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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide contains outlines for short courses in poetry, prose narrative, the personal essay, and the short story. Each outline lists objectives, the content emphasized, class activities, means of evaluating student performance, and the length of time for the short course. The last section of the guide presents the requirements for individual projects in creative writing. (RB)

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CREATIVE WRITING

Cedar Falls High School  
English Department  
1974

Prepared by  
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ED 089287

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## I. Poetry

### A. Objectives

1. Growth in sense of discovery--receptivity to images, response
2. Ability to find materials from live experience and from recall that have individuality
3. Willingness to read orally and to discuss poems, from good authors and students, that demonstrate sensitivity and perception
4. Knowledge of writing craft and gradual application to own writing
5. Growth in knowledge and use of individuality, suggestion, universality
6. Growth in willingness to experiment, to revise, to keep writing

### B. Content emphasis

1. Adventure in living by developing a sense of awareness
  - a. Observation of live imagery
  - b. Delight in photography and art as an experience
2. Recognition of the aesthetic in poetry--glad, dramatic, dark beauty. Poems from Mosaic, Poetry II.
3. Experiences and responses of various poets
  - a. The Hedgerow    H. McDowell
  - b. This is My Country,                                  R. P. T. Coffin
  - c. Four Ducks On a Pond,                              W. Allingham
  - d. Spring and All,                                        W. C. Williams
4. The recall of a writer
  - a. Experience as individual
    - Sea Fever    John Masefield
    - Feather    Lew Sarett
    - Daffodils    W. Wordsworth
    - The Fish     Eliz. Bishop
    - The Great Lover     Rupert Brooke
5. The craft of writing poetry
  - a. Figurative language--imagery, simile, metaphor, personification, symbol
    - The Mountains are Lonely Folk                              H. Garland
    - Solitaire     Amy Lowell
    - The Warning     A. Croysey
  - b. Other poetic devices--rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and sound (oral reading to illustrate sound and Lew Sarett's theory of rhythm)

- |                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| A Vagabond Song,                | Bliss Carman |
| Sea Fever,                      | J. Masefield |
| Trade Winds,                    |              |
| The Highwayman,                 | Alfred Noyes |
| The Ballad of East<br>and West, | R. Kipling   |
- c. Language - Connotative words for suggestiveness.  
Fresh words for individuality, beauty, and signi-  
fance. Conciseness.
- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| Deserted,    | M. Cawein   |
| The Eagle,   | A. Tennyson |
| The Warning, | A. Cropsey  |
- d. Form and Structure. Reference to poems already used.  
Addition:
- |                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Meeting at Night,   | R. Browning     |
| Recuerdo,           | E. S. V. Millay |
| How Do I Love Thee? | E. B. Browning  |
| In Just,            | e. e. cummings  |
| The Cow Trail,      | H. McDowell     |
- e. The poem as an idea--meaning and tone
- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Prayers of Steel,                           | C. Sandburg  |
| I Never Saw a Moor,                         | E. Dickinson |
| Auto Wreck,                                 | Karl Shapiro |
| Solitude,                                   | A. Pope      |
| fate is Unfair,                             | Don Marquis  |
| Sea Lullaby,                                | Elinor Wylie |
| Four Preludes on<br>Playthings of the Wind, | C. Sandburg  |
6. Ways to improve writing so poetry will reveal individuality,  
suggestion, and universality
- a. Using revision
  - b. Writing many poems and experimenting
  - c. Giving attention to constructive criticism
  - d. Reading literary poems that have individuality,  
suggestion, universality

C. Activities

1. Discussion after lectures
2. Discussion of student poems on board
3. Reading of poems studied
4. Rhythm in Music, Mr. John Evenson, Music Director
5. Rhythm in Art, Mr. Jerry Nissen, Art Instructor
6. Student Conferences

D. Evaluation

1. The writing of six or more poems that reveal a growing knowledge of poetry craft
2. Evidence of growth in experimentation, revision, and ability to keep writing  
(measured in part by personal writing of "The Great Lover" and imagery poems)
3. Growth in awareness of own areas of interest, and own writing craft or lack of it.
4. Growth in awareness of nature and people as an ever fresh source for material
5. Some knowledge of how to use recall, and the realization of the wealth of material in own individual past
6. Growth in willingness to read orally and discuss the experience and writing craft of various authors and students

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time -- 5 weeks

## II. Prose Narrative

### A. Objectives

1. Growth in awareness of nature, and a desire to seek interesting sensory experiences for writing
2. To read with enjoyment and profit writers who can reveal experience with truth and imagination
3. To write two experiences with nature or exotic city sights showing some mastery of techniques for literary nonfiction
4. To revise material and edit for publication
5. Hopefully, to enjoy the out-of-doors and feel a sense of harmony with the Universe, or at least respect for all life

