

GOTHAM  WRITERS

Write

Stories. Everywhere.

Spring Classes 2019

Everyone has a story.

WE WANT YOURS.

Gotham Writers Workshop is a creative home in New York City and Online where writers develop their craft and come together in the spirit of discovery and fellowship. We've been teaching creative writing to students since 1993.

We believe that everyone has a story to tell. Indeed, many stories. Keep your eyes and mind open and you will find them everywhere. And we can help you tell your stories better.

Whether you're a new writer looking to explore, or an experienced writer looking to strengthen your skills, our classes will help you reach your goals—through clear instruction on elements of craft, critique in a safe environment, and a structured process that keeps your work on track. We also teach Business Writing, with the same verve and expertise we bring to our creative writing courses.

We strive to give each student the best possible learning experience. Class size is strictly limited so you never get lost in a crowd. And our instructors are consistently excellent—working writers who are as skilled at teaching as they are at writing.

We are invested in helping students find the writing class that is most appropriate for their particular needs. Explore our website, and feel free to discuss options via email or phone.

Thousands of people have been enriched by the Gotham experience. It's why we've been around for over twenty-five years.

Ways to Learn



In-person classes in NYC.

NYC CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY. MANY OF THEM BEGIN THE WEEK OF APRIL 8.



Online classes draw together writers from across the globe.

ONLINE CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY.

Registration fee for all classes:
\$25 paid once per term.

10-Week Workshops

These classes use a combination of lectures, exercises, and workshoping (critiquing of student projects). In New York City, they meet for three hours per week; online, each session begins at the same time each week, and unfolds gradually all week long. Available in Level I, II, III.

\$435 — NYC
\$409 — Online

6-Week Classes

These classes let students explore a variety of forms and concepts in a low-pressure manner, through a combination of lectures and exercises. In New York City, they meet for three hours per week (two hours for Business Writing); online, each session begins at the same time each week, and unfolds gradually all week long. (Timing and price is different for Business Writing.) All Level I.

\$325 — NYC
\$309 — Online

Selling Seminars

These courses emphasize the business side of writing. The New York City versions take place over two three-hour sessions. The online versions take place over four weeks. All Level I.

\$175

Intensives

In NYC, these are seven-hour crash courses, taking place all in one day. The online versions take place over three weeks. All Level I.

\$150

Courses



Fiction

Whether delving inside the truth of our everyday lives or letting us escape into an entertaining page-turner, fiction takes us through the "looking-glass" into a world that's a curious mixture of real and made-up.

FICTION/NOVEL
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
MYSTERY
ROMANCE
COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS
READING FICTION



Nonfiction

Whether it's an experience found in your kitchen or halfway around the world, whether it's an idea you can't forget or a conversation with a fascinating person, sometimes the most intriguing stories are true.

CREATIVE NONFICTION 101
MEMOIR
ESSAY & OPINION
PERSONAL ESSAY
ARTICLE
TRAVEL WRITING
FOOD WRITING



Scriptwriting

We all like to be entertained, whether it's watching a performance live on stage or flickering on a screen. Here's where you learn to write the material that holds those audiences in thrall.

WRITING SCRIPTS 101
SCREENWRITING
TV WRITING
PLAYWRITING
DOCUMENTARY FILM
SCRIPTS IN FOCUS
VIDEO GAME WRITING
WEB SERIES



Comedy, Poetry & Song

Send words soaring in the lyricism of poetry or song. Or get people high on laughter through stand-up comedy or humorous prose.

POETRY
SONGWRITING
HUMOR WRITING
STAND-UP COMEDY



Essentials

Creative Writing 101 is an ideal starting point for writers, to test the waters or wash off the rust. The other courses here focus on crucial aspects of the writing craft, useful for all types of writing.

CREATIVE WRITING 101
CHARACTER
DIALOGUE
GRAMMAR!
THE WRITER'S MIND
THE EDITOR'S EYE
IN(VERSE): POETIC TECHNIQUES FOR NON-POETS
SOCIAL MEDIA
PEN ON FIRE
JUST WRITE



Professional Development

These courses sharpen your skills in the workplace, or help you build a platform as a writer, or guide you through the tricky task of publishing your work. We also offer Corporate Classes.

