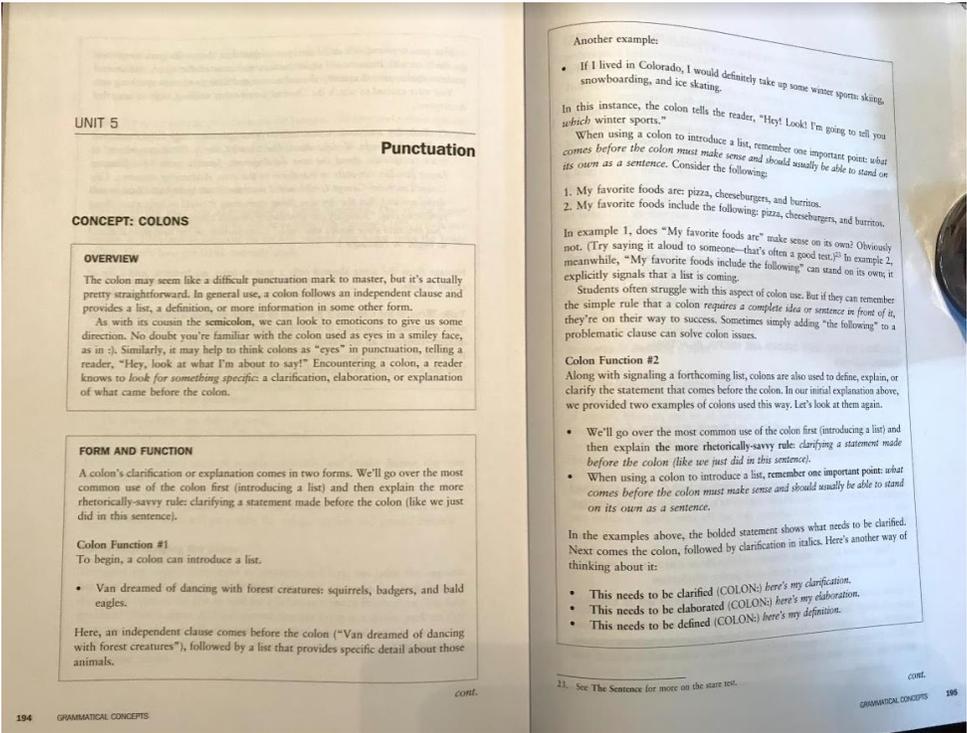
5. Class Session #7: Students will share out their final stories in small groups and then turn in their final written pieces. Students will be graded on their usage of the “Brush Strokes” and how they enhanced their adjectives and adverbs.

X. Describe this lesson’s assessment strategies:

- A. Type(s) of assessment: Formative assessment with a class discussion of “The Raven.” Formative assessment with students completing both gallery walks. Summative assessment of final “Exquisite Corpse Writing” piece.
- B. Tool(s) used for assessment: Classroom observations, discussions, peer review notes, and “Exquisite Corpse Writing Rubric” for summative assessment.

XI. Appendix Lesson 1 Punctuation

A. Images of *Grammar to Get Things Done* by Crovitz and Devereaux pages 194-202; 215-218



As you can see, what follows the colon can be a phrase or a complete sentence. This quality separates colons from semicolons, which connect related independent clauses. Replacing a semicolon with "and" is one way to verify correctness, but that trick doesn't work with colons. Try adding "and" in place of the colon in any of the sentences above, and you'll see that they don't make sense.

Does the colon have its own little replacement trick? Yes! If you can successfully replace the colon with the word "namely" and the sentence still makes sense, chances are you have used the colon correctly to clarify or explain what came before the colon. (Note: this hack doesn't quite work with sentences using the phrase "the following.")

Typical Form Exercises

1. Write three sentences using a colon to introduce a list.
2. Write three sentences using a colon to clarify, define, or elaborate upon what comes before.

FOCUSING ON USE: HOW COLONS ARE USEFUL IN ACTUAL COMMUNICATION

Colons can make your writing more concise. Here's a passage that could use some tightening:

Using a colon takes some confidence and thought as a writer. To use a colon according to Standard English rules, you must be consciously aware that a point needs further clarification.

If we look closely, we see some unnecessary repetition: both the first and second sentence begin with the same idea (although there's a gerund in the first sentence and an infinitive in the second sentence, they say the same thing). A colon can fix this wordiness:

Using a colon takes some confidence and thought as a writer: you must be consciously aware that a point needs further clarification.

A colon points as directly toward an elaboration of a statement, cutting through excess verbiage. Keep in mind that colons are considered a "mature" punctuation mark; English teachers typically don't expect elementary students to master colons and are pleased when secondary students do. Using a colon well is a small but telling sign of advanced control in writing.

196 GRAMMATICAL CONCEPTS

EXPERIMENTING WITH COLONS

Scenario 1: The Power of Lists

You have multiple goals for Carlton's Block Party scheduled for next weekend. The first is to assure—and then reassure—your parents that this event is safe, appropriate, and completely legal. Boring and Grated, even. Your next job is just about the complete opposite: rousing your old friends in Jackson County to make the trip over for this blowout gathering. To do that, you have to explain how absolutely unforgettable, exciting, and can't-miss this party will be: it's a long trip for them, after all. Another challenge? You can't tell lies about the party to either group, because you'll get found out. You have to describe the event accurately, but somehow focus on the particular aspects that your audiences want to hear. Not an easy task to please two separate groups, but you're pretty sure you can do it.

Task: You need to write two notes, one to your parents and one to your friends. Both of these audiences need a very different kind of list that will get them thinking in ways you want them to think. As part of each note, create a list of details so that your audience can visualize what you want them to see. Use a colon to lead into this list.

Scenario 2: Defining a Term

People love coming up with new words to describe each other and themselves. Hipsters, scenesters, emo kids, crustpunks, cybergrubs, preps, gangstas, jocks, hip hop nerds, straightedges—all of these and more supposedly define a specific kind of person, lifestyle, and set of interests. But do they really? The trouble lies in placing complex individuals in small categories. Most people are more multi-dimensional than a single term can capture. When slang is used to describe people, things can go sideways quickly.

Now's your chance to set folks straight on a slang term with which you're familiar. A feature reporter from the city's largest newspaper is visiting your school, and you've got the opportunity to educate a lot of people on the real information.

Task: Choose a slang term with which you have some familiarity, and in a paragraph, explain what folks typically believe along with the actual truth as you see it. Offer your true definition with the use of a colon.

Scenario 3: The Final Reason

Some people have a difficult time taking "no" for an answer. You're known as Skooch for a long time, but you're not exactly close friends these days, which is why his repeated requests for you to drive him into the city on what he's calling a "special errand" is so odd. He runs with a different crowd now, and frankly

cont.

197 GRAMMATICAL CONCEPTS

you don't want to get involved. But today he buttonholed you after school again, and he's laying it on thick, telling you how a real friend would help him out. You're able to brush him off again, but this has to stop.

Task: Draft an email to Skooch in order to put an end to his inquiries. Explain your thinking for saying "no." As part of your draft, lay out your ultimate reason for not helping him out with the line below:

The final reason I don't want to drive you is this:

Be honest but not cruel. You don't need to burn the guy down completely. Just let him know where you stand once and for all.

CONCEPT: SEMICOLONS

OVERVIEW

In our experience, most students avoid the semicolon in their writing. That's a shame, as it's a pretty easy piece of punctuation to master. Semicolons are rarely required (and some purists may argue that they are never really necessary), but they are a sophisticated option that, when used well, demonstrate control of rhetorical effects and can suggest a mature prose style.

In the language of emoticons, a semicolon represents a wink. We might similarly think of the semicolon as a kind of "expressive resource" (Petit, 2003, p. 67).

FORM AND FUNCTION

There are only a few established ways to use a semicolon. Let's take a look at them.

