

Creative Writing Outline and Lesson Plans

Week 1 – Imagination and overview of the creative writing process. The five elements of creative fiction:

1. Story World
2. Characters
3. Plot and Structure
4. Conflict and Resolution
5. Theme

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to define the five main elements of creative fiction.

Students will be able to compare and contrast ‘slice of life’ versus ‘well made stories’.

Students will be able to list sources of inspiration for writing topics.

Students will be able to find resources for the class.

Class exercises:

- Write down a few possible story worlds for your work.
- Write down three strong emotional experiences from your life.
- Write down an idea for a slice of life story.
- Read my story *Preheat the Microwave.Com* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Homework:

Read “How to create a believable world for your characters” at

<https://thewritelife.com/worldbuilding/>

Write more details about your story world. Describe the setting and time period.

Read a story by Edgar Allan Poe at: <https://americanliterature.com/author/edgar-allan-poe>

Get a kindle account and the free kindle reading app for your tablet or computer.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Where to read fiction online:

Best Short Fiction Writers at: <http://bit.ly/2ySCWcI>

Classic Short Stories at: <http://www.classicshorts.com/>

20 Great American Short Stories at: <http://bit.ly/2pNm6aO>

100 Great American Stories at: <http://bit.ly/239SnaP>

27 Short Stories at: <http://bit.ly/2ARBysr>

Literary magazines at: <http://bit.ly/2zK8IvQ> and <http://bit.ly/2hDDiR1>

46 Literary Magazine to submit to by The Write Practice at: <http://bit.ly/1HVuMQJ>

Magazine search result at: <http://bit.ly/2zmWSYa>

Favorite Short Story Collections at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-story-collections>

75 Short Short Stories at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-short-stories>

Some of my stories are at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 2 – Your Story World. How stories are constructed. Learning from master storytellers.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to define one or two story worlds for their stories and share them in class.
Students will be able to describe a “circular ending” in fiction.
Students will be able to describe “irony” in fiction.

Class exercises:

- Share your thoughts about the World Building article you read for homework.
- Read my story *Who Stole Asbury Park* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>
(Note the circular ending)
- Read my story *Anything but Indian Food* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>
(Note the ironic ending)
- Write how you might begin and end a story?

Homework:

Read a story by Anton Chekhov at: <http://bit.ly/2zoI2k9>

Read a story by Mark Twain at: <https://americanliterature.com/twenty-great-american-short-stories>

Write more detail about your story world. Begin thinking about your characters.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 3 – Character development. Your actors carry the story.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to create a few character profiles.

Students will be able to expand their story world.

Students will be able to sketch out a story world and character on paper or by using Scapple.

Class exercises:

- Sketch out some character profiles. Provide details about their appearance, personality and motivations. Use paper or Scapple.
- Read Eudora Welty's viewpoint on short stories at: <https://bit.ly/2MK4oEy>
- Humor and Style. Read a story by Woody Allen at: <https://bit.ly/2ME2Xr4>

Homework:

Read a short story by J.D. Salinger at: <https://bit.ly/2GN1bhu>

Read *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry at <http://bit.ly/2hoLB6d> and also the analysis at <http://bit.ly/2hoLB6d>

Begin building your plot for your story world. Sketch out events in a plot map (by hand or you might use Scapple).

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 4 – Dialogue and Subtext (the unspoken dialogue).

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to draft a college love story.

Students will be able to recognize an O. Henry style story.

Students will be able to describe examples of dialogue and subtext.

Students will be able to distinguish between *showing* and *telling* a story.

Class exercises:

- Read *The Grand Poobah* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>
- Write down examples of subtext and how it may be used in your story.
- Write down examples of showing and telling.
- Begin writing a college love story.

Homework:

Read another short story by O. Henry at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-short-stories>

Read two stories at: 75 Short Short Stories at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-short-stories>

Read a short story by Alice Munro at: <https://www.newyorker.com/contributors/alice-munro>

Write the second draft of your flash fiction story (around 500 words). Improve the dialogue, showing, not telling.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 5 – Plot, what happens when?

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to describe plot and give examples.

Students will be able to show an example of plot in writing.

Class exercises:

- Review the 20 and 36 plot types by Tobias and Polti
- Select one of the plot types and sketch out notes about that style.
- Expand your college love story to 500 words.

Homework:

Read a short story by Phillip K. Dick at: <https://bit.ly/2PMYbKS>

Read a short story by Katherine Mansfield at: <https://bit.ly/2wuUGLi>

Review your story elements.

Begin writing your long story (1000-7500 words).

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Plot and Structure by James Scott Bell at: <https://amzn.to/2wq24IJ>

Week 6 – Structure, the foundation of your story.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to describe structure and contrast it with organic writing.
Students will be able to compare screenwriting structure with fiction structure.

