

College Guild
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CREATIVE LANGUAGE

Unit 1 of 6

Welcome to College Guild's Creative Language course. As the title suggests, this is all about your imagination, so there are no right or wrong answers. Volunteer "readers" will be giving you specific feedback. Here are some guidelines for all CG courses:

- 1- Answer all the questions that are in bold print. When we receive a completed Unit back, you'll be sent the next one, along with your original work and feedback from your reader. You don't need to return the questions – it saves us both postage.
- 2- Take the time to read the questions thoroughly and find the most creative way to word your answers. There is no specific deadline to complete any Unit, but we would get concerned if we hadn't heard back from you in 2-3 months. You can ask for an extension if your own circumstances make that necessary. Remember how often the mail service loses things and if you don't hear back from us after a month, write to make sure your Unit was received and the next Unit sent out.
- 3- Let us know if you need a dictionary, free to CG students who complete the first Unit.

LANGUAGE AND CREATIVITY

"Language is the dress of thought."
~ Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) ~

Writing is much more than using correct spelling and grammar. Unique vocabulary and ideas, imagination and humor can all make a piece of writing great vs. just good. In other words, dress up your thoughts with creative language, just as Samuel Johnson said!

The building blocks of language are words, so we'll start with them.

1. Write down 5 words that start with each of the following letters, (total of 30):

C M A S I R

2. Pick six of the words you wrote down, one for each letter. For the first three words you picked, make up three funny sentences, one for each word.

3. Make up three serious sentences for the other three words.

4. Choose six other words, one for each letter. Write a story using these six words. It doesn't have to be long, but it should have at least 2 characters, and a plot to make us want to keep reading in order to find out how it ends.

5. Write a sentence only six words long – each word should start with the letter C, M, A, S, I or R.

Example: "Cars slide in mud and rain."

METAPHORS are a wonderful way to "dress up" language. They are comparisons that reveal a connection between