Semicolon Function #1

The most common function of the semicolon is to connect two related independent clauses. In essence, the semicolon gives us a way to link two sentences into one. Seems simple enough. However, when using the semicolon, we must think of how the two sentences relate to one another. Ideally, a semicolon alerts the reader to a subtle distinction that this longer flow of writing unbroken by a period somehow reinforces a kindred meaning between the sentences.

One way to get a sense of the nuance that semicolons provide is through thinking carefully about sentence options.

cont.

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1. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq. The experience affected him noticeably.
2. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq; the experience affected him noticeably.
3. Mr. Moncrief is obsessive about his lawn. He's out there almost every day mowing, trimming, and puttering around.
4. Mr. Moncrief is obsessive about his lawn; he's out there almost every day mowing, trimming, and puttering around.

How would you express the difference between these sentence variations? Legitimately, students might push back a bit here. After all, the difference between these constructions is so slight that perhaps it's not worth worrying about—we could just go with two sentences and put the semicolon back on its dusty shelf. But as students gain control and precision with their writing, punctuation options become more important as a vehicle for expressing complex and subtle ideas.

Consider the options below.

1. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq. The experience affected him noticeably.
2. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq; and the experience affected him noticeably.
3. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq; the experience affected him noticeably.
4. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq—the experience affected him noticeably.
5. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq; the experience affected him noticeably.
6. My brother did a six-month Army Reserve tour in Iraq . . . and the experience affected him noticeably.

All of these options—and more—are legitimate in particular contexts, depending on what the writer wants to accomplish. And rhetorical options mean that we have more control, power, impact, and consequence with language.

Finally, there's the "meta" language quality of the semicolon (and other not-so-common punctuation) to consider. The ability to use a semicolon correctly is one of those small but noticeable indicators of fluency, comfort, and confidence in the written word. We aren't advocating for gratuitous language choices for the purpose of showing off; semicolons should be used judiciously. But the student who can command this punctuation option helps establish her prose at a level above the typical.

Semicolon Function #2

The second common function of the semicolon is to separate units of a series when the units themselves contain commas.

cont.

199 GRAMMATICAL CONCEPTS

- Last year I traveled to Ravenna, Italy; St. Petersburg, Russia; and Manchester, England.
- I read many books last year, including *Language, Culture, and Communication; Evolution, Diversity, and Conflict in the English Language; and Culture, Literacy, and Learning.*

Here, the semicolon corals comma-embedded list elements. Try replacing them with commas in the examples above and the result is pretty chaotic.

Semicolon Function #3
The final common function of the semicolon is really a variation of Use #1. Recall that semicolons connect two independent clauses. When one of these sentences contains a transitional element called a **conjunctive adverb** (e.g., *however, meanwhile, nevertheless, accordingly, consequently*, etc.), we place a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb and a comma after it.

- My plan was to see my grandmother this weekend; **however**, she decided to take a trip to New Orleans instead.
- He studied hard for his test; **consequently**, he earned an A.

The conjunctive adverb helps clarify the relationship between the two independent clauses and is quite useful in expository, professional, and academic writing.

Typical Form Exercises

1. Describe in writing (1) a place that is important to you, or (2) a hobby. Use a semicolon as part of your description.
2. After you have written at least five sentences, trade your descriptions with a partner. Assess the effectiveness of your partner's semicolon use. Is it correct? Does it make sense?
3. Explain how a different punctuation choice would change meaning.

FOCUSING ON USE: HOW SEMICOLONS ARE USEFUL IN ACTUAL COMMUNICATION

Since Semicolon Use #2 (separating comma-embedded list elements) deals more with literal clarity than with rhetorical effect, we'll focus here on Uses #1 and #3.

First, though, let's point out something that may seem a little obvious. Because the semicolon joins two independent clauses, it creates a single long sentence. The question of how or why semicolons are useful is thus part of a larger question: what's the use of a longer sentence? What's it good at doing?

cont.

As we mention in other sections (see *Complex Sentences and Compound-Complex Sentences*), syntactic complexity often partners with complex thinking. When you are doing complex things with words—explaining, elaborating, justifying, arguing, deliberating, evaluating—longer sentences help. Generally, we where a topic, point, or idea tends to be explored in detail.

Semicolons can give your writing a flow that other punctuation can't. Many Victorian novels, for instance, use the semicolon liberally when describing brooding the setting rather than *looking at this thing <stop>, looking at that thing <stop> over and now looking over here <stop>*. What's the connection to meaning? Arguably, such flowing descriptions might be characteristic of a Romantic temperament, capturing the upwellings of spirit as it's manifested in nature and language.

Using a series of semicolons can be a bold move, but we should focus on the effect: a sweeping breathlessness of ideas. When you have ideas that are so intimately connected that to break them apart would be to destroy meaning or feeling or flow, the semicolon serves as that vital bridge.

EXPERIMENTING WITH SEMICOLONS

Scenario 1: Deep Dive into Detail

You heard some sad news the other day. You know that place where you spent so much time as a little kid? The place that now sits in a soft glow inside your memories? Well, evidently it's being torn down in order to build a landfill. It's heartbreaking. But then comes an update that the county council will hold a public hearing before making a final decision on the matter. They want to hear from people about this place. Do people even care if it disappears? Is it special? If so, why?

Task: Prepare your remarks for the council. Your goal? Persuade the council members to stop the destruction. But to do this, you need to paint a picture with words that makes them feel the worth and importance of this place. Make them see what you see and feel what you feel. As you work on your depiction, try stringing sentences together with semicolons to produce this effect.

The boards curved from decades of rain, splintering around the knots. The barn sat high on the hill; the roof was the best place in the whole county to watch the sun set over the towering pines. Chickens clucked noisily; cows lowed softly in the far-off fields. My first memories were of that old barn and a setting summer sun.

cont.

Scenario 2: Defending Your Honor

Everyone thinks you did it. You have an alibi—a couple of other students saw you studying in the library before basketball practice—but it doesn't seem to matter. Ms. Prince's bag is missing from her car and with it, an expensive phone and about \$200 in cash. You don't have a clue what happened to her stuff, but over the last couple of days people are shooting you the cut-eye and whispering when you walk past. A couple of your teachers have even given you some unwanted advice ("you know, telling the truth is always the best policy") and the insinuations are starting to get under your skin.

Now Mr. Aristos, the principal, has asked for a meeting with you on Monday morning, and he wants a statement about what you know about this incident.

Task: Since you don't know anything about what happened, there isn't much you can say at all about the "incident." But you can say something about the not-so-subtle accusations concerning your presumed guilt. You want to make Mr. Aristos understand what you've been dealing with, but you also want to maintain a cordial and respectful tone in your statement. Defend your honor, and experiment with semicolons in making your points.

Scenario 3: Elaborating on an Idea

Damia McManus, the student body president, is a tireless advocate for her peers. She's worked with the school administration to create the policy that allows students to eat outside during lunch; she helped move the prom to a much cooler location; and she helped loosen up the personal-phone-use policy.

But Damia's latest project isn't so popular. She wants to start a program that would require each college-track senior to mentor a freshman student, with mandatory meetings and expectations for tutoring and homework help. The school administration likes the concept, but quite a few students and their parents seem less than thrilled. A public forum event has been arranged at which the pros and cons of the idea can be discussed.

Task: Damia has sought your assistance in crafting the rationale for her senior-freshmen mentoring plan. She has several claims she wants to make, including the following:

- Mentoring would increase academic performance for new students.
- The program would positively impact school morale.
- Seniors would gain valuable service skills.

What she needs help with is fleshing out the support for each idea. Help her write a paragraph for each claim that connects the dots and makes the benefits clear. Use some well-chosen semicolons to help.

cont.

