

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Exploratory Creative Writing Workshop

DATE: October, 2007

SCHOOL: Folsom Middle School

COURSE TITLE: Exploratory Creative Writing Workshop

SUBJECT AREA: Elective

PROPOSED GRADE LEVEL(s): 6-8

COURSE LENGTH: One Trimester

GRADING: A- F

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will allow students to explore the multi-faceted art of creative writing in several genres. Students will receive direct instruction in reading and literary analysis of stories and poems which will serve to inspire their own writing. They will learn how to appropriately and effectively use reference materials such as the thesaurus. During the twelve week term, students will compose fictional narratives and poetry using structured, systematic writing processes organized around a chosen theme. They will compose their work around a standard plot structure, utilizing vividly described characters and setting, incorporate dialogue, figurative and descriptive language, and the conventions of standard English. Advanced students may experiment with symbolism and more complex character and plot development. Struggling or reluctant writers may focus on practicing a basic story format in multi-paragraph form with a beginning, middle and end which includes a fundamental plot and encourages the exploration of creative expression. Students will work individually and collaboratively with others in small groups. At the end of each writing unit, students will formally present their work to the class to showcase what they have created and to discuss its development and their evolution as writers throughout the term.

GENERAL GOALS/PURPOSES:

Students will:

- Analyze plot, characterization, story-structure, and setting in a variety of fictional genres
- Analyze elements of poetry and poetic techniques
- Compose writing systematically -- including planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing
- Write fictional narratives
- Write poetry
- Work collaboratively as writers and editors
- Use the thesaurus
- Use examples of figurative language in fiction and poetry
- Use examples of literary devices (personification, onomatopoeia, similes, etc.)
- Use descriptive language, including sensory details
- Use precise verbs and nouns
- Revise for word choice, sentence variety and creative expression
- Edit for clarity and concision
- Orally present/publish their work
- Orally evaluate their development as writers
- Orally evaluate their own creative writing experiences

STUDENT READING COMPONENT:

Students will:

- Read short stories in a variety of genres which may include: teen fiction, general fiction, science fiction, fantasy, action-adventure, historical fiction, etc.
- Read poetry on a variety of themes
- Analyze fiction in the aforementioned genres to identify theme, literary elements and style
- Deconstruct and analyze poetry to identify literary elements, poetic technique and style
- Utilize reference materials such as the thesaurus to improve writing quality

STUDENT WRITING COMPONENT:

Students will:

- Write short fictional narratives
 - Establish character, plot, setting theme
 - Incorporate a variety of literary devices (simile, dialogue, suspense, etc.)
 - Use sensory details, precise nouns and verbs
- Write poetry
 - Incorporate a variety of literary devices
 - Use sensory details, precise nouns and verbs
- Revise and edit written work
- Utilize standard English conventions
- Critique and notate revision recommendations for students working collaboratively in small groups

STUDENT ORAL COMPONENT:

Students will:

- Orally summarize short stories and poetry in groups and whole-class
- Orally identify themes in fiction and poetry in groups and whole-class
- Orally analyze literary elements in fiction and poetry in groups and whole-class
- Formally deliver a personal narrative about the creative writing experience
- Orally critique the writing of classmates working in small groups

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

1. Students will read a short story assigned by the teacher using core literature selections, the Holt anthology or other grade-level appropriate short fiction as required by the California State Content Standards. They will identify sensory details, precise nouns and verbs. Students will analyze how descriptive details “paint a picture in words” of characters and setting and how word choice contributes to style and mood. They will illustrate a scene from the story using the author’s clues about how something might look.
2. Using the same story, students will analyze theme and plot structure as defined in the Holt language arts series modules on literary analysis. Students will read a short story to identify the elements of fiction and to analyze how those elements come together to suggest a theme. Students will identify the conflict in the story, events comprising the rising action, the climax, denouement, and ultimate resolution. Students will create storyboards to depict each component of the plot structure in the short story example – including the relationship of the outcome of the problem in the story to the over-arching theme.

