

GOTHAM



WRITERS

write

Stories. Everywhere.

Fall Classes 2015

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 years.

Courses



Fiction

Whether delving inside the truth of our everyday lives or letting us escape into entertaining page-turning, 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.

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.

DRAMATIC WRITING 101
SCREENWRITING
TV WRITING
PLAYWRITING
DOCUMENTARY FILM
SCRIPT ANALYSIS
VIDEO GAME WRITING



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: WRITE IT RIGHT!
THE WRITER’S MIND
THE EDITOR’S EYE
IN(VERSE): POETIC TECHNIQUES FOR NON-POETS
PROMPT-A-THON
ONLINE VIDEO
SOCIAL MEDIA



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



Classes for Teens

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
WRITE IT RIGHT!: GRAMMAR FOR TEENS



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
COLLEGE ESSAY COACHING
MFA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE
BLOG LAUNCH

Events and Free Classes

Gotham offers various events that bring writers together, such as our weekly Write-Ins. And we present free classes around Manhattan and Brooklyn to showcase our teaching.

Check our website for listings.

Ways to Learn



In-person classes in NYC. NYC classes begin throughout September, October, and November.

MANY OF THEM BEGIN THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 5.



Online classes draw together writers from across the globe.

ONLINE CLASSES RUN THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, AND NOVEMBER.

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.

\$425 - NYC
\$399 - 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.

\$315 - NYC
\$299 - 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.

\$165

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.

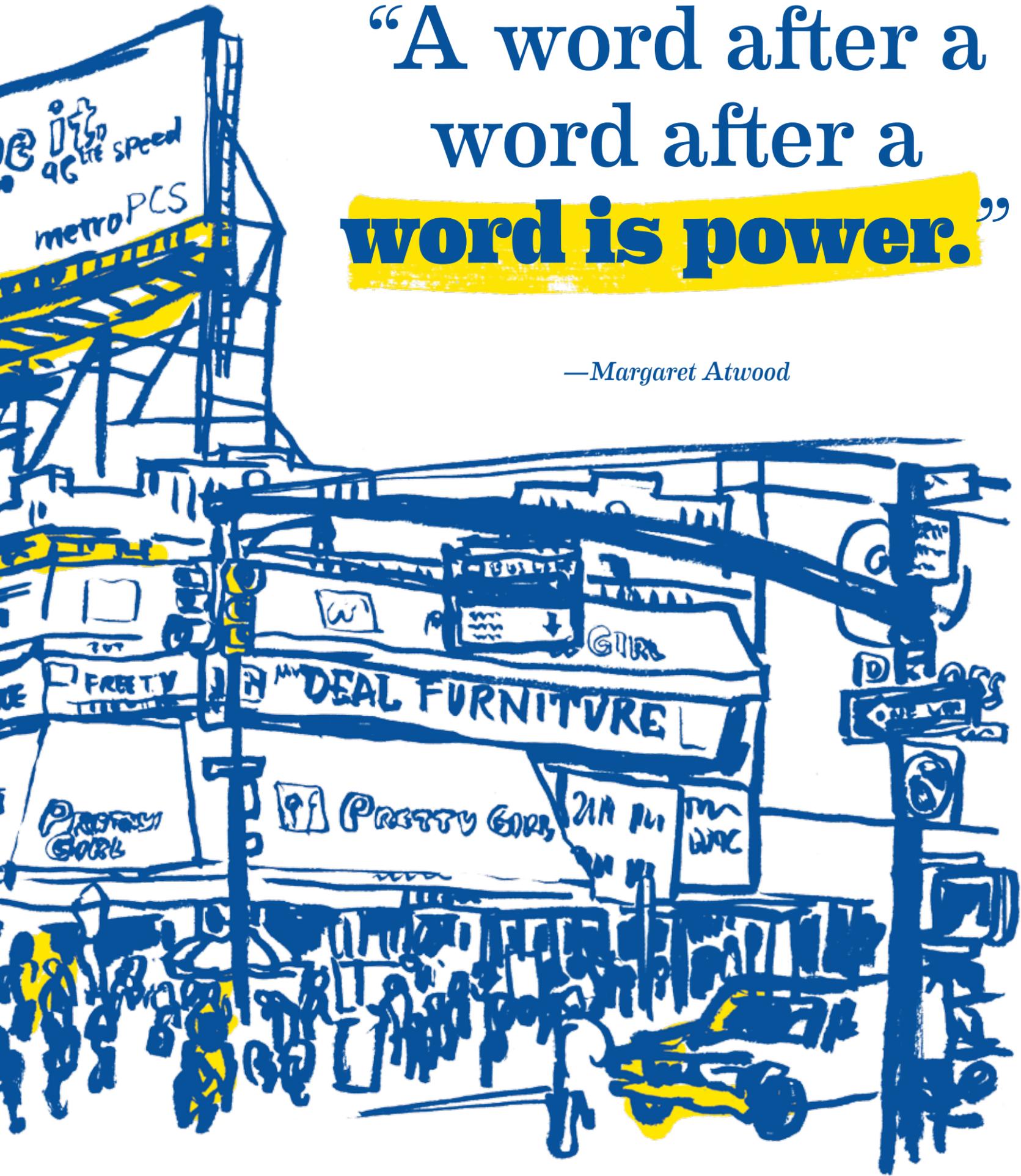
\$125

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



“A word after a
word after a
word is power.”

