

Pascack Valley Regional High School District

Pascack Hills High School, Montvale, New Jersey

Pascack Valley High School, Hillsdale, New Jersey

Course Name: Creative Writing

Born On: August, 2024
Previous Revision: August, 2024
Current Revision: August, 2026
Board Approval: 8/24/26

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Creative Writing

Creative Writing is a full-year, five-credit course designed for students who wish to explore a variety of genres. Readings in multiple genres, lessons in a variety of writing techniques, intense writing practice and self-evaluation are the basis of this course. The class is run in a workshop model, through ongoing writing, sharing, and revising work. Models, mini-lessons based on technique, daily writing, and peer and teacher feedback are at the core of the course work. Students will be assessed by portfolio evaluations, daily work completion and assessment, and participation in peer critiques.

Month	Unit
September	Unit I – Getting Started & Developing the Journal/Writer’s Notebook
October	Unit II – The Short Story
November	Unit III – Poetry
December	Unit III – Poetry
January	Unit IV – Drama
February	Unit IV – Drama
March	Unit V – Creative Nonfiction
April-June	Unit V – Creative Nonfiction

<i>Creative Writing: Students will examine master texts and develop a collection of various genres of writing.</i>					
Content/Topic:	Key learning items/concepts:	Observable Proficiencies and Skills:	NJ SLS	Benchmark Performance and Assessments	Suggested Materials
Unit I – Getting Started & Developing the Journal/Writer’s Notebook Time: First week of school Content Statement: Writers make writing a daily habit by observing and reacting to the world around them. Essential Question: What is the purpose of a journal/writer’s notebook? How do writers study the world and pull inspiration from what they know? How does a writer find his or her “voice”?	Key learning items/concepts: Students will develop the habit of writing through daily writings. Students will take ownership of their writing by creating a collection of ideas in the journal/writer’s notebook. Students will read and examine teacher-selected excerpts of authors discussing the journal/writer’s notebook.	Proficiencies/skills: Students will develop daily written entries in the journal/writer’s notebook. Students will make observations about the world and record them in the journal/writer’s notebook.	W.WP.11–12.4. W.RW.11–12.7.	Daily entries in the Journal/Writer’s Notebook	“Write Till You Drop” by Annie Dillard "Judith Scott—Bound and Unbound" (art) "Giants: Kikito (2017)" (short film - artist JR) Reference Texts Chapter One (“Working Like a Writer”) & Chapter Two (“Keeping a Journal”) <i>Creative Writer’s Handbook</i> by Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz Chapter Eleven (“Reading for Courage”) <i>Reading Like a Writer</i> by Francine Prose <i>“The Making of a Story”:</i> <i>A Norton Guide to Creative Writing</i> by Alice LaPlante Teacher Texts For daily prompts paired with select mentor texts <i>Naming the World</i>, Edited by Bret Anthony Johnston

					<i>Steering the Craft</i> by Ursula K. Le Guin <i>Suggestion(s):</i> <i>Letters to a Young Writer: Some Practical and Philosophical Advice</i> by Colum McCann <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King <i>Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within</i> by Natalie Goldberg <i>The Craft of Revision</i> by Donald M. Murray <i>The Playful Way to Serious Writing</i> by Roberta Allen
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Content/Topic:	Key learning items/concepts:	Observable Proficiencies and Skills:	NJ SLS	Benchmark Performance and Assessments	Suggested Materials
Unit II – The Short Story Time: 6-8 weeks Content Statement: Students will examine the genre of the short story. Essential Question: What is a short story? What	Key learning items/concepts: Students will debate what makes a short story. Students will reflect on their collection of ideas in the journal/writer’s notebook for inspiration to write and develop an original short story. Students will read and examine excerpts of short stories.	Proficiencies & skills: Students will be able to identify the elements of the short story genre. Students will be able to incorporate the elements of the genre into their own original short story.	W.NW.11–12.3. W.RW.11–12.7.	Annotated short stories Original student work (short story)	Fiction section of <i>The New Yorker</i> Book Riot’s lists of lists of short stories Reference Texts Chapter Four (“The Shapely Story”), P. 152-167 of <i>“The Making of a Story”</i> :