### B. Content emphasis

1. Seeking fresh sensory experiences
  - a. Walking alone for the usual, the unusual
  - b. Developing awareness and response
2. Recalling past experiences that may grow into a piece of literary nonfiction
3. Reading in and discussion of writing from books, magazines, and works of students to recognize individuality and craft
  - Driftwood Valley, T. C. Stan-Fletcher
  - North to the Orient, Anne Lindberg
  - The Singing Wilderness, S. F. Olson
  - The Lonely Land
  - Runes of the North
  - My Wilderness (both), W. O. Douglas
  - An Inland Voyage, R. L. Stevenson
4. The craft of writing—includes how to get individuality and universality
  - a. The nature of sensory experiences
  - b. The nature of point of view, tone
  - c. Organization and order
    - chronological, geographical, spacial
  - d. Discourse within a frame
    - concrete description to give pleasure, reality
    - narration to give movement, suspense
    - exposition for explanation, author's comment
  - e. Language (largely covered in poetry) should reveal knowledge accurate nature and geographical some figurative language
  - f. Choosing an appropriate title
  - g. Revising for an individual style
  - h. Editing for publication in Tiger Hi-Line

C. Activities

1. Some discussion of books--large and small groups
  - a. Writer's experience
  - b. Selection of subject matter
  - c. Writing craft
2. Reading comments from various papers on class writing
3. Reading excerpts from good prose narratives to show writing techniques
4. Isador, Canadian Wilderness Guide, Marvin Ziesmer
5. Student Conferences

D. Evaluation

1. The writing of one or two prose narratives from live experience or from recall revealing a degree of craft
2. The writing of a paragraph of description revealing observation and the ability to use concrete detail
3. The ability to revise and edit for publication in the Tiger Hi-Line
4. Willingness to read and discuss the work of a variety of prose narrative authors and students

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time. 2 1/2 weeks.

### III. Personal Essay

#### A. Objectives

1. To write one or two personal essays, preferably humorous, revealing enough techniques to attract a reader
2. To read with enjoyment and be able to discuss a variety of personal essays
3. To notice and enjoy personal essay writers and humorists in newspapers, magazines, and books.
4. Hopefully, to become more aware of the amusing aspects of living and the possibility of channeling grievances and moods into a piece of writing.

#### B. Content emphasis

1. What a personal essay is
  - a. It is personal--it deals with topics the writer has experienced
  - b. It takes us inside his mind and emotions letting us see how he reacts to what he sees and does
  - c. It is somewhat loosely organized but does have a degree of unity as it sticks fairly well to the topic
  - d. It may start far from the main topic but it spends most of the time on the writer's greatest concern
  - e. The style is light or pleasantly meditative
2. How to find subject matter (initiated by reading aloud a variety of subjects and styles followed by discussion)

Tribute to Trees

Innocence Abroad	With the Doctor
Oh, for a Woodshed	Why Vermont?
3. Recognition of the characteristics of the personal essay by reading and discussion of essays of good writers and students

The Laundry Problem	S. Leacock
Old Junk and New Money	
University Days,	J. Thurber
The Night the Ghost Got In	
The Day the Dam Broke	
The Treasurer's Report,	R. Benchley

Also, individual reading
4. Writing the personal essay

Analysis of My War With the Ospreys by John Steinbeck

  - a. Finding a subject from experience
  - b. Writing out the feeling



- c. Noting organization and development.  
has a very versatile form  
may be loosely or tightly constructed  
paragraphs may be short or medium  
employs narration, description, explication, even  
dialogue
- d. Noting language and tone.  
language should be appropriate to the subject,  
speaker, audience  
tone should start at once and be consistent
- e. Revising for an individual style
- f. Editing for publication in Tiger Hi-Line

C. Activities

- 1. Some reading aloud of essays
- 2. Some reading of excerpts to note tone
- 3. Frequent conferences

D. Evaluation

- 1. The writing of one or two essays that reveal a degree of craft and are pleasurable to read
- 2. Willingness to read and discuss a variety of essays from the standpoint of author's experience and craft
- 3. The ability to revise
- 4. The ability to edit

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time. 2 1/2 weeks.

#### IV. Short Story

##### A. Objectives

1. To write an incident and one or two short stories revealing enough mastery of craft to interest a reader
2. To read and discuss a variety of short stories for pleasure, insight, and craft
3. To learn revision, editing, and some knowledge of publication
4. Hopefully, to broaden interests for future reading, to become more human, to become aware of own individuality, to enjoy writing stories.

