



Writers in Residence (WIR) Curriculum – 2018

Advisor:

Email:

Phone:

Facilitator:

Email:

Phone:

Goals:

- Increase the residents' reading and writing skills.
- Create a space for the residents to share their thoughts and feelings without discrimination.
- Make new relationships with the facilitator, the residents, and the corrections officers.

Expectations for the Facilitator:

- Facilitator comes to every creative writing workshop on time and with food.
- Facilitator respects the residents, the corrections officers, and themselves.
- Facilitator keeps all information shared in the creative writing workshops private.

Expectations for the Residents:

- Residents come to most of the creative writing workshops.
- Residents respect the facilitator, the other residents, the corrections officers, and themselves.
- Residents keep all information shared in the creative writing workshops private.

The facilitator will ask a resident to leave a creative writing workshop if the resident repeatedly breaks these guidelines.

Schedule:

1. 5–minute freewrite
2. Introduce the topic, the author, and his/her work. Read and ask these questions:
 - a. What's the central drama?
 - b. What do you like about the work? Why?
 - c. What don't you like about the work? Why?
3. Pass out the writing prompt and give the residents time to write.
4. Share. Critique.
5. Conclude. Eat.

Week 1:

- Day 1: Introductions, Contracts, and Analogies
 - Ice-breaker:
 - What do you want to be called? Why?
 - Where do you call home?
 - What do you want to do when you are released?
 - Finish the sentence: I like to read/write because...
 - “Hip Hop Analogies” by Tara Betts

Review the expectations. Facilitate the ice-breaker. Read “Hip Hop Analogies” by Tara Betts. Discuss Betts’ comparisons with ‘self’ and the ‘other’ to find an identity. Also discuss Betts’ metaphor usage instead of similes and slang terms instead of common knowledge terms.

Prompt:

Write a poem that only compares yourself to someone/something else through metaphors.
Uses 5-10 slang terms (or words that aren’t common knowledge).

Hint: mimic the “If you be/then I be” arrangement from Betts’ poem.

N.B.

The residents’ answers to the ice-breaker questions will become their biographies included in the chapbook.

Week 1:

- Day 2: Remembering the Past: the Hood, the Streets, and its People
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Can’t Forget About You” by Nas (Excerpt)

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read an excerpt of “Can’t Forget About You” by Nas. Discuss Nas’ rap that remembers his childhood in a chorus that focuses on the hood, the streets he grew up on, and the people that influenced him. Also discuss Nas’ reflection on the big and small particulars that changed him from being a boy to becoming a man, and Nas’ use of the poetic rap genre to entertain, educate, and remember.

Prompt:

Write a poem (or a rap) with a rhyme scheme that remembers your hood,
your streets, and the people that influenced your life.
Include the big and small particulars that changed your life.

Hint: consider the important life events that made you who you are today.

Week 2:

- Day 3: Going Off: Fuck Everything
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Feeling Fucked Up” by Etheridge Knight

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Feeling Fucked Up” by Etheridge Knight. Discuss Knight’s longing for a woman and the pain that he feels without her presence. Also discuss Knight’s usage of a repetitious and rhythmic list that takes us through a complete dismissal of all things for love.

Prompt:

Write a poem that “goes off,” or dismisses everything for a single desire.
Mimic Knight’s repetitious and rhythmic list style.

*Hint: think about one desire that you are willing to give up everything for,
and then say “fuck you” to everything else.*

Week 2:

- Day 4: Natural Innuendoes
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “The Morning is Full” by Pablo Neruda

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “The Morning is Full” by Pablo Neruda. Discuss Neruda’s consistent, vivid, and natural imagery to tell a single love story with innuendos. Also discuss Neruda’s couplet form for the poem.

Prompt:

Write a poem only in couplets that tells a single love story with consistent, vivid, and natural imagery. Incorporate innuendoes into the images.

Hint: make the innuendos less obvious because the poem will lose its beauty and gain its raunchiness.

