

Creative Writing Seminar Syllabus 2022

Meeting 1 - Introduction to Fantasy Setting and Characters (30 mins)

- Read excerpt from Chapter 1 of *The Hobbit - The Unexpected Party* (pg. 8-14)
 - How does the mysterious party gradually introduce multiple characters to the reader in a single scene?
- Read Chapter 5 of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone - Diagon Alley*.
 - How does JK Rowling use Diagon Alley as a gateway for both the character and the reader into a magical world?
- Consider Both Excerpts:
 - What makes the excerpts successful and excites you as a reader?
 - What did you like most about each excerpt?
 - How does the text invite you into the fantasy realm?
- Fill out Story "Mad Libs" sheet #1
Mad Libs sheets consist of a skeletal *Harry Potter* story introduction; fill in blanks with a few sentences using your creativity to take the story in your own direction. Here, you are able to implement some of the techniques discussed in class. We will read aloud some of their ideas in class with the hope of inspiring your classmates.
- Fill out Story Mad Libs sheet #1 and share it with me at kornmehlja@belmonthill.org

Homework:

- Read Chapter 1 of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire - The Riddle House*

Meeting 2 - Creating Compelling Plotlines and Scenes (30 mins)

- Recap the chapter.
 - How did *The Riddle House* introduce new characters?
 - How did the chapter create a sense of mystery?
 - How could the chapter have paved the way for a complex and captivating plotline?
- We will each describe our favorite and least favorite aspects of the chapter from a reader's perspective and then from a writer's perspective.
 - How do you creatively add in description and make the reader feel as if they are in the scene with the character? (Thinking forward, how is character development important here in making us care about the character?)
- Distribute Story Mad Libs sheet #2
Fill in Mad Libs sheet #2 which is related to *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*; use skills from the past two lessons to introduce a character and to set up a compelling plot line.

Homework:

- Fill out Story Mad Libs sheet #2 and share it with me at kornmehlja@belmonthill.org

Meeting 3 - Fairy Tales and Concise Plot Composition

- Read <https://storiestogrowby.org/story/hansel-and-gretel-bedtime-stories-for-kids/>
 - How did the author create a short version of this beloved fairy tale that still includes a completely developed plot?
 - What could the author have done better here? From a writer's perspective? From a reader's perspective?
 - What do you think is the main idea of the story? What should the reader have learned from it?
- Read the classic version of the fairy tale, *Jack and the Beanstalk* (link below).
<https://www.dltk-teach.com/rhymes/beanstalk/story.htm>
- Introduce Story Mad Libs Sheet #3
Create a short contemporary version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Is it set in an urban environment? Is the giant a huge alien from another planet? Is the beanstalk a brand new telephone pole?

Homework:

- Fill out Story Mad Libs sheet #3 and share it with me at kornmehlja@belmonthill.org

Meeting 4 - Character Development (30 mins)

- Read excerpts from *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*
 - How was Voldemort's backstory introduced?
 - How do the scenes that show the origin of his horcruxes expand the reader's view of his character?
 - Does his backstory as an orphan create any empathy, or does his cruel nature in the flashbacks only strengthen your hatred for him?
- Consider character growth and development over time: Learn more about Neville Longbottom's character development and discuss how the author added in easter eggs in the early books to foreshadow how he evolves later on (ie. Why does he try to stop Harry Ron and Hermione from causing trouble in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*?)
- Introduce Story Mad Libs Sheet #3
Plot out your own character's growth/development. Use the same character from a previous brainstorm or create an entirely new one.
- You will introduce your favorite self-created character and Mad Libs sheet at a virtual campfire we plan for the last lesson. You can share two or three pieces of work if you'd like.

Homework:

- Fill out Story Mad Libs sheet #4 and share it with me at kornmehlja@belmonthill.org
- Pick out at least 1 Story Mad Libs sheet to go over with me during our private meeting.
- Email me which Mad Libs sheet you want to discuss with me at kornmehlja@belmonthill.org

Private Meetings--(15-30 mins)

You will each schedule with me a ~20 minute private zoom where we will talk about the Mad Libs sheet you want to share. We also will review certain editing techniques that will help polish your creative story excerpts.

Meeting Homework - Polish your Story Mad Libs sheet/s that you are going to share at the virtual campfire!

Final Meeting / Virtual Campfire: (30 mins)

We will all come together and take turns sharing! You can then ask your classmates some questions you have about their work! I participated in a virtual campfire during a horror writing program with GrubStreet the summer after seventh grade and thought it was so much fun.

*GrubStreet offers a variety of different creative and non-fiction writing programs. If you are interested, I highly recommend you check it out!

<https://grubstreet.org>