Prefixes
re-, pro-, anti-, quasi-, para-, ex-, ultra-, mega-, micro-, mini-, neo-, pseudo-, crypto-, retro-, semi-, tri-, quad-, self-, all-, hyper-, titan-, proto-

Suffixes
-able, -proof, -esque, -free, -style, -based, -ish, -like, -itis, -ism, -wise, -ation, -oid, -tron, -ize

CONCEPT: COMMAS

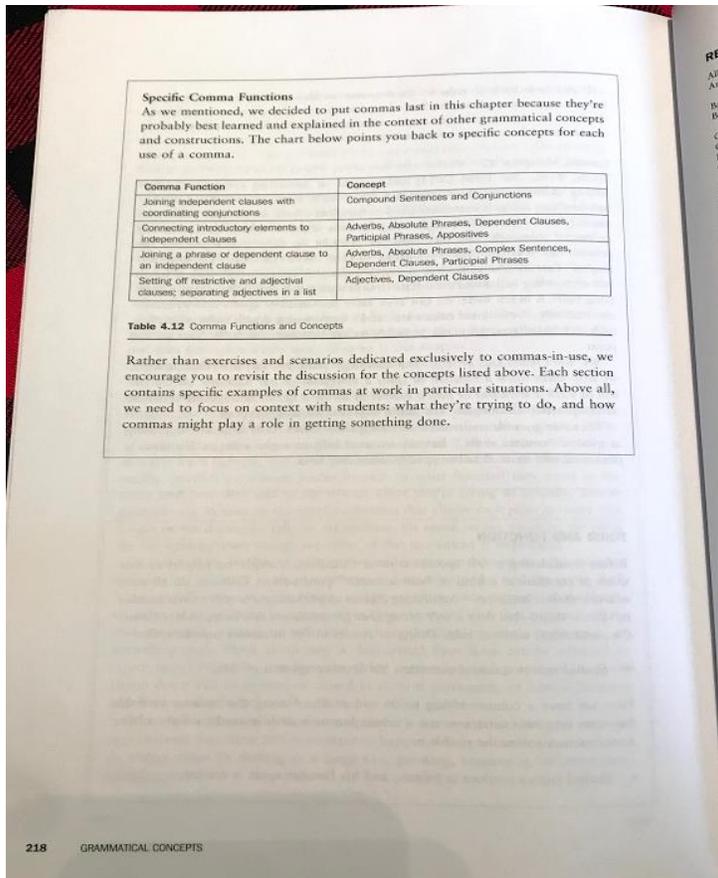
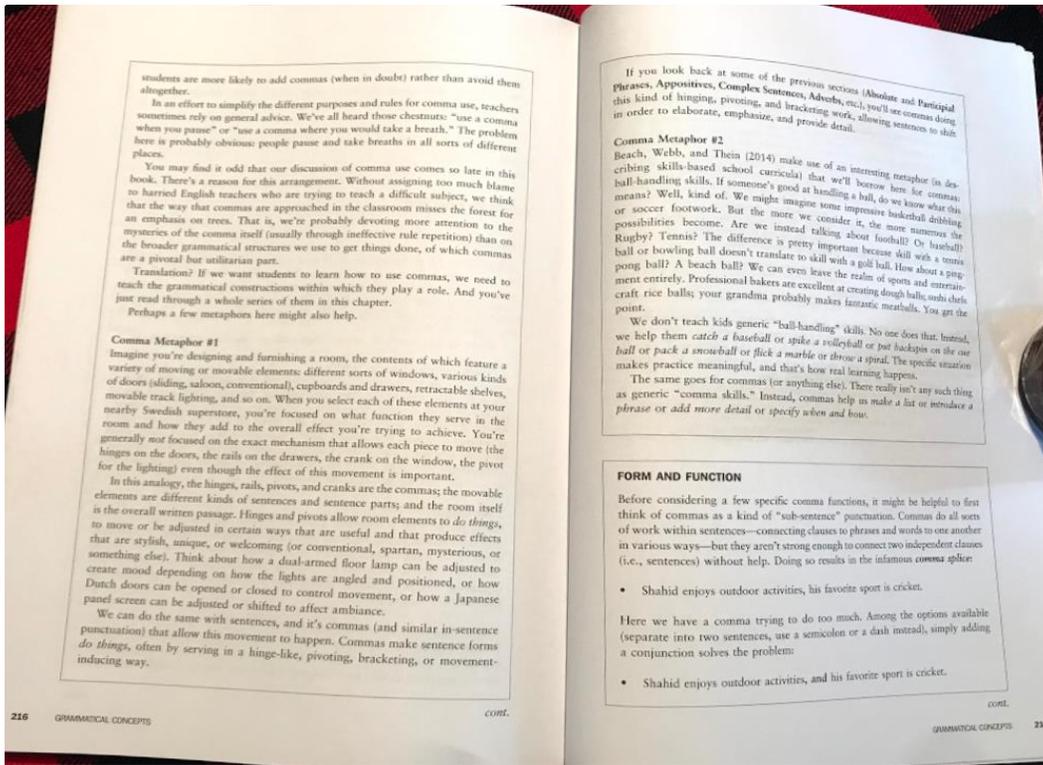
OVERVIEW

Ask teachers what grammatical concept students struggle with the most, and odds are that "correct comma usage" or something similar will be one of the top responses. In some ways, commas are like referees or umpires during a sporting event: you only notice them when they're a problem. Misplaced or missing commas tend to stick out and, fairly or not, convey the impression of "basic" or "unsophisticated" writing.

What's up with commas? Why are they such an issue for student writers?

1. **Commonality + Misuse = Trouble**
Commas are by far the most common in-sentence punctuation mark but also one of the most misused. Lunsford and Connors' research (1986) found that of the top 20 most common errors in student writing, six were explicitly comma-related. A follow-up study two decades later found similar rates of errors related to commas (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008). To make matters worse, some errors involving comma usage come with particularly negative "status-marking" consequences (Hairston, 1981); six issues ranging in severity from "moderately serious" to "very serious" involved commas.
2. **A Multipurpose Tool**
Part of the problem is related to all the things that commas can do: they have at least 15 distinct functions, more than any other sentence marker. A good deal of comma use is also *stylistic* (as in the perennial debate over the "Oxford comma"). This means that commas can be necessary and appropriate—or optional or superfluous—all in the same sentence. Easy stand-alone rules or a shortlist of guidelines are hard to come by.
3. **Alas, Familiarity Does Not Equal Fluency**
Because commas do so many different tasks in writing, students see them everywhere. Commas have an everyday quality that's far less intimidating than more exotic punctuation (we're looking at you, dash and semicolon). That means

cont.



B. "Boardworks" Colons and Semicolons Interactive PowerPoint

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Colons and Semicolons

What is a colon?

When a **colon** (:) is used, it shows that the words that follow it are an explanation, example or list of what has been written before it.

For example:

A cheeseburger is usually made up of five layers: the bottom half of the bun, the burger, the cheese, some lettuce, and the top half of the bun.

Where do we put colons?

A colon should be placed after a complete sentence.

It can be followed by lots of words or just a few words that may or may not be in a complete sentence. For example:

There is only one thing I have to say to you: you are a pig!

I don't know what to do with my money: spend or save?

complete sentence

not a complete sentence

Colons are placed directly after the last word of the main idea and they are followed by one space only. They are **never** followed by either a hyphen (-) or a dash (-).

Where should the colons go?

Press on the place in each sentence where you think the colon should be. If you are correct, a colon will appear!

Chris had two thoughts about the movie long and boring.

There are so many things we could do go to the movies, go skating, go bowling or just stay in and watch DVDs.

There was only one verdict for the jury guilty as charged.

The fire destroyed many things in the house the furniture, the carpets and the curtains.

There was only one dessert in the world for Maddy cookie dough ice cream cake.

solve

Now write five sentences using colons to either explain a point, give an example or introduce a list.

What is a semicolon?

A **semicolon** (;) joins two **independent clauses** (complete sentences) into one longer sentence.

