

General Author Presentation:

How to get published, how to go from idea to finished book, followed by interactive storytelling with a story that the students create themselves while I illustrate it for them on a large pad of paper. Students come up with characters and a basic plot, then suggest three different endings so we can take about how endings shape the story and what makes for a good ending.

Writing & Journaling Workshop:

We start with character development with students creating their own characters with distinctive personalities. Then we take on plot, from great beginnings (strong first sentences) to interesting middles (discussing pacing, use of dialog, juicy, active verbs) to strong finishes. How do you hook your reader? How do you make them want to keep on reading? And how do you finish your story in a way that's satisfying and not frustrating?

Historical Fiction:

Primacy of Research, how to and how not to: organization/avoid plagiarism at note-taking stage. What kind of sources, where, how to find them. Start broadly, narrow down as you find what interests you. Be curious, use primary sources as much as possible. Search for different tools to inspire writing – from maps to artifacts to contemporary media, all combined into historically-based narratives.

Plot: Pick the right moment, the dramatic crux. What story do you want to tell? Be clear what your story is about.

Character development: When retelling life of actual historical character, must give shape to it, not blurt out every detail into a boring compendium. Pick the salient stories, the ones that reveal character or push the narrative forward. Everything in the book must be there for a reason. If it doesn't deepen character or impel the story, it goes.

Use of supporting characters: how to use subplots and minor characters to pack in more history.

Advanced Writing Workshop (preferably this would cover 2-4 days):

Most of writing is rewriting. This advanced workshop models how to revise, how to self-edit and edit others. We play with the use of tense (past or present?), how it effects the narrative; with person (first or third?), with narrative voice. How do choices shape the story?

How to weave in multiple story lines, develop subplots.

Work with character motivation and development.

Plots & Turning Points: developing the narrative arc.

Use of five senses

Pacing/dialog/description

Different endings: what works, what doesn't

Visual storytelling (preferably 2-4 days):

Some people think more clearly in images than words. For them, graphic novels or comics are more expressive forms. Sometimes pictures are more effective, get more information across than words. A combination of words and pictures can evoke the most. You don't need to describe your character, you can draw them, for example. Art should never do what the text does, but go beyond it, amplify, deepen, or give additional, even contradictory information.

How do you use words and/or images for:

Character description

Beginnings: How do you start?

Pacing/use of dialog vs. description

Emotional weight/mood
Settings
Endings

Publishing Presentation: The Writing Profession:

Ins and outs of publishing today, how to prepare, how to get published, what a writer's life is like.

Drawing/Storytelling workshop (for younger students where writing is trickier):

How to go from idea to book. Read *After-School Monster* and discuss. Then the students draw their own monsters and or follow a step-by-step guide if they want more direction. We draw angry, happy, sad, scared monsters and talk about how to show those emotions with our drawings.