are the elements of a short story? What does a writer seek to accomplish in a short story? Why does the story need to be told?*(or: Why do certain stories need to be told?)	Students will read and examine reference texts that analyze the genre of the short story. Students will write and develop a short story.	Students will revise and workshop the student-created short stories.			<i>A Norton Guide to Creative Writing</i> by Alice LaPlante <i>Creative Writer's Handbook</i> by Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz <i>Reading Like a Writer</i> by Francine Prose Teacher Texts For daily prompts paired with select mentor texts <i>Naming the World</i>, Edited by Bret Anthony Johnston <i>Steering the Craft</i> by Ursula K. Le Guin Additional Resources <i>Letters to a Young Writer: Some Practical and Philosophical Advice</i> by Colum McCann <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King
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Content/Topic:	Key learning items/concepts:	Observable Proficiencies and Skills:	NJ SLS	Benchmark Performance and Assessments	Suggested Materials
Unit III – Poetry Time: 8-12 weeks	Key learning items/concepts: Students will debate what makes a poem.	Proficiencies & skills:	W.RW.11–12.7.	Annotated poems	Poetry Writing: Invention (Purdue OWL) Online Resources https://www.poets.org/

Content Statement: Students will examine the genre of the poem. Essential Question: What is a poem? What are the elements of a poem? What does a writer seek to accomplish in a poem? Why write a poem instead of a short story?	Students will read and examine excerpts of a variety of types of poems. Students will read and examine reference texts that analyze the genre of the poem. Students will reflect on their collection of ideas in the journal/writer's notebook for inspiration to write and develop original poems.	Students will be able to identify the elements of poetry. Students will be able to incorporate the elements of the genre into their own original poems in a variety of structures. Students will revise and workshop the student-created poems. Students will share poems aloud in an in-class poetry reading.	SL.PE.11–12.1. SL.II.11–12.2. SL.ES.11–12.3. SL.PI.11–12.4 SL.UM.11–12.5.	A variety of student-created poems In-class poetry reading	https://www.poetryfoundation.org/ http://www.poetryinamerica.org/ https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/poems http://underwaternewyork.com/ http://www.poetryoutloud.org/ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/poetryeverywhere/?scrllybrkr=d4062993 Suggested Poems & Poets “One-Word Poem” by David R. Slavitt “If I Should Have a Daughter...” by Sarah Kay “Bored” by Margaret Atwood “On Disappearing” by Major Jackson “Business” by Naomi Shihab Nye "i love you to the moon &" by Chen Chen "little prayer" by Danez Smith "The Lanyard" by Billy Collins "dream where every black person is standing by the ocean" by Danez Smith
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					"Late Summer after a Panic Attack" by Ada Limón "That's My Heart Right There" by Willie Perdomo "Words are Birds" by Francisco X. Alarcón "Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Rezervation" by Natalie Diaz "Prints" by Joseph Bruchac "A Half-Life of Cardio-Pulmonary Function" by Eric Gansworth "Invisible Fish" by Joy Harjo "Remember" by Joy Harjo "In Flanders Field" by John McCrae "Bilingual/Bilingüe" by Rhina P. Espaillat "Meeting a Stranger" by Sharon Olds "I'll tell you how the Sun rose (204)" by Emily Dickinson "One Today" by Richard Blanco "This Is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams "King" by Nkosi Nkululeko
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					"Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe "Jewish Food" by Joan Larkin (McSweeney's) "Tsunami" by Lewis Turco (McSweeney's) "Detective Notes" by David Trinidad (McSweeney's) "Uvalde Shooting Highlights Role of Doors in Security Plans" by Deborah Paradez Reference Texts "The Joy of the Memorized Poem" by Joe Fassler <i>Poems to Read: A New Favorite Poem Project Anthology</i> <i>An Invitation to Poetry: A New Favorite Poem Project Anthology</i> <i>Creative Writer's Handbook</i> by Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz Additional Resources <i>Letters to a Young Writer: Some Practical and Philosophical Advice</i> by Colum McCann <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King
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Content/Topic:	Key learning items/concepts:	Observable Proficiencies and Skills:	NJ SLS	Benchmark Performance and Assessments	Suggested Materials
Unit IV – Drama Time: 8 weeks	Key learning items/concepts:	Proficiencies & skills: Students will be able to identify the elements of a play.	SL.PE.11–12.1. SL.II.11–12.2.	Annotated scenes from a play	Selection of primary sources