It is used to join clauses that are too closely related to be separated by a period. Semicolons can replace **conjunctions** such as *and* or *but*.

Eating chocolate in moderation is fine; eating chocolate to excess is bad.

The semicolon joins the statements about chocolate into one sentence which acts like a warning: eating a little chocolate is okay but beware of eating too much. The second clause is directly related to the first clause.

Semicolons

Here are some more examples of sentences with semicolons.

Notice that the sets of words on either side of the semicolon are complete sentences that make sense on their own.

1. My dad's coming home tonight; he's been away on business for two weeks.
2. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.
3. My little brother always sleeps with the light on; he's afraid of the dark.
4. I love Taylor Swift; she's great!
5. Sarah didn't like the movie; Tim really enjoyed it.

Is the semicolon used correctly?

Is the semicolon used correctly in each sentence? Press on the answer of your choice.

I go running every day; it's great exercise.

Yes **No**

Where should the semicolons go?

Press on the place in each sentence where the semicolon should be. If you are correct, a semicolon will appear!

I would love to go to Italy the food is supposed to be great.

I'm going to invite Nathan he loves snowboarding.

Jamal can't eat most types of cookies he is allergic to nuts.

Vicky is moving to New York her dad got a job there.

The snowy mountainside glistened in the sunlight it was utterly beautiful.

My alarm buzzed loudly it was time to get up.

solve

Write five sentences using semicolons to link two sentences that are closely related.

Using semicolons in a complex list



A semicolon can be used to separate items in a long and complicated list. Read the sentence below that contains commas only to separate the items in the list.

There were four people at the meeting: Mike, the class president; Jenny, the vice president; Roberto, the class treasurer and Mrs. Foster, the principal.



What problem is created by only using commas?

It looks like there were seven people at the meeting, not four.

Read the sentence again, this time with semicolons.

How do the semicolons make the meaning clear?



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Using semicolons in a complex list



Press on the misplaced commas to turn them into semicolons which will separate the items in the list correctly. There are two to replace in each example.

Mr. Grant's class are studying *An Inspector Calls*, by J.B. Priestly, *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, by Thomas Hardy, and a range of modern poetry.

I still have to get Christmas presents for four people: Andrew, my brother, Mischa, my best friend, Kelly, my second best friend and Gemma, my cousin.

We could go on vacation to London, in England, Sydney, in Australia, Toronto, in Canada or Barcelona, in Spain.



solve



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Punctuating sentences



Drag the punctuation marks to the correct places to punctuate this piece of text.

It was an eerie night _dark _cold and misty _A dog howled somewhere on the moor _breaking the stillness _I felt scared _I shivered _I walked slowly towards the castle _its bulk dominated the hilltop _After a few minutes of walking _I began to feel warmer _I approached the castle _it looked gothic and uninviting _I began looking for an entrance but suddenly I froze _someone was behind me...



solve



11 of 11

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C. "Boardworks" Worksheet

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Worksheet One
This worksheet accompanies *Colons and Semicolons*.

Where should the colons go?
Add a colon to each of these sentences.

1. Chris had two thoughts about the movie long and boring.
2. There are so many things we could do go to the movies, go skating, go bowling or just stay in and watch DVDs.
3. There was only one verdict for the jury guilty as charged.
4. The fire destroyed many things in the house the furniture, the carpets and the curtains.
5. The environment is facing a huge threat global warming.

Now write five sentences using colons to either explain a point, give an example or introduce a list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Worksheet Two
This worksheet accompanies *Colons and Semicolons*.

Where should the semicolons go?
Add a semicolon to each of these sentences.

1. I would love to go to Italy the food is supposed to be great.
2. I'm going to invite Nathan he loves snowboarding.
3. Jamal can't eat most types of cookies he is allergic to nuts.
4. Vicky is moving to New York her dad got a job there.
5. The snowy mountainside glistened in the sunlight it was utterly beautiful.
6. My alarm buzzed loudly it was time to get up.

Now write five sentences using semicolons to link two sentences that are closely related.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Worksheet Three
This worksheet accompanies *Colons and Semicolons*.

Punctuating sentences
Using the punctuation marks in the box below, punctuate the following passage.

, , . . ; ; : : . . ; , . :

It was an eerie night ___ dark ___ cold and misty ___ A dog howled somewhere on the moor ___ breaking the stillness ___ I felt scared ___ I shivered ___ I walked slowly towards the castle ___ its bulk dominated the hilltop ___ After a few minutes of walking ___ I began to feel warmer ___ I approached the castle ___ it looked gothic and uninviting ___ I began looking for an entrance but suddenly I froze ___ someone was behind me...

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D. "Boardworks" Comma Interactive PowerPoint

boardworks Boardworks English: Grammar and Skills **Flashcards**

Commas

A dog ~~hauled~~ ^{breaking} the ~~stiltiness~~ ^{ellipsis} ~~Someone~~ ^{period} was behind me.

What do we use commas for?

A comma (,) indicates a short pause. There are a number of ways the comma is used in sentences.

Look at these sentences.

A comma is used after an adverb or adverbial phrase at the beginning of a sentence.

Suddenly, there was a loud clap of thunder.

Without warning, the skies opened and rain pelted down.



2 of 10 © Boardworks Ltd 2010

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What do we use commas for?

A comma is used after an adverbial phrase at the beginning of a sentence.

Bright and hot, the sun beamed down on the ocean.

A comma is used after an interjection at the beginning of a sentence.

Aaargh, this homework is so unbelievably boring!




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Pairs of commas

We use **pairs of commas** when we want to add information to the middle of a sentence.

A tomato, **although a fruit**, is usually eaten in salads.

The sun, **bright and hot**, beamed down on the ocean.

Tommy, **who is my cousin**, plays the drums in a rock band.

The thief, **without blinking an eye**, lifted the dazzling crystal from its golden case.

Pairs of commas allow us to add extra details to a sentence without disrupting its flow.



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Pairs of commas

Can you identify where pairs of commas should go in each of these sentences?

- Mexico assumed by many to be a South American country is actually in North America.
- The moon although it floats in space like the Earth is not a planet.
- My brother is very healthy and whenever he can he goes to the gym.
- Bulls despite the fact that they will attack a red cloak are color-blind.

solve

Now write three sentences using pairs of commas to add information to each sentence.

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Where do the commas go?

Press on the places in each sentence where you think there should be commas.

- Einstein who was a genius developed the Theory of Relativity.
- Without a sound the students filed into the classroom.
- Yeah like I'm going to go to the party with him!
- I've told you oh about a thousand times!
- Quickly the thief shoved the bills into his sack.
- My sister even though I have told her not to always uses my hairbrush.

solve

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Using commas in lists of items

Commas are also used to separate items in a list.

I want my pizza with **cheese, mushrooms, ham, green pepper and red pepper.**

Notice that a comma is not used before the 'and' at the end of the list!



The comma replaces the **conjunction 'and'** in a list of items.

How would the sentence sound if commas were not used to replace 'and' in a list?

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Using commas in lists of sentences

You can also use commas in lists of **simple sentences**.

Freya likes indie music, Gemma likes heavy metal, Ashleigh likes pop music and Andy likes classical music.



Remember, a list must have three or more items or sentences. You should not use a comma to join just two words or sentences together.

Write a list of sentences, using commas to separate each one.

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Using commas in lists of adjectives

Commas are used to separate a list of two or more **adjectives** being used to describe the noun in a sentence.

The fat, sleepy, lazy cat sat on the sofa licking her white, fluffy paws.

The bright, hot sun blazed across the desert.

Notice that a comma is **not** used after the final adjective in the list.

Using commas helps us to avoid repeating 'and' after each adjective.

Write a sentence describing something, using commas to separate your adjectives.

Test your knowledge

Can you identify how many commas each sentence should have?