Class exercises:

- Read my story *The Waiting Room* (handout). How or why did the woman disappear?
- Working in small groups, students will brainstorm a story, begin writing and share with class.
- Sketch out a mystery story. Use Scapple or a map to describe characters, plot and story world.
- Read both very short stories by James Thurber at: <https://bit.ly/2Pf38pB>

Homework:

Read a short story by P.G. Wodehouse at: <https://bit.ly/2NrNua3>

Read *The Case of the Perfect Maid* Agatha Christie at: <https://bit.ly/2t6n1a5>

Read my story *The Sonoma Murder Mystery* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Were you able to solve the mystery before the end?

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Story Trumps Structure by Steven James

On Writing by Stephen King

How to Write a Novel Using the Snowflake Method by Randy Ingermanson

Plot and Structure by James Scott Bell

Story Engineering by Larry Brooks

Week 7 – Conflict and Resolution. Getting in and out of trouble.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to explain how conflict and resolution are used in stories.

Students will be able to give examples of conflict and resolution.

Students will be able to show tension in writing.

Class exercises:

- Write down some examples of conflicts (between characters or between situations)
- Write down examples of tension. How could tension increase engagement in your story?
- Write down examples of resolution, how conflicts are resolved.
- Sketch out your longer short story (1000 - 7500 words). Think about your theme, characters, plot, conflicts and story world.

Homework:

Read a short story by one of these authors at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-short-stories>

Read my story *The Old Man and the Sea* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

What themes are in this story?

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

20 Great American Short Stories at: <https://americanliterature.com/twenty-great-american-short-stories>

Favorite Short Story Collections at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-story-collections>

75 Short Short Stories at: <https://americanliterature.com/short-short-stories>

My stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 8 – Theme and the importance of a universal message.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to define literary theme and give examples.

Students will be able to describe literary devices and give examples.

Class exercises:

- Read my story *UFO* (handout). How would Tony's life change if someone else saw the UFO?
- Think about your major life decisions. (i.e. different school, relationship, job, place to live, etc) Where would you be today if you followed another path?
- Sketch out a story where a character has to make a decision (i.e. two equally good or difficult decisions) and say where each choice would lead him/her

Homework:

Read *Before the Law* by Franz Kafka at: <https://bit.ly/1INI82o>

Read a short story by one of these American writers at: <https://americanliterature.com/twenty-great-american-short-stories>

Read my story *The Devil's Orchestra* (in your eBook). How did choices change the main character?

Work on your longer short story. Add a difficult choice or two that your character has to make.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 9 – Writing scenes. Also Genres and Writing Style.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to list and define several genres.

Students will be able to distinguish between *showing* and *telling* in writing.

Students will be able to write scenes of different genres.

Students will be able to define different writing styles.

Class exercises:

- Write a scene between two characters. Make sure you show (don't tell) what they are thinking and feeling.
- Write down a scene with humor.
- Write down a scene with drama.

Homework:

Read *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* by Arabian Nights at: <https://bit.ly/2NrQVlP>

Read my story *The Tightrope* at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read> or in the eBook.

Keep working on your long story.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 10 – Writing resources including software.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to find and evaluate writing software on the Internet.

Students will be able to write with emotions (Angela Ackerman's books)

Students will be able to use plot generators, writing prompts and character ideas online.

Class exercises:

- Read *The Bathhouse* by Mikhail Zoshchenko (handout).
- Watch Scene Dynamics at: <http://bit.ly/2zSbrmO>
- Work on one of your stories. Share with someone in the class.

Homework:

Read a short story by Arthur Conan Doyle at: <https://bit.ly/2BTMeeI>

Read a story by Flannery O'Connor at: <https://bit.ly/2uCbHLJ>

Continue working on your long story.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>

Week 11 – Publishing: how to find a market for your story. Duotrope and Submittable.

Lesson objectives:

Students will be able to use Duotrope to search for magazines that publish stories.
Students will edit and improve their stories in preparation for publication.

Class exercises:

- Do a search on Duotrope that matches your flash fiction or longer story.
- Change parameters to give you additional results (e.g. word count, genre, sub genre, topic)
- Revise your story by eliminating excess words, substituting telling with showing and tightening up paragraphs and transitions.

Homework:

Use Duotrope to find a market(s) for your story. Make sure your story meets the submission requirements.

Make 15 copies of your flash fiction (shorter) story. Be prepared to share with the group next week.

Resources:

Café Stories website at: <http://cafestories.net>

Resource page at: <https://cafestories.net/resources>

Author stories at: <https://cafestories.net/stories-you-can-read>