BUSINESS WRITING
BLOG BASICS
BLOG WRITING
HOW TO GET PUBLISHED
NONFICTION BOOK PROPOSAL
HIT SEND: PUBLISHING SHORT NONFICTION



Teen Classes

Pressure-free, creativity-stretching, not-like-school courses for writers ages 13-17. Useful for expanding your talent or gaining skills bound to help with essays and schoolwork.

UNBOUND: CREATIVE WRITING
TRUE STORY: CREATIVE NONFICTION



One-on-One

It's wonderful to learn in a group setting, but sometimes one-on-one is the right match. You may want a private class, or "doctoring" on a specific project, or a professional mentor to guide you, or one of our specialty arrangements.

DOCTORING—BOOK/STORY/SCRIPT MENTORSHIPS
PRIVATE SESSIONS AND CLASSES
PRIVATE GRAMMAR SESSIONS
PRIVATE BUSINESS WRITING SESSION/CLASS
COVER LETTER COACHING
COLLEGE ESSAY COACHING
MFA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE
BLOG LAUNCH
BLOG BOOST
PODCAST LAUNCH
PROOFREADING

Write Now

The most challenging part of writing is often just getting started—daring yourself into the wide-openness of the blank page. We invite you to do just that.

To help out, we present several “story starters” and some tantalizing blank space to write upon.

READY, SET, WRITE

Use this writing prompt as inspiration: *a smell awakening a memory*

Now write a story that springs from this prompt in some way. It can be true or made up. Prose, script, poem, whatever you like. The trick is not to think about it, but just dive in and start writing. Let the prompt lead you wherever it wants to. Often this “no thinking” approach to writing is the best way to tap your creativity. (This will give you a taste of what we do every Friday night at our Write-Ins.)

IT'S A VISUAL

Begin a story inspired by this photograph.



Photo by Mantas Hesthaven

YOUR OWN TV SHOW

Dream big. Pretend you've been asked to create a TV series that will air a year from now. It must be based on your experiences, in some way. Decide what the show is about and write down some quick ideas for the show.

Gotham Faculty

SIX STEPS TOWARDS FINDING YOUR INNER CHILD ON THE PAGE

Faculty Insight

BY MARGARET MEACHAM

Even if you haven't been a child for decades, if you want to write for middle grade and YA readers, you need to find a way to see the world through your child characters' eyes, minds, and hearts. You need to remember what it's like to be a kid, to find a passport to that other country.

Children like to read about people who are their age or slightly older. If you are writing a story for 9- to 12-year-olds, your main character will probably be 12 or 13. If you are writing for teenagers, your main character will usually be 15 or older.

How does an adult writer create realistic child and teenage characters? Here are six ways of thinking like a kid—plus some exercises to help you practice.

1. Wonder why and ask what if.

Kids are curious. They don't know as much as adults, but they desperately want to know about and understand the world, and because they don't come with preconceived notions, they are much more able to question, imagine things differently, and see other possibilities.

A child might ask "Why does it get dark at night?" An adult would explain that it's about the earth spinning. The child might then think, but what if it didn't? Or what if the earth slowed down? Sped up?

A child might ask, "Why is there gravity?" An adult would explain that it's because of the pull of the moon. The child might then think, what if something shifts, and there's much less gravity? Or much more?

2. Read, watch, play.

Though many aspects of childhood are the same as they were when you were a kid, and even when your grandma was a kid, a lot of things are different. To understand the world of children today, immerse yourself in their culture. Read the books they're reading, watch the shows they're watching, play the games they're playing.

3. Remember.

Understanding today's kids is important, but if you are to really get inside your child characters, you also want to remember your own childhood. You were there once yourself. You passed through every age of childhood, and there are probably a lot more memories of those days buried in your subconscious mind than you realize. Here are some methods for bringing those memories to the surface:

- Look at old photographs and home movies.
- Talk to people you knew back in the day, reliving old times.
- Reread old letters, journals, diaries, school projects.
- Research what was going on in the world when you were a child—politics, local news, culture.
- Listen to the music you listened to back then.
- Ruminant—think about past life events in a relaxed and meditative state.