—Margaret Atwood



Gotham Faculty

HOW TO KEEP FOCUS IN A LYRIC...OR NOT

Faculty Insight

BY TONY CONNIFF

Recently I heard some talented students record a song that I've always liked, and still do—"If I Ever Lose My Faith In You" by Sting. Great groove, strong Chorus, interesting and unexpected chord changes and, as is usually the case with Sting, a soaring, catchy melody.

But today I'm looking into the song's lyrics, which bring up questions that I think arise for most songwriters when writing. Questions about keeping focus... and when, in the lyric, to let yourself shift or loosen focus... or not.

Let's say you're lucky enough to come up with a good Title/Chorus, maybe even one as strong as Sting's:

*If I Ever Lose My Faith In You
There'd be nothing left for me to do*

Where do you go from there? Sting chose, very wisely I think, to take a page from basic songwriting playbook—he made a List Song, ending in "BUT." In other words, he made a list of things that, if he

lost faith in them, as rough as it might be, he'd be OK. Then comes the "BUT"... If I Ever Lose My Faith In You... now *that* would be a disaster.

This "list song" strategy is one that's been used in many thousands of songs and will continue to be used. If it's done well, it's just *effective*. Examples include Vernon Duke/Ira Gershwin's "I Can't Get Started" ("I did this list of incredible things BUT I Can't Get Started With You"), U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" ("I did this list of incredible things BUT I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For"), and Bob Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody" ("Here's a list of exciting and worldly things you might do BUT you still Gotta Serve Somebody").

Honesty compels me to say that in "Lose My Faith" Sting did not carry out this strategy quite as effectively as these other songwriters did in the above songs. Don't misunderstand; Sting's a great songwriter with

a number of classics to his credit. Whether you think it was a good idea or not, he just let himself—intentionally, I'm sure—get a little loose on the lyric of this one.

Let me try to elucidate why I say that.

Verse 1:

*You could say I lost my faith in science and progress
You could say I lost my belief the holy church
You could say I lost my sense of direction
You could say all of this and worse BUT*

So far so good; right on topic.

Verse 2:

*Some would say I was a lost man in a lost world
You could say I lost my faith in people on TV
You could say I'd lost my belief in our politicians
They all seemed like game show hosts to me BUT*

The 'game show' line is a wise-crack; it's an aside... it doesn't set up the "But." It draws attention away from the main idea of

the *song* and to the *writer*. It's only one line though, right?

Verse 3:

*I never saw no miracle of science
That didn't go from a blessing to a curse
I never saw no military solution
That didn't always end up as something worse
but Let me say this first*

There's no law that says a writer has to stick with the "plan" (in fact there are no songwriting laws at all), and some songs effectively abandon what seems to be their original "plan." But this song, and this *type* of song (the list with a twist?), isn't one of them, in my opinion. It's a "set 'em up and knock 'em down" kind of writing situation (see Ira Gershwin, Bono, Bob Dylan above). At its best, it's about how imaginatively the writer can illustrate their main idea.

I think in *most* songs it's best to think about the Verses in terms of setting up the Chorus (if there is one). But the list song almost demands it.

Finally... Sting... Gordon Sumner... please forgive me! I'm a fan; you're a great

songwriter and singer, not to mention one of my favorite bass guitarists. But over the last week I listened to your song twenty times and couldn't help but notice what I've pointed out above.

This article originally appeared in the author's blog, found at tonyconniff.com

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.



LEIGH MICHAELS

Faculty Profile

BY BRITT GAMBINO

Gotham teacher Leigh Michaels wrote her first romance novel when she was fourteen-years-old. "What I knew about love and relationships back then could have fit on a postage stamp—and have room for the grocery list," she says. Today, Leigh has more than 35 million copies of her romance novels in print, in 120 countries, in 25 languages.

And yet, a reporter from her alma mater once asked Leigh if she considered writing romance novels a waste of her life and talents. (Leigh was an honors journalism student at Drake University.) Leigh responded, "I received a letter from a hospice nurse about how she loved reading my books because they're a relief from what she does at work. Another woman who read my books while her father was dying in the hospital told me, 'It's like your arms came out and hugged me.' Another woman may be alive because she picked up one of my books—she realized she was being poisoned by the carbon monoxide from her furnace, like one of my heroines! So, no I don't consider it a waste of a life."