1. Peter's mother insisted that before he could go out he had to finish his homework. _____
2. I can't wait to sink my teeth into the hot gooey chocolate brownies. _____
3. I missed the bus because my alarm clock didn't _____

1 comma

0 commas

2 commas

1 comma

2 commas

3 comma

0 commas

2 commas

solve

Now rewrite the sentences with the commas in place.

E. "Boardworks" Worksheet

Boardworks English: Grammar and Skills

Worksheet One

This worksheet accompanies *Commas*.

Pairs of commas
Can you identify where pairs of commas should go in each of these sentences?

1. Mexico assumed by many to be a South American country is actually in North America.
2. The moon although it floats in space like the Earth is not a planet.
3. My brother is very healthy and whenever he can he goes to the gym.
4. Bulls despite the fact that they will attack a red cloak are color-blind.

Now write three sentences using pairs of commas to add information to each sentence.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1

Boardworks English: Grammar and Skills

Worksheet Two

This worksheet accompanies *Commas*.

Where do the commas go?
Add commas to each of these six sentences.

1. Einstein who was a genius developed the Theory of Relativity.
2. Without a sound the students filed into the classroom.
3. Yeah like I'm going to go to the party with *him*!
4. I've told you oh about a thousand times!
5. Quickly the thief shoved the bills into his sack.
6. My sister even though I have told her not to always uses my hairbrush.

2

Boardworks English: Grammar and Skills

Worksheet Three

This worksheet accompanies *Commas*.

Test your knowledge

Can you identify how many commas each sentence should have?

1 comma	0 commas	2 commas	1 comma
2 commas	3 commas	0 commas	2 commas

- 1. Peter's mother insisted that before he could go out he had to finish his homework. _____
- 2. I can't wait to sink my teeth into the hot gooey chocolate brownies. _____
- 3. I missed the bus because my alarm clock didn't go off. _____
- 4. I would like to visit Rome Barcelona Paris and Berlin. _____
- 5. Because my alarm clock didn't go off I missed the bus. _____
- 6. My annoying stupid little brother always gets his way with mom and dad. _____
- 7. For my birthday which is in one week I want a new phone a skateboard and some cash. _____
- 8. I'd like to be a vet when I'm older. _____

XII. Appendix Lesson 2 Active and Passive Voice

A. Screen capture of *Rhetorical Grammar* Koln and Gray 40-43

The Passive Voice

You're probably acquainted with the definition of a verb as an "action word," a description commonly applied to both intransitive and transitive verbs:

The students graduate in June. (Pattern 4)

My roommate wrote the play. (Pattern 5)

In these sentences the subject is performing the action. This doer of the verbal action is called the **agent**. The relationship of the subject to the verb is known as the **active voice**.

What happens when we turn the Pattern 5 sentence around, when we remove the agent from the subject position and give that role to the original direct object, *the play*?

The play was written by my roommate.

This reversal has changed the sentence from active to **passive voice**. However, while *my roommate* is no longer the sentence subject, it is still the agent, and while *the play* is no longer the direct object, it is still the so-called receiver of the action. What has changed are their functions in the sentence.

The transformation from active to passive voice involves three steps:

1. An object, usually the direct object, becomes the subject.
2. A form of *be* is added as an auxiliary (in this case the past form *was*, because *wrote* is past); it joins the past participle of the main verb.
3. The original agent, if mentioned, becomes the object of the preposition, usually *by*. In the majority of passive sentences, no agent is mentioned.

Forms of the Passive Voice

The core of the passive verb is the auxiliary *be* and the past participle. Here is an abbreviated form of the tense chart you studied earlier; this time, though, it is filled with verbs in the passive voice.

Verb Tenses (Passive Voice)			
	Present	Past	Future
Simple	<i>am (is, are) assigned</i>	<i>was (were) assigned</i>	<i>will be assigned</i>
Progressive	<i>am (is, are) being assigned</i>	<i>was (were) being assigned</i>	<i>will be, being assigned</i>
Perfect	<i>has (have) been assigned</i>	<i>had been assigned</i>	<i>will have been assigned</i>

Using the Passive Voice

The passive voice has an important purpose: to shift the focus of the sentence, changing the topic under discussion. This shift is an important tool for sentence cohesion, a feature of writing you will explore in [Chapter 9](#).

The passive voice may also be called for when the agent is unknown or irrelevant to the author's purpose, as in this passage about Robert Moses's plan for urban renewal:

In Moses's implementation of urban renewal, which involved clearing large tracts of inner-city land for university and hospital expansion or middle-class housing, many poor and working-class families were not relocated nearby but displaced to worse neighborhoods.

—Phillip Lopate, "Robert Moses Rethought"

The purpose of this passage is not to point out who was responsible for implementing the urban-renewal plan but rather to show the results of this implementation. Notice the absence of *by* phrases.

The choice between the active voice and the passive voice depends on where the main focus should be. Sometimes, in order to add modifiers to the agent, we use the passive voice so that the agent is at the end of the sentence:

Early today a campus van was hit by a truck traveling at high speed through the intersection of James Avenue and Water Street.

Note that if we switched the agent to the subject position, the result would be a fairly wide separation of the subject headword and the verb:

Early today a truck traveling at high speed through the intersection of James Avenue and Water Street hit a campus van.

The passive voice is especially common—and deliberate—in legal documents and in technical and scientific writing:

Auroras are caused by the interaction of energetic particles (electrons and protons) of the solar wind with atoms of the upper atmosphere.
Encyclopaedia Britannica

The Missing Agent

Certainly the passive voice has a place in every kind of writing; it is a legitimate tool—but like any tool it must be right for the job. Too often the purpose of the passive voice is simply to hide the agent. For example, one of the most common responses that governmental investigative committees hear from individuals accused of mismanagement is

"Yes, Senator, mistakes were made."

And the passive is common in the official style used by bureaucrats:

It was reported today that the federal funds to be allocated for the power plant would not be forthcoming as early as had been anticipated. Some contracts on the preliminary work have been canceled and others renegotiated.

Such "officialese" or "bureaucratese" takes on a nonhuman quality because the agent role has completely disappeared from the sentences. In the foregoing example, we do not know who is reporting, allocating, anticipating, canceling, or renegotiating. This use of the passive voice does an efficient job of hiding responsibility, but it is neither efficient nor graceful for the writing that most of us do in school and on the job.

Sometimes writers use the passive voice to avoid the first-person *I*, perhaps because the paper has too many *I*'s already or because the teacher has ruled out the first-person point of view:

The incessant sound of foghorns could be heard along the waterfront.

Many times, of course, the writer simply doesn't realize that the passive voice may be the culprit producing the vagueness or wordiness of that first draft. For example, a student writer ended his family Christmas story with an impersonal, inappropriate passive:

That visit from Santa was an occurrence that would never be forgotten.

Clearly, he needed to ask himself, "Who was doing what?"

The family would never forget that visit from Santa.

And if for purposes of transition or rhythm he had wanted to retain *visit* as the subject, he could easily have done so in an active way:

That visit from Santa became part of our family legend.

Exercise 10

The writer of the following passage has managed to avoid using the first-person point of view but in doing so has obliterated any resemblance to a personal voice. Revise the passage, avoiding both the passive voice and the first person. Remember to think about the agent as subject.

The woods in the morning seemed both peaceful and lively. Birds could be heard in the pines and oaks, staking out their territory. Squirrels could be seen scampering across the leaves that covered the forest floor, while in the branches above, the new leaves of the birches and maples were outlined by the sun's rays. The leaves, too, could be heard, rustling to the rhythm of the wind.

B. Exercise 9 (Kolln and Gray 41)

1. It's important to recognize the passive voice when you see it—so that you'll know how to use it deliberately and effectively. Remember that the passive voice must have a form of the auxiliary *be* and the past participle of the main verb.