4. See, hear, smell, taste, feel.

As the great children's book editor Ursula Nordstrom said, "We must remember that children are new, and the whole world is new to them."

We learn about the world through our senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Children are still learning. They see and understand everything about the world through their senses. If you want your story to be accessible to kids, if you want to capture and hold their attention, you will need to create scenes that engage the senses. Fiction is told in scenes because scenes that utilize all the senses help us feel that we are actually there with the characters, seeing, hearing,

tasting, smelling, and feeling what they see, hear, smell, taste, and feel. We actually live the scene vicariously along with the main character. This is how fiction derives its emotional power and also why it is so good at teaching emotional truths and helping readers understand others and themselves.

5. Talk the talk.

In the past, most kids' books—in fact, most books in general—used an omniscient point of view, in which the story is told by a voice that is separate from the characters and outside the story, and also knows everything about the characters and the events of the story. While picture books are still often told in an omniscient voice, books for older kids and YA audiences usually use either a first-person or a third-person limited (non-omniscient) point of view.

Whether you choose to tell your story in first person or in third-person limited POV, you will be telling the story in the voice of one of your characters, usually (but not always) the main character. An advantage of these POVs is that they create a sense of connection to the narrator, and hence, a direct and intimate connection between reader and writer. Readers, especially older kids and YA readers, are then able to identify strongly with the main character and to care deeply about what will happen to him or her.

In order to use a first person or third limited POV successfully, it's important to find the voice of your character. If your character doesn't sound like a real kid, readers won't feel that sense of connection and will put the story down.

The key to creating a convincing voice is understanding your character as a real human (or alien, animal, futuristic robot, or whatever form your character takes—they are all stand-ins for humans), complete with flaws, loveable qualities, quirks, and biases.

Listening to the way kids talk, watching the way they interact, working to understand their goals and problems will enable you to see the world

through your character's eyes, mind, and heart, and to create a unique and believable voice that will speak to kids and allow them to identify.

6. Imagine.

What is it about a child's mind that can turn a bathtub into an ocean, a cardboard box into a rocket ship, an empty cabinet into a hideout full of hidden treasures? How can adult writers recapture that ability to make connections, to find new worlds around every corner and wonder in the everyday?

One problem we adults have is that we've been told again and again that our imaginings are not reality and, therefore, have no validity. As when an older sibling says, "Uh, actually, that's not an ocean. It's just a bathtub." Or a teacher says, "No, the Thanksgiving turkey did not get up and fly away from your grandmother's dining room table," and marks an F on your "How I Spent My Thanksgiving" essay.

To a child, the boundaries between reality and fantasy are porous, not solid as they are to adults. It's so much easier to slip between the worlds. Of course, as we grow, we have to be able to distinguish between what's real and what isn't. But this doesn't mean we have to relinquish the ability to imagine.

As Brenda Ueland, in her classic and affirming book *If You Want to Write* assures us, "Everyone is talented, original, and has something important to say." She explains that "the imagination needs noodling—long, inefficient, happy idling, dawdling and puttering." Like a child at play.

Margaret Meacham is the author of 15 novels for children.

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.

Student Voices

I've been a professional writer for over twenty years now, and it is, in large part, because of you.

—Lia Huber, writer

Gotham lights a fire to keep me chasing my writing dreams.

—Brad Regier, animator

The teacher is a joyful and energetic raconteur who entertains, educates, and always encourages. He is the Big Bang of ideas.

—Michael Bennett, rehabilitation physician

A great way to actually GET WRITING.

—Deborah Coco, college admissions counselor

The perfect community to refine your talent, fill in the spaces, give you confidence, renew your imagination and give you the knowledge and tools to set you firmly on the road to become a successful writer.

—Beth Hegy, massage therapist



SHAMAR HILL

Faculty Profile
BY JOSH SIPPIC

For Shamar Hill, being a writer started when he was 13, in a studio apartment in Brooklyn where he would close himself in the bathroom and write soap opera tele-novella stories, starring all of his school classmates.

"It was Beverly Hills 90210, but with my classmates," he said. "During recess, all my classmates wanted to see what happened with their characters."

It was around this time that he was starting to understand his love for writing, and what it meant to him.