Week 3:

- Day 5: Food as a Portkey Pt. 1 (Prose)
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Memorare for a Ding Dong” by Michael Czyzniejewski

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Memorare for a Ding Dong” by Michael Czyzniejewski. Discuss Czyzniejewski’s ability to transport the reader from the present to the past and the present to the future via a portkey: A Ding Dong. Also discuss Czyzniejewski’s narrative with 3-5 scenes and instances that remind us that this is a reflection on the past.

Prompt:

Write 2 scenes for a short story that transports the reader from the present to the past and to the future via a food portkey (any food).

Hint: choose a significant food that possesses several different memories for you in the past.

Week 3:

- Day 6: Food as a Portkey Pt. 2 (Poetry)
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Sunday Greens” by Rita Dove

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Sunday Greens” by Rita Dove. Discuss Dove’s decision to place the reader into the poem’s current setting via a food portkey, a soul food dinner, and then sends the reader into a similar past with a different food portkey: collard greens. Also discuss Dove’s minimalistic language and the portkeys that capture the speaker’s desires.

Prompt:

Write a poem that focuses on a food portkey (a different food portkey than the previous creative writing workshop’s). Shift the tense to the past only once.

Hint: choose a significant food that possesses several different memories for you in the past.

Week 4:

- Day 7: A Celebration of Life
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “won’t you celebrate with me” by Lucile Clifton

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “won’t you celebrate with me” by Lucile Clifton. Discuss Clifton’s celebration on life that recognizes the difficulties that have been overcome, especially death. Also discuss Clifton’s biblical references and demographics that specify her success story.

Prompt:

Write a poem that starts with “won’t you celebrate with me” and mentions everything that makes you happy to be alive. Specify the poem as a success story by including the difficulties that you have endured and demographics that you have embraced.

*Hint: ask yourself, “what have I been through?” and “who am I?”
How do those answers make you a success story for being alive?*

Week 4:

- Day 8: Poetic Athleticism
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Slam, Dunk, & Hook” by Yusef Komunyakaa

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Slam, Dunk, & Hook” by Yusef Komunyakaa. Discuss Komunyakaa’s dramatic and rhythmic play-by-play of basketball. Also discuss Komunyakaa’s single scene with basketball language and athletic glorification.

Prompt:

Write a poem about playing your favorite sport in extreme detail.
Use the sport’s specific language within the poem.

Hint: think about your favorite sport or athletic memory. Then, write about it.

Week 5:

- Day 9: Our Children
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Homeless” by Juliet Kono

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Homeless” by Juliet Kono. Discuss Kono’s poetic narrative about the relationship between a mother and a son, especially how the son doesn’t live with the mother even though the mother supports the son from afar. Also discuss Kono’s sounds, images, and memories that make the reader empathize for the mother and son.

Prompt:

Write a poem about your relationship with your son/daughter (and if you don’t have one, then imagine one). Show the reader how you support him/her.

Hint: what would your son/daughter be doing right now, where would he/she be at, and how would he/she respond to you?

Week 5:

- Day 10: DNA
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Genetics” by Sinéad Morrissey

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Genetics” by Sinéad Morrissey. Discuss Morrissey’s examination of her hands – the lines on the palms and the shapes that they make. Also discuss Morrissey’s realizations that despite her parents’ divorce she will always be the result of their union.

Prompt:

Write a poem that examines 1 physical characteristic that resembles either your father/mother (or even both). Describe the effect that characteristic has on your perspective of their relationship today.

Hint: identify a physical characteristic that someone has told you that reminds them of your father/mother. Then, explain why.

Week 6:

- Day 11: Letters from ODYS Pt. 1
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by MLK Jr. (Excerpt)

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read an excerpt of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by MLK Jr. Discuss King’s execution of the five W’s and the single H in his letter: (1) King tells us who he is; (2) King tells us where he is; (3) King tells us what he is doing; (4) King tells us when he is doing something or when he will do something; (5) King tells us why he is doing what he is doing; and finally (6) King tells us how he is going to do something. Also discuss King’s tone, diction, and specific audience.