2. Change the following active sentences into the passive voice; remember that the object of the active voice functions as the subject in the passive voice.
 - a) The Hungarian inventor Erno Rubik designed the Rubik's Cube in 1974.
 - b) Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen accidentally discovered the X-ray.
 - c) Walter Diemer invented bubble gum in 1928.
 - d) Hedy Lamar, an Austrian actress who had immigrated to the United States, and George Anthiel developed a secret communication system during World War II.

3. Change the following passive sentences into the active voice; remember that the subject of the passive is an object in the active. (Note: If the agent is missing, you will have to supply one to act as the subject for the sentences in the active voice.)
 - a) The White House was designed by James Hoban.
 - b) Charles Babbage is considered a pioneer of computer science.
 - c) The first batch of chocolate chip cookies was made by Ruth Wakefield.
 - d) The Nobel Prize was awarded to Francis Crick and James Watson for producing the double-helix model.

4. First decide if the following sentences are active or passive; then recast them. Be prepared to discuss whether one version is more effective than the other.

- a) Guido d'Arezzo, an Italian monk, originated the musical staff during the Middle Ages.
- b) Mary Anderson was given a patent for windshield wipers in 1903.
- c) Robert Koch established criteria for identifying a causal link between an organism and a disease.
- d) James Naismith is remembered as the inventor of basketball.

C. "For Group Discussion" (Kolln and Gray 41)

- 1. Review the chart on page 40. With classmates, write nine sentences in the passive voice, each with a different verb and verb tense.
- 2. Surely the most famous words in the history of the United States are those written by Thomas Jefferson in *The Declaration of -Independence*. Here is the opening of the Declaration's second paragraph:

a) *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established*

should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

3. Underline the passive sentences. Rewrite all or some of them in the active voice and compare the two versions.

D. Activity from Flocabulary:

Change these sentences to active voice and get them to fit on Twitter (130 Characters):

1. The Thanksgiving turkey dinner with cranberry sauce and stuffing was eaten by everyone, including Kristina, Jill, Nick, Kate, Matt and Alexander. (145 characters)
2. Jeremiah had been given twenty gifts for his birthday by his family. But it's because his parents had been given a discount by their friend who owned a store. (160 characters)
3. The Jay-Z concert was attended by all of my friends. The concert venue was filled by fans of all ages. It was said by everyone that it was a great show. (152 characters)
4. My brother, sister and I were invited by our neighbors to the block party. The hamburgers were cooked by Freddy and the cookies were baked by Liana. (148 characters)

E. "Vocabularize" worksheet (Rehbein):


Celebrity Tweets

It's about time for celebrities to ditch the acronyms and made-up words! Help your favorite (or least favorite) celebrities improve their lexicon with the activity below. Start by choosing two celebrities or professional athletes that have a Twitter account. Next, scroll through each celebrity's Twitter feed and find one tweet that needs to be vocabularized! In the boxes below, record the original tweet and the edited tweet. Each edited tweet should contain at least two vocabulary words. Finally, write down your reasons for editing that particular tweet.

All tweets should be appropriate for the classroom.

Celebrity Suggestions: LeBron James, Taylor Swift, Kanye West, Katy Perry, Cristiano Ronaldo, Adele, Barack Obama, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Darnell Dockett, Kristen Bell, Dwayne Jo'uson "The Rock"

Original Tweet	Vocabularized Tweet
<div style="border: 1px solid #00a0e3; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  <p style="margin: 0;">Name _____</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #00a0e3; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  <p style="margin: 0;">_____</p> </div>
Reasons for Edits:	

Original Tweet	Vocabularized Tweet
<div style="border: 1px solid #00a0e3; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  <p style="margin: 0;">Name _____</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #00a0e3; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  <p style="margin: 0;">_____</p> </div>
Reasons for Edits:	

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XIII. Appendix Lesson 3 Adjectives and Adverbs

A. “Exquisite Corpse Writing”

**EXQUISITE
CORPSE
WRITING**

WRITE AN ATTENTION
GRABBER THAT
ESTABLISHES THE
SETTING AND MOOD OF
THE STORY.

CONTINUE WRITING
ABOUT THE SETTING, MAKE
SURE YOU'RE STICKING TO
A GOTHIC STYLE OF
WRITING.

INTRODUCE A CHARACTER,
BE SURE TO DESCRIBE
THIS PERSON OR THING
IN GREAT DETAIL.

WRITE THE MAIN
CONFLICT, BUT DON'T KILL
THE MAIN CHARACTER
QUITE YET. USE SENSORY
DETAILS.

END THE MAIN CONFLICT.
ANYONE CAN DIE AT THIS
POINT. BE SURE TO USE
DETAILS. WRAP UP THE
STORY.

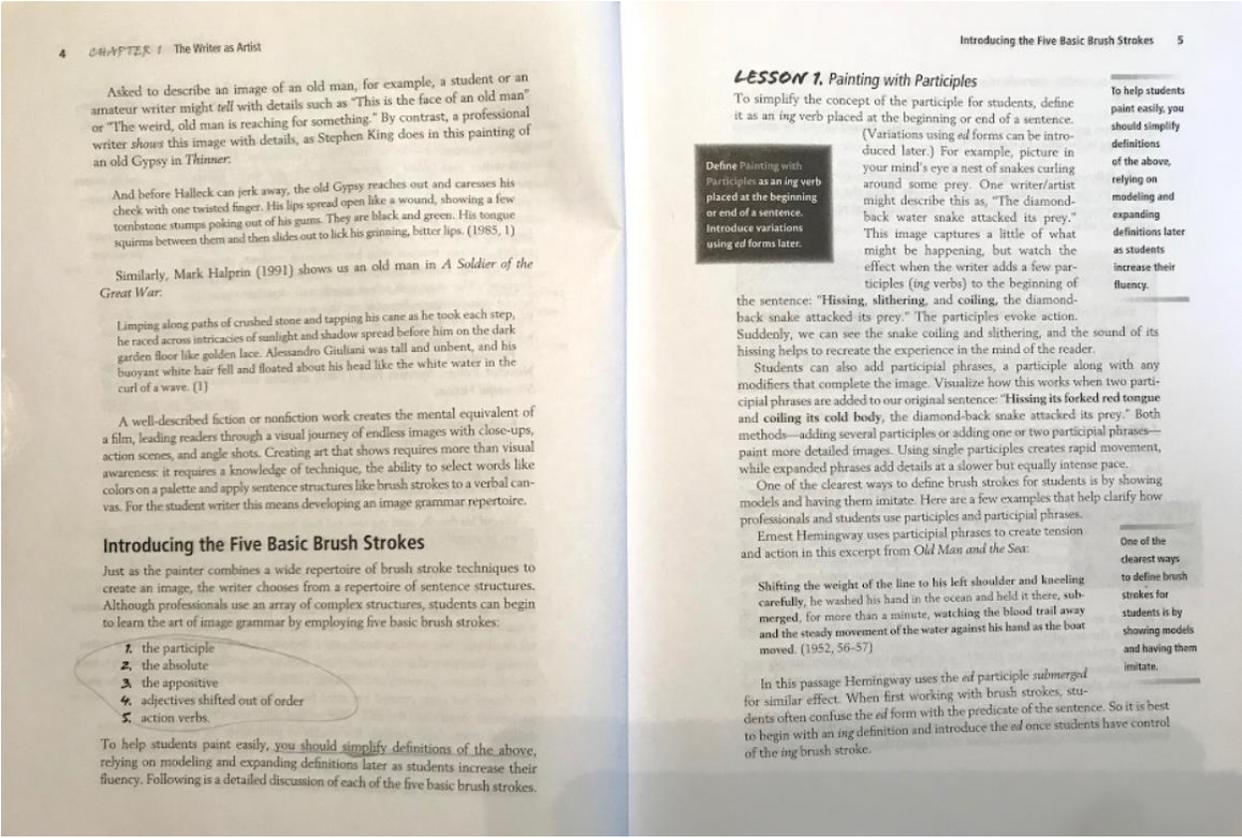
CONTINUE THE STORY IN
WHATEVER WAY YOU SEE
MAKES SENSE. MAYBE
MORE DESCRIPTION.