Growing up reading the likes of James Baldwin, Shamar knew that writing was what he wanted to do. After going through high school writing "silly poems" and being the unpopular kid due to his fancy for reading the likes of Soren Kierkegaard and Immanuel Kant, Shamar pursued fiction writing in his undergrad at the New School. Yet, while he had always wanted to be a writer, it wasn't until he began his MFA program at NYU that he actually felt like he was a writer.

"I was like, 'Okay, I can actually do this,'" he said.

Shamar has found himself the recipient of numerous opportunities throughout his career as a writer, but for him, one of his proudest moments was when he realized that he had found the prowess to write poetry as well as fiction. "I felt like a horrible writer," he said, regarding his start in poetry writing. "I had no idea what I was doing, but I kept trying, trying."

It worked. Just one year after picking up the art, he was accepted into the Bread Loaf Writers Conference for his poetry, where he would end up sipping a gin and tonic and discussing hip-hop with one of his poetic influences, Terrance Hayes, all while understanding that he was headed in the right direction.

"I can really work in both prose and poetry, and explore my obsessions and thoughts and wonders in both," Shamar said. "Sometimes it filters through a poetic lens, sometimes it filters through prose and story."

Along with successfully writing both prose and poetry, Shamar teaches both as well. And along with teaching in the standard classroom format, he can also be found teaching poetry at the Rikers Island Prison, which he finds tremendously gratifying.

"The students are very serious," he said. "They asked me to teach iambic pentameter." But no matter who Shamar is teaching, his advice to any given writer is going to be the same advice that he had to teach himself—just keep trying.

"Writing is an endeavor," he said. "You have to keep at it. The work is the most important thing."

Community

WRITE-INS

Do you wish there was a place you could go for writing inspiration and practice? Where you could hang out with other writers? Without needing to make a long-term commitment or spend a lot of money? With food and drink involved?

Gotham Write-Ins are that place.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS:

The teacher gives an interesting writing prompt. Everyone writes for a while. Then, those who want to read aloud their work. You take a break and socialize over refreshments. Then you go through the process one more time. Then you socialize a little more. It's two hours of writer's heaven. You can sign up in advance or just drop in.

FRIDAY EVENINGS IN MANHATTAN

6:30-8:30 pm

\$20 per session

See our website for details.

FREE EVENTS

We do free classes and other fun things around New York City—at bookstores, bars, Bryant Park, etc. It's our way of showcasing what we do and getting to know you. See our website for upcoming events.

SPRING CONTEST

A Very Short Story

It may be apocryphal, but the story goes that Ernest Hemingway won a bet by writing a short story that ran fewer than ten words. One version of the story places the bet at the famed Algonquin "round table." Whether true or not, there is an actual bet-winning short story attributed to Hemingway:

For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.

You have to admit it's pretty good. It builds, and there's a whole world of background and emotion lurking beneath those words.

We would like to make a similar bet with you. Write a great short story in ten words or fewer. (You may use a title, but that goes into the word count.) Submit it to our contest. Entry is free. Winner of the bet gets a free Gotham class.

We did this contest last year, and here are some of the best entries:

She sat in the car wondering what other children did.

*Maribel Ledezma-Williams
New York, NY*

One heartbreaking cry. Hello, my baby. Goodbye, somebody else's daughter.

*Casey O'Callaghan
York, PA*

He looks like Pittsburgh, I thought. He's definitely my father.

*Darlene Coker
Tampa, FL*

For competition rules and online entry form,

— visit —

GOTHAMWRITERS.COM/TENWORDSTORY

#GWstories everywhere

Stories are, truly, everywhere—every place you look, everyone you meet, everything you experience. Every day is filled with hundreds of potential stories awaiting your imagination and craft.

Each month we invite you to post a story on Twitter at #GWstories everywhere. Your stories (which can be true or made up) will be inspired by what you see, know, or do, and they should relate in some way to these monthly themes:

MARCH
feeling green

APRIL
duped

MAY
emergency

At the end of each month, we will pick our favorite and reward that person with a free Gotham writing class.

Your story must be no longer than 25 words, with a max of 280 characters, including spaces and the hashtag #GWstories everywhere.

Everyone has a story. Especially you.

gothamwriters.com
212-974-8377

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