Prompt:

Write a letter to a United States politician with the five W’s and the single H. (1) tell him/her your story; (2) explain what problem you encounter often; (3) ask him/her to consider solving that problem; (4) and provide him/her suggestions on how to solve that problem.

Hint: pick one problem that you would like to ask of a United States politician to consider solving. Avoid any personal requests.

Week 6:

- Day 12: Letters from ODYS Pt. 2
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Letter from a Region in My Mind” by James Baldwin (Excerpt)

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read an excerpt of “Letter from a Region in My Mind” by James Baldwin. Discuss Baldwin’s reflection on when he was growing up as a teenager and his navigation around problems such his physical development to police harassment. Also discuss Baldwin’s, tone, diction, and specific audience.

Prompt:

Write a letter (or prose essay) that reflects backward to when you were growing up at the ages of 13-14 and navigating the problems around you.

Hint: reflect on a specific moment of change in your life at the ages of 13-14 and how you dealt with that moment.

N.B.

Ask the residents a week before which text that they have written over the last 6-weeks that they would like to peer critique, so the facilitator can make photocopies of their text for the residents to follow along for the upcoming creative writing workshop.

Week 7:

- Day 13: Workshop Pt. 1 (Peer Critique)
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “If You’re Done, You’ve Only Just Begun” by Colum McCann

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “If You’re Done, You’ve Only Just Begun” by Colum McCann. Discuss McCann’s outline of the writing process from editing the text to reading the text aloud. Also discuss McCann’s chapter title and McCann’s encouragement for writers to pursue their passions without reservations.

Prompt:

Choose 1 text (poem or prose) that you have written over the last 6-weeks that you want to receive peer criticism on. Then, read the work aloud without explanations. Next, listen and take notes on your peers’ criticism. Finally, explain your text to your peers and ask any remaining questions.

Hint: choose a text that you would like to publish in the chapbook.



Week 7:

- Day 14: Workshop Pt. 2 (Individual Critique)
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “The Energy of Revision” by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “The Energy of Revision” by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux. Discuss Addonizio’s and Laux’s revision advice. Also discuss Addonizio’s and Laux’s reasons why revision is important to the writing process.

Prompt:

Follow the directions on the handout. Choose 1 or 2 of the following individual critique methods to revise your text (poem or prose). Then, tell the facilitator which method(s) you chose before revising.

Hint: select 1 or 2 individual critique methods that you think will make your text better. Remember, the text that you select should be different from the previous creative writing workshop.

Week 8:

- Day 15: Interior Motives
 - 5–minute freewrite
 - “Good Country People” by Flannery O’Connor

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Good Country People” by Flannery O’Connor. Discuss O’Connor’s development of the characters, setting, and plot from the banal to the dramatic. Also discuss O’Connor’s writing philosophy (a moment of grace, or a crisis) and its appearance in her short story.

Prompt:

Write a scene for a short story that includes 2-3 characters traveling from 1 destination to a different destination. Intertwine 1 of the character’s interior motives that creates a moment of grace for the other characters.

Hint: refrain from unnecessary contextual details.

Focus on a moment where your character have to make a decision.

Week 8:

- Day 16: The High School Superstar
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Death of the Star High School Running Back” by Christopher Kempf

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Death of the Star High School Running Back” by Christopher Kempf. Discuss Kempf’s elegy that immortalizes the star high school running back. Also discuss Kempf’s Greek and Roman mythology to elevate his poem.

Prompt:

Write an elegiac poem about a star high school athlete that you know passed away.
Compare them to a god-like mythical figure.

*Hint: if you can’t think of any god-like, Greek, or Roman mythical figure,
then compare the athlete to someone that you look up to.*

Week 9:

- Day 17: Purpose
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Famous” by Naomi Shihab Nye

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Famous” by Naomi Shihab Nye. Discuss Nye’s comparisons, especially the effect that the comparisons have on each other. Also discuss Nye’s manipulation of the word ‘famous’ as a metaphor.

Prompt:

Choose one of the following prompts:

- (1) Write a poem that mimics Nye’s poem by using her “[blank] is famous to [blank].”
- (2) Write a poem similar to Nye’s poem that compares 2 different things through a different word instead of ‘famous.’