3. Aligning with the same genre and theme as the short story example, students will plan a short story of their own. Teacher resources for instruction include “Step-Up to Writing” by Maureen Auman and/or the Holt language arts series modules for fictional narrative. They will sketch out a plot diagram using the plot structure which will eventually become a blueprint for their own story board. They will create character “dossiers” with illustrations, interests, and personality traits of the main character and “fact sheets” for minor characters. Then, they will draw a storyboard to use as a graphic organizer to facilitate writing the rough draft.
4. Students will compose rough drafts of their stories working individually. Students will be taught how to revise and how to edit (and how to differentiate between these two tasks) using the “Step-Up” program and Holt language arts resources. They will revise for detail, precision of word-choice, sentence variety and literary devices. Then, they will edit for concision, clarity and appropriate language conventions. The first phase will be self-directed and reflective where each student works independently (with teacher guidance available). The second phase will be whole-class using student models to critique. The third phase will be interactive and collaborative where the student works in pairs or small groups to seek the perspective of other student writers based on what was modeled in class.
5. Students will write final drafts incorporating teacher feedback, as well as the changes made in the revision and editing processes. Publication will include a creatively designed student-made booklet containing the final product. Students will orally present their booklets -- including a summary of characters, setting, plot (including problem/resolution) and how all tie in to reflect the theme. They will comment on their process as a developing writer.
6. Students will read a series of poems assigned by the teacher. Resources for poetry selections can come from the Holt anthology or other grade-level appropriate resources. Teacher resources for teaching the elements of poetry include the Holt language arts modules on poetry analysis. Students will identify sensory details, precise nouns and verbs, rhyme, meter and type of poem (haiku, free verse, limerick, sonnet, etc.) where applicable. Students will analyze how word choice contributes to mood, theme/meaning and rhythm in the poems.
7. For each poem analyzed, students will write examples of their own based upon the same type or style. The drafting, revising and editing processes will follow the same progression as for the fiction writing activities.
8. Students will write final drafts incorporating teacher feedback, as well as the changes made in the revision and editing processes. Publication will include a creatively designed student-made booklet containing the final product and group discussions where students explain the process of writing the poems. They will also compare the process of writing poetry to fiction process and draw common conclusions about the pleasures and challenges of both creative applications.
9. Students will move on to explore other short-story genres based on their own interests and to write their own narratives using the same process as they’d previously learned in class.

THIS COURSE WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE CAHSEE AND/OR THE FCUSD EXIT EXAMS:

Reading, Writing, Language Arts

SUBJECT AREA CONTENT STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:

- 6.3.1 Students identify the forms of fiction and describe the major characteristics of each form.
- 6.3.2 Students analyze the effect of the qualities of the character (e.g., courage or cowardice, ambition or laziness) on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.
- 6.3.3 Students analyze the influence of setting on the problem and its resolution.
- 6.3.4 Students define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.
- 6.3.5 Students identify the speaker and recognize the difference between first-and third-person narration (e.g., autobiography compared with biography).
- 6.1.0 Students utilize Written and Oral English Language Conventions
- 7.1.1 Students identify idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes in prose and poetry.
- 7.3.2 Students identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action(s) or foreshadows future action(s).
- 7.3.3 Students analyze characterization as delineated through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.
- 7.3.4 Students identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).
- 7.2.1 Students write fictional or autobiographical narratives which:
- Develop a standard plot line (having a beginning, conflict, rising action, climax, and denouement) and point of view.
 - Develop complex major and minor characters and a definite setting.
 - Use a range of appropriate strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; naming of specific narrative action, including movement, gestures, and expressions).
- 8.3.1 Students determine and articulate the relationship between the purposes and characteristics of different forms of poetry (e.g., ballad, lyric, couplet, epic, elegy, ode, sonnet).
- 8.3.4 Students analyze the relevance of the setting (e.g., place, time, customs) to the mood, tone, and meaning of the text.
- 8.3.5 Students identify and analyze recurring themes (e.g., good versus evil) across traditional and contemporary works.
- 8.3.6 Students identify significant literary devices (e.g., metaphor, symbolism, dialect, irony) that define a writer's style and use those elements to interpret the work.
- 8.3.7 Students analyze a work of literature, showing how it reflects the heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of its author. (Biographical approach)
- 8.2.1c Students employ narrative and descriptive strategies (e.g., relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description, background description, comparison or contrast of characters).

DISTRICT ESLRs TO BE ADDRESSED:

Students will:

- **Self-directed Learners:** Take initiative to utilize peer and teacher critiques of their work to improve their final product. Be reflective and self-motivated to apply techniques and strategies discussed and modeled in class. Follow through with each step of the writing

process from planning through publication – including group-oriented and individual components. Remain focused on the current writing task or skill until ready to move on to the next.

- **Effective Communicators:** Further hone and develop writing, revision and editing skills. Apply nuances of word meanings and effective writing strategies to written and spoken communication applications. Draw on unique creativity to improve writing and define own style and personal voice.
- **Quality Producers:** Apply feedback to improve established and developing writing skills. Utilize self-reflective and collaborative revision and editing strategies to nurture confidence in writing. Meet or exceed established standards of formal “publication” and presentation as required in class.
- **Constructive Thinkers:** Apply own creativity and writing strategies to assigned writing tasks. Utilize developing confidence in writing expertise to critique their own work as well as the work of their peers. Provide legitimate feedback to peers and accept and apply relevant suggestions for improvement from others.
- **Collaborative Workers:** Work in pairs or small group workshops designed to strengthen skills and inspire creativity. Adhere to established guidelines for group work to maximize the benefits of the collaborative process.
- **Responsible Citizens:** Develop enhanced awareness of self and of the role collaboration, creativity and communication play in the world around us.

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District prohibits discrimination, intimidation, harassment (including sexual harassment) or bullying based on a person’s actual or perceived ancestry, color, disability, race or ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity or gender expression, immigration status, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. **For concerns/questions or complaints, contact the Title IX Coordinator(s) and Equity Compliance Officer(s): Curtis Wilson, cmwilson@fcusd.org (grades K-5) and Jim Huber, ED. D., jhuber@fcusd.org (grades 6-12), 1965 Birkmont Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 96742, 916-294-9000 ext.104625**