On a related note, even many readers of romance assume that because the novels are light and easy to read, they must be easy to write. But Leigh debunks that myth: "They're actually very tightly written. They're so focused on the hero and heroine, so there's no room for wandering off or secondary character subplots."

Furthermore, because romance is what Leigh calls "a very specific genre," it's important to learn the fundamentals of the craft. Some writers think that just because they understand the basics of fiction they'll be able to write a successful romance. Not necessarily. "The danger," Leigh says, "is that you can write something that falls in between a traditional literary novel and a romance novel and then it can't find a home anywhere."

In addition to her many novels, Leigh has written three books on craft: *On Writing Romance*, *Creating Romantic Characters*, and *Writing Between the Sexes*. The latter serves as a how-to guide using gender differences to create believable characters. "When we write, it's natural to do it from our own perspective," says Leigh, "so we don't always write realistic men." (And she confirms this goes both ways—there are male writers out there writing unrealistic female characters as well.)

She even teaches seminars on gender differences, which, as Leigh describes it, is really an opportunity to talk about people—why we behave the way we do—and how to apply those behaviors to writing.

Leigh says she teaches for two reasons: to foster a writing community and to give back to newer writers. "When I started, there was no one out there to help me," Leigh explains. "When I submitted my first manuscript, I consulted *Writer's Market* [an annual directory for writers] and did what I thought I should do, but I sent all the wrong things. I feel an obligation to help others and let them know what they need to do. I learned how to do it the hard way."

More than thirty years since the publication of her first book, Leigh is churning out new stories—whether in the form of a traditional novel or short story e-book, set in contemporary America or the Regency period in England. Her most recent book was released earlier this summer as part of a fifteen-author box set called *Magical Weddings*.

"People think all romance novels are the same," Leigh says. "But every journey is different: the problems the characters overcome, the negotiations they make." And, she adds, "That happy ending has to be satisfying, convincing, and earned."

Student Voices

“It was an absolute thrill and quite inspirational.”

—Elise Brancheau, opera singer

“I look at my creative writing after just 10 weeks and am amazed at what I can do and how proud I feel about my writing.”

—John Furth, management consultant

“If you’ve ever had a voice somewhere inside you, urging you to give this a try, if for no other reason than to say you tried, this is a wonderful way to do it.”

—Stuart Hill, copywriter

“This was the best course I’ve ever done and I’m heartbroken that it has ended so quickly.”

—Fiona Shelton, lawyer/linguist

“A place to go to learn from other kindred spirits.”

—Karen Z. Waltensperger, international health advisor

“I had finished my MFA in fiction writing and I wanted a way to continue writing in a serious atmosphere, both honest and generous. The Gotham class was fabulous. I was able to develop a character for a novel I had been working on, which is now due for publication in August.”

—Roxann King-Feuerman, writer

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
6:30–8:30pm

See our website for details.

\$20 per session

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.

Write Now

25 WORDS OF WONDER

A LITTLE PUSH

Contest

25 Words of Wonder

This time we give you a contest that lets you wander wherever you like. Give us story of any kind, true or made up. Prose, poetry, script, whatever. The only catch: It must be 25 words or fewer. (Use a title. You get extra words for that.)

Challenging? Yes. As the saying goes, "If I had more time, I would have written you a shorter letter." (No one knows who said this. It's been attributed to numerous people including, Mark Twain, Winston Churchill, and Pliny the Younger.)

But it's possible to write a wonderful story in 25 words or fewer. To prove it, here are some of the best entries we received the last time we ran this contest:

Married Life

(COUPLE at window)

CAROL: If we weren't living in a one story, I'd jump.

VIN: I'd push you.

CAROL: What?

VIN: Nothing.

CAROL: Exactly.

Ray D'Ariano
White Plains, NY

Southside

I live here.

People from other parts come, soliciting votes or prostitutes. News crews arrive to report shootings or protests then flee.

I live here.

Catina Williams
St. Louis, MO

For competition rules and online entry form,

— visit —

GOTHAMWRITERS.COM/25WORDS

Story Starters

Sometimes all you need is a little push to write a good story. So let's give you a push. Write a story with this title:

THE HOUSE ON THE
CORNER OF WINSLOW
STREET



#stories 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 #stories 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”:

SEPTEMBER

What happened at school today?

OCTOBER

Monster

NOVEMBER

Strange relatives

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 140 characters, including spaces and the hashtag #stories everywhere. Here is a previous winner, using the theme *A dangerous turn*:

Had I gone right I'd have picked up my dry cleaning and gone home to Indian takeout. I went left and found his knife. #stories everywhere

(By @Vale1217)

Everyone has a story. Especially you.

GOTHAMWRITERS.COM

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