Hint: make insignificant comparisons between everyday objects or everyday occurrences.

Week 9:

- Day 18: Letters and Words are Building Blocks of Language
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “b o d y” by James Merrill

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “b o d y” by James Merrill. Discuss Merrill’s break down of the word ‘body’ letter-by-letter as if it were an actual body itself. Also discuss Merrill’s imagined stage that the letters appear on for the reader to visualize.

Prompt:

Write a poem about your favorite word.
Write about the shapes and sounds of that word.

Hint: convince the reader that your favorite word should be their favorite word too.

Week 10:

- Day 19: Identity
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Theme for English B” by Langston Hughes

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “Theme for English B” by Langston Hughes. Discuss Hughes’ playful and sad tone as a young adult that comments on race. Also discuss Hughes’ direct address to his instructor that develops the idea that likeness and difference matter, specifically when it concerns race and nationality.

Prompt:

Write a poem that highlights a moment when you felt the same and different simultaneously with another person.

*Hint: think about your identities and someone else’s identities.
Then, compare the two in your poem.*

Week 10:

- Day 20: How to...
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “How to be Chinese” by Celeste Ng

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read “How to be Chinese” by Celeste Ng. Discuss Ng’s instructional prose that talks about the difficulties of a female Asian American and creates empathy within the reader through comedy, romance, and relatability. Also discuss Ng’s sadness that arrives once the reader understands that the speaker is learning too.

Prompt:

Write your own “How To” declarative prose narrative about being part of 1 specific demographic (race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, age, religion, etc.)

Hint: choose a demographic that you are an expert on.



Week 11:

- Day 21: Workshop Pt. 3 (Revise Chapbook Submissions)
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - “Letters to a Young Poet” by Rainer Maria Rilke (Excerpt)

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read an excerpt of “Letters to a Young Poet” by Rainer Maria Rilke. Discuss Rilke’s XYZ in the excerpted text. Also discuss Rilke’s XYZ in the excerpted text.

Prompt:

Select all of the texts (poetry and/or prose) that you want published in the chapbook. Then, either ask the facilitator or a peer to critique your submissions, or critique individually. Next, revise the texts. Finally, if you’re done with your revisions, indicate on the texts if you want spelling and/or grammar corrections as well as a specific format for the text.

Hint: remember that the chosen texts will represent who you are and will be read by many different individuals locally and nationally, so choose your best work.

Week 11:

- Day 22: Workshop Pt. 4 (Chapbook Submissions)
 - 5–minute freewrite
 - “The Art of Losing (And Other Visions of Revisions)” by Philip Metres (Excerpt)

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read an excerpt from “The Art of Losing (And Other Visions of Revisions)” by Philip Metres. Discuss Metres’ revision references from other authors. Also discuss Metres’ advice on revision himself on the revision process.

Prompt:

Select all of the texts (poetry and/or prose) that you want to publish in the chapbook. Then, either ask the facilitator or a peer to critique your submissions, or critique individually. Next, revise the texts. Finally, if you’re done with your revisions, indicate on the texts if you want spelling and/or grammar corrections as well as a specific format for the text.

Hint: remember that the chosen texts will represent who you are and will be read by many different individuals locally and nationally, so choose your best work.

N.B.

Ask the residents: “what text would you like to read and discuss for the next creative writing workshop?”



Week 12:

- Day 23: Resident's Pick
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - Read the Resident's Pick

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Read the resident's pick. Discuss XYZ in the resident's pick. Also discuss XYZ in the resident's pick.

Prompt:

Hint:



Week 12:

- Day 24: The Survey and Showcase
 - 5-minute freewrite
 - WIR Creative Writing Workshop Survey
 - Showcase

Facilitate the 5-minute freewrite. Administer the WIR Creative Writing Workshop Survey. Coordinate the showcase with the residents performing 2-3 of their published texts. Inform the residents about the next WIR creative writing workshop. Conclude the last session with an honest and heartfelt farewell.