##### B. Content emphasis

1. The incident approach
  - a. Recognition of the impact of experience
  - b. Getting a sense of scene
  - c. Revelation of character through dramatization  
(all three taught by discussion of: "Bill,"  
"They Never Walk Alone," "John's Way")
  - d. Movement
2. Getting a concept for a story  
(Taught by reading of my short stories followed by discussion of writer's experience and techniques)
  - a. Impact of personal experience  
The Rose Umbrella
  - b. Impact of a person  
Ann Jordan
  - c. Impact of a news article  
One Man's Job
  - d. Impact of a phrase  
Call It Life
  - e. Impact of the imagination  
The Little Flower
3. Review of the elements of the short story through reading and discussion of a variety of stories
  - a. Sense of scene.  
To give reality and unity, to set mood, to give background for characters  
Love of Life, Jack London
  - b. Revelation of character--direct, indirect  
use of dialogue to advance plot, to establish character more deeply

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| The Revolt of Mother | M. Freeman    |
| The Verger,          | S. Maugham    |
| Molly Morgan,        | J. Steinbeck  |
| Quality,             | J. Galsworthy |
- c. Development of plot  
 Situation--everyday, unusual, supernatural  
 Incidents and episodes  
 Conflicts--movement, slowing down  
 Resolution--types of endings  
 Unity--emotional involvement  
 Love of Life, J. London
- d. Point of View  
 Omniscient  
 The Enemy, Pearl Buck  
 Characters  
 Joy Ride, Edith List  
 Jim Bree, B. Johansson
- e. Unity in theme, tone, language, symbol  
 Joy Ride, Edith List  
 Jim Bree, B. Johansson  
 The Enemy, Pearl Buck  
 A White Heron, S. O. Jewett  
 The Ship That Found Herself, R. Kipling
4. Attaining individuality  
 a. Through uniqueness of concept  
 b. Through area of subject matter  
 Love of Life, Jack London  
 c. Through form  
 Joy Ride, Edith List  
 d. Through economy, tone, language, symbol  
 All of the stories
5. Individual reading for pleasure and profit  
Midwest  
Venture  
Seven
6. Writing stories for children (optional, five or six students interested)
7. Editing and markets.
- C. Activities
1. Discussion for analysis
  2. Reading of excerpts to reveal scenes, character, atmosphere
  3. Frequent conferences
- D. Evaluation
1. The writing of an incident and one or more short stories revealing enough mastery of craft to interest a reader

2. Willingness to read, and discuss a variety of short stories from the standpoint of craft
  3. The ability to revise and edit
  4. Growth in broadening reading experiences, in becoming more human, in developing individuality
- E. Resources -- At end of course outline
- F. Length of time. 3 weeks.

## V. Individual Projects

### A. Objectives

1. To have more opportunity to write in an area of interest.
2. To have more individual guidance in perception, in planning, and in improving writing craft
3. To have an opportunity to browse in writing by own age group
4. To become more familiar with contemporary poetry
5. To improve initiative and writing habits
6. To find time to learn about publishing

### B. Content emphasis

1. Giving the students an opportunity to write in the area of their interests
  - a. Review of poetry as an experience, as a craft  
Comparisons and evaluations  
Outlines I, II, III  
Individuality, suggestion, universality  
Velvet Shoes, Elinor Wylie  
Silver, W. De La Mar  
Moonlight, Berta H. Nance  
Buffalo Dusk, C. Sandburg  
Nocturne in a  
Deserted Brickyard, C. Sandburg  
The Hedgerow, H. McDowell  
To an Oak, D. Grimes  
Elegy For The Wild Plum, Sister M. Therese
  - b. Examination of earlier writing for the possibility of revisions and rewrites
  - c. Submission of plans for the unit through frequent conferences
2. Reading poetry of own age group in magazines  
Mosaic  
High School Magazines  
Young America Sings  
Lyrical Iowa  
Others
3. Becoming more familiar with contemporary poetry

- a. Readings from
    - James Hearst
    - Karl Shapiro
    - Others brought by students
  - b. Readings from
    - Poetry
    - Midwest
    - Seven
    - Several College Magazines
    - Saturday Review
    - Others brought by students
  - 4. Learning about publishing
    - Popular magazines
    - College magazines
    - Small poetry collections
    - Children's books--poetry and picture books
  - 5. Selecting and editing two poems for 1969 Mosaic
- C. Activities
- 1. Some group discussion
  - 2. Some reading of poems
  - 3. Kuder Preference Test
  - 4. Frequent conferences
- D. Evaluation
- 1. The equivalent of a good poem or piece of prose per week
  - 2. Knowledge of revisions and editing--revealed in improvement of writing
  - 3. Completion of special projects
    - A collection of poems
    - A children's picture book
    - Children's stories
  - 4. Willingness to read, to take part in discussion, and to grow in initiative and craft
- E. Resources
- F. Length of time -- 6 weeks.

Paul Engle  
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