Content Statement: Students will explore playwriting. Essential Question: What is a play? What are the elements of play? What does a writer seek to accomplish in a play?	Students will define the key elements of a play. Students will review and implement theatrical terms. Students will reflect on their collection of ideas in the journal/writer's notebook for inspiration to write and develop an original one-act play. Students will read and examine excerpts from various plays. Students will read and examine mentor texts that analyze the genre of the play.	Students will be able to incorporate the elements of the genre into their own original one-act play. Students will revise and workshop the student-created one-act plays.	SL.ES.11–12.3. SL.PI.11–12.4 SL.UM.11–12.5. W.NW.11–12.3. W.RW.11–12.7. .	Original student work (ten-minute play)	<u>"Come Into the Garden, Maud"</u> (short play) <u>"Oma"</u> (short film) <i>The Secret Life of Walter Mitty</i> (film) "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (short story) Reference Texts Excerpts from Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> <u>The Art of the Ten-Minute Play</u> <u>2018 New Voices Young Playwrights Festival</u> YouTube Playlist <u>New Voices Young Playwrights Contest</u> <u>Simple tips handout from the Kennedy Center</u> <i>Creative Writer's Handbook</i> by Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz Teacher Texts Playwrights Teach Playwriting Additional Resources <i>Letters to a Young Writer: Some Practical and Philosophical Advice</i> by Colum McCann <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King
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Unit V – Creative Nonfiction Time: 8 weeks Content Statement: Students will explore the creative nonfiction genre. Essential Question: What is creative nonfiction? What are the elements of creative nonfiction? What is an essay?	Key learning items/concepts: Students will define the key elements of creative nonfiction. Students will reflect on their collection of ideas in the journal/writer's notebook for inspiration to write and develop a piece of creative nonfiction. Students will read and examine mentor texts that analyze the genre of creative nonfiction. Students will write and develop a piece of creative nonfiction.	Proficiencies & skills: Students will be able to identify the elements of creative nonfiction. Students will be able to incorporate the elements of the genre into their own original writing. Students will revise and workshop creative nonfiction piece.	W.IW.11–12.2. W.NW.11–12.3. W.RW.11–12.7.	Annotated essays/articles Creative nonfiction essay	Excerpts from the introduction to <i>The Art of the Personal Essay</i> by Phillip Lopate "Let It Snow" by David Sedaris NPR column: "I'm Really Into" "Quarantine Tips from My Cat" by Nikki Palumbo "The Lizard" by T Kirra Madden "My High School Commute" by Colin Jost Creative Nonfiction: AN Overview (Purdue OWL) An array of short articles on a variety of topics (magazines, online journals, etc.) Examples: "The Only Restaurant on the Upper West Side That Hasn't Been Bettered Anywhere on Earth" by David Remnick (<i>Bon Appetit</i>, 6/6/18)

					“The Valley of Darkness” by Greg Bishop (Sports Illustrated, 4/13/18) Memoirs <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King Excerpts from <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> by Maya Angelou Excerpts from <i>The Color of Water</i> by James McBride “Goodbye to All That” by Joan Didion Reference Texts <i>Creative Writer’s Handbook</i> by Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz Teacher Texts <i>The Art of the Personal Essay</i> by Phillip Lopate For daily prompts paired with select mentor texts <i>Naming the World</i>, Edited by Bret Anthony Johnston Additional Resources <i>Letters to a Young Writer: Some Practical and Philosophical Advice</i> by Colum McCann <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King
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