WRITE SOMETHING THAT
MYSTERIOUSLY LEADS THE
READER TO THE MAIN
CONFLICT.

Exquisite Corpse Writing and Brush Stroke Writing Rubric:

- Correct heading, size, font, creative title /10
 - Creative story, characters, and plot /10
 - Enhanced description with adjectives and adverbs /30
 - Utilized at least 2-3 Brush Strokes /20
 - Correct spelling, grammar, mechanics, and length (2-3 pages) /10
- Total Points: /80

B. Scan of *Image Grammar* by Harry Noden pages 4-13



Here is another example of participles, from Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity*:

The man got out of the chair with difficulty, pushing himself up with his arms, holding his breath as he rose. (1975, 23)

The following student descriptions were written after several examples were created by the teacher using projected images. Only the minimal definition given above was presented. Notice how each participial phrase enhances the action and adds visual detail.

Flying through the air on the wings of a dream, the Olympic long jumper thrust the weight of his whole body forward. (Cathleen Conry)

Melody froze, dripping with sweat, hoping with all her might that they wouldn't hear the noise. A beam of light swung out into the darkness, searching. (Becky Swaab)

The clown, appearing bright and cheerful, smiled and did his act with unusual certainty for someone who had just killed a man. (Christ Flick)

LESSON 2. Painting with Absolutes

An equally powerful brush stroke that also adds to the action of an image is the *absolute*. An absolute is a two-word combination—a noun and an *ing* or *ed* verb added to a sentence. Instead of saying "The cat climbed the tree," you can add two absolutes to give it detail: "Claws digging, feet kicking, the cat climbed the tree." Either way the cat gets up the tree, but in the second instance, he climbs with flair, and the dog chasing him is amazed.

Painting with Absolutes can be defined as simply combining a noun with an *ing* participle.

To help students understand absolutes, try this approach. Have them close their eyes and picture a mountain climber moving along a steep cliff. Pause for a moment and ask students to visualize this one-sentence description: "The mountain climber edged along the cliff."

Next, explain that you are going to add a brush stroke, defined simply as a noun combined with an *ing* participle. (Again, *ed* participles can come later.) Then, with their eyes still closed, tell them to watch what happens as you add two absolutes. Read the sentence: "The mountain climber edged along the cliff, hands shaking, feet trembling." Or in the reverse order: "Hands shaking, feet trembling, the mountain climber edged along the cliff." Although adding

three absolutes overloads the picture and diminishes the effect, one or two creates a far more dynamic image than the original.

As with participles, explain to students that absolute phrases are also effective. For example, with the previous example, the climber might have been described with an absolute phrase, such as "Feet trembling on the snow-covered rocks, the mountain climber edged along the cliff."

Gary Hoffman, in *Wristful*, suggests another way of teaching absolutes—by asking students to imagine that the comma controls a telescopic lens that zooms in on images. Using the basic sentence "The rhaps palm sat in a large, white container" he demonstrates the zoom technique:

The writer can zoom up on any part of the picture that is already framed by the original sentence. In this example, that means zooming up on either the container or the palm.

For instance, assume the branches of the palm are the detail of interest. Without any word of transition, only a twist of a zoom lens represented by a comma, the sentence can now read: "The rhaps palm sat in a large, white container, the branches stretching into the air." The writer can place a comma after air and zoom up something framed in this part of the sentence. This time the zoom can only be on the branches or air because the "camera" has focused on them, cutting the general description of the palm and container out of the picture.

Suppose there is nothing of interest about the air, but the branches have interesting joints or nodes. Zooming in on those, the sentence would now read: "The rhaps palm sat in a large, white container, the branches stretching into the air, fibrous joints knocking the otherwise smooth surface." (1986, 20)

The zoom analogy works nicely for teaching students to use not only absolutes but also participles, appositives, adjectives out of order, and a variety of other grammatical brush strokes. The zoom also helps to convey the proper use of commas to connect phrases to a simple sentence. Below are some sample absolute images created by professional and student writers. Using commas to zoom in on details, these writers telescoped images both at the beginning and end of their primary sentences. Showing examples such as these to students before they write can help them learn absolutes by imitating.

Notice how in this passage from *The Mummy Anne Rice* uses absolutes to zoom in for a close-up photo, capturing the specific images of the mummy's arm:

The mummy was moving. The mummy's right arm was outstretched, the torn wrappings hanging from it, as the being stepped out of its gilded box! The scream froze in her throat. The thing was coming towards her—towards Henry,

The zoom also helps to convey the proper use of commas to connect phrases to a simple sentence.

who stood with his back to it—moving with a weak, shuffling gait, that arm outstretched before it, the dust rising from the rotting linen that covered it, a great smell of dust and decay filling the room. (1989, 72)

In the following one-sentence examples, students painted with absolutes and absolute phrases as they observed slides:

Mind racing, anxiety overtaking, the diver peered once more at the specimen. (Erin Stralkal)

I glanced at my clock, digits glowing fluorescent blue in the inky darkness of my room. (Jenn Coppola)

Jaws cracking, tongue curling, the kitten yawned tiredly, awaking from her nap. (Tara Tesmer)

One of the most common brush strokes in the action sequences of fiction, the absolute infuses action into a word painting.

The absolute infuses action into a word painting.

LESSON 3. Painting with Appositives

Just as the artist requires a variety of painting techniques to vary effect, the writer too needs a repertoire of devices to shape impressions. A third technique, the appositive, provides another option, often used to amplify still images. For student word painters, teachers can define an appositive as a noun that adds a second image to a preceding noun. Like the absolute, the appositive expands details in the reader's imagination.

Define an appositive as a noun that adds a second image to a preceding noun. The appositive is often used to amplify still images.

For example, by adding a second image to the noun *raccoon* in the sentence "The raccoon enjoys eating turtle eggs," the writer/artist can enhance the first image with a new perspective. For example, the writer might paint the sentence "The raccoon, a scavenger, enjoys eating turtle eggs." *Scavenger* follows *raccoon* in the sentence; it's set off with commas and enriches the image of the painting. To add more vivid details, writers frequently expand the appositive to an appositive phrase with added details: "The raccoon, a midnight scavenger who roams lake shorelines in search of food, enjoys eating turtle eggs."

Like the absolute, the appositive expands details in the reader's imagination.

Observe how Cornelius Ryan uses appositives in *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944*. He could have written: "A phalanx of ships and planes bore down on Hitler's Europe," but instead, Ryan expanded the image with appositives and then extended the picture with further specific examples.

In nonfiction authors more often use an appositive image to add clarity.

Flowing through the choppy gray waters, a phalanx of ships bore down on Hitler's Europe: fast new attack transports, slow rust-scarred freighters, small ocean liners, channel steamers, hospital ships, weather-beaten tankers, and swarms of fussing tugs. Barrage balloons flew above the ships. Squadrons of fighter planes weaved below the clouds. And surrounding this cavalcade of ships packed with men, guns, tanks, and motor vehicles, and supplies came a formidable array of 702 warships. (1959, 243)

With the same intent as Cornelius Ryan, eighth graders used appositives and appositive phrases to add a second noun image in each of the following sketches from photographs:

The volcano, a ravenous God of fire, spewed forth lava and ash across the mountain. (Ben Quagliata)

The old Navajo woman, a weak and withered lady, stared blankly. (Jon Vadnal)

The waterfall, a tilted pitcher, poured the fresh, pure spray into the creek. The essence of natural beauty, tranquil and majestic, it seemed to enchant the forest with a mystical rush that echoed throughout the untouched virgin paradise. (Allie Archer)

The fish, a slimy mass of flesh, felt the alligator's giant teeth sink into his scales as he struggled to get away. (Lindsey Kannen)

All brush strokes work equally well for fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, but each genre creates a different emphasis.

Working with fiction in the examples above, student-artists used appositives to expand the sensory details. In nonfiction authors more often use an appositive image to add clarity in phrases such as "Michael Jordan, the famous basketball player." All brush strokes work equally well for fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, but each genre creates a different emphasis.

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LESSON 4. Painting with Adjectives Shifted Out of Order

Adjectives out of order, used more often by authors of fiction, amplify the details of an image. We have all seen students overload their descriptions with too many adjectives in sentences like "The large, red-eyed, angry bull moose charged the intruder." Professional authors rarely commit this error. When they want to stack an image with three adjectives, they avoid a three-in-a-row adjective by using a technique called adjectiving out of order. Leaving one adjective in its original place, the authors shift two others after the noun. With the sentence about the angry moose, a professional might transform it into "The large bull moose, red-eyed and angry, charged the intruder." The effect creates a spotlight and intensifies the image, giving it a profound rhythm instead of the elementary cadence of the original.

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles* Sir Arthur Conan Doyle uses this technique to shift three adjectives to the end of a sentence to describe a mysterious sound: "And then, suddenly, in the very dead of the night, there came a sound to my ears, clear, resonant, and unmistakable" (1968, 72). Had he placed the adjectives in their normal position, the description would have seemed childish. Listen to the loss of power when the sentence is written as "And then, suddenly, in the very dead of the night, there came a clear, resonant, unmistakable sound to my ears."

Similarly, in *The Abolitionist*, Caleb Carr describes arriving at the Insane Pavilion at Bellevue in New York City: "The Pavilion was a simple city, long and rectangular" (1994, 27). Again, shifting the adjectives out of their normal order creates a focus. Robert Newton Peck uses the same technique in this sentence from *A Day No Pigs Would Die*: "I could smell Mama, crisp and starched, plumping my pillow, and the cool muslin pillowcase touched both my ears as the back of my head sank into all those feathers" (1984, 12).

Students can learn to use this technique effectively, as the following examples illustrate:

The woman, **old and wrinkled**, smiled upon her newborn great-grandson with pride. (Stephanie Schwalbe)

Adjectives out of order, used more often by authors of fiction, amplify the details of an image.

To amplify details of an image, an author leaves one adjective in its original place and shifts two others after the noun.

The effect creates a spotlight and intensifies the image, giving it a profound rhythm instead of the elementary cadence of the original.

Introducing the Five Basic Brush Strokes 11

The boxer, **twisted and tormented**, felt no compassion for his contender. (Chris Hloros)

The cheetah, **tired and hungry**, stared at the gazelle, which would soon become his dinner. (Zach Vesoulis)

Adjectives can also be shifted out of order to introduce a sentence, but this is not very common and sometimes weakens the verb. For example, notice how this unidentified author ineffectively uses adjectives at the beginning of this sentence: "Hungry and ravenous, the hunters ate three helpings of meat." Much more effective would have been "The hunters devoured three helpings of meat," replacing the adjectives with an action verb for a more powerful image.

LESSON 5. Painting with Action Verbs

Painting with action verbs gives writers another effective image tool. By eliminating passive voice and reducing being verbs, writers can energize action images. Verbs of passive voice communicate no action. The image is like a still photograph with the subject of the action frozen with the prepositions *by* or *with*. Typically, passive voice verbs require the help of a being verb. For example, these sentences are passive:

The runaway horse was ridden into town by an old, white-whiskered rancher.

The grocery store was robbed by two armed men.

Notice how the word *by* signals the noun performing the action. Passive voice can weaken images by freezing the action often inherent in a sentence. Compare the following revisions of the previous passive sentences and notice how active voice energizes the images:

The old, white-whiskered rancher rode the runaway horse into town.

Two armed men robbed the grocery store.

Even when not used as part of a passive voice, *being* verbs slow the action and tend to link complements that tell. Students can improve the power of their sentences by replacing as many being verbs as possible, often by creating

Passive voice can weaken images by freezing the action often inherent in a sentence.

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an appositive. For example, examine these two sentences: "The Nerk Knocker is a strange mechanical contraption. It brews coffee while beating a drum solo." Both could be combined into a single, more powerful statement such as, "The Nerk Knocker, a strange mechanical contraption, brews coffee while beating a drum solo."

Action verbs transform still photos into motion pictures. With a little imagination, a writer can even bring an inanimate object to life by adding an action verb. Try this experiment. Have a friend read you this sentence while you close your eyes and visualize the scene: "The gravel road was on the left side of the barn." Now, with your eyes still closed, have your friend read you the following sentence: "The gravel road curled around the left side of the barn."

The second sentence creates motion, generated by the action verb *curled*. The reader travels around the barn. By contrast, the being verb *was* creates a still image, which is not nearly as dynamic as the action verb. This is why in the majority of sentences, action verbs are preferred.

For example, when Shawn Jiveden first wrote the opening paragraph of her children's book *Goose Moon*, she frequently used being verbs. In her revision she replaced these with action verbs, mobilizing the action of the children and the geese. Visualize the difference in the motion picture of your imagination as you compare these two drafts:

FIRST DRAFT

Rockwell was a beautiful lake. Canada geese could be heard across the water bugling like tuneless trumpets. Near the shore, two children were hidden behind a massive maple tree. Watching quietly, they hoped to see the first gosling begin to hatch. Tiny giggles escaped their whispers of excitement.

FINAL DRAFT

Rockwell Lake echoed with the sounds of Canada geese. Their honking bugled across the water like tuneless trumpets. Two children hid behind a massive maple tree. They silently watched, hoping to see the first gosling hatch. Tiny giggles escaped their whispers of excitement. (Jiveden and Jiveden 1997, 1)

Amateur writers often construct sentences in which being verbs highlight vague noun complements. For example, in a sentence such as "The meal was wonderful," the being verb *spotlights* *wonderful*, an adjective that tells instead of shows, that labels instead of paints. Because of this quality, Burroway

Even when not used as part of a passive voice, being verbs slow the action and tend to link complements that tell. Students can improve the power of their sentences by replacing as many being verbs as possible.

Using Multiple Strokes in Paragraphs, Stories, and Poems 13

(1987) argues that most being verbs are "effectively passive," functioning like passive voice.

However, there are times when the writer as a cinematographer uses being verbs to create the effect of a freeze frame, a still shot—usually of a character or setting. With this technique, the images following being verbs are highlighted in the reader's mind and held for a longer time than passages with action verbs. For example, notice how in *To Kill a Mockingbird* Harper Lee uses the being verb *was* to create slow-motion images of Calpurnia, images that compel the reader to examine selected details:

Calpurnia was something else again. She was all angles and bones; she was near-sighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. (1960, 19)

Similarly, observe how Douglas Adams, in *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, uses this slow-motion technique to paint a short humorous portrait of Mr. L. Prosser:

Mr. L. Prosser was, as they say, only human. In other words he was a carbon-based bipedal life form descended from an ape. More specifically he was forty, fat and shabby and worked for the local council. Curiously enough, though he didn't know it, he was a direct male-line descendant of Genghis Khan, though intervening generations and racial mixing had so jugged his genes that he had no discernable Mongoloid characteristics, and the only vestiges left in Mr. L. Prosser of his mighty ancestry were a pronounced stoutness about the tum and a predilection for little fur hats. (1981, 8)

To distinguish between being verbs that create an effective freeze frame and those that simply slow the pace, students can use the "find" command on any word processor to locate and examine being verbs (*to, was, were, are, am, [forms of] be*). With a little time spent replacing weak verbs, they can bring their images to life.

Using Multiple Strokes in Paragraphs, Stories, and Poems

Once students have developed control of the five basic brush strokes, they begin to combine them spontaneously in longer works. Student Adam Porter, for example, blended several techniques in this scene from his horror story, inspired by the close-up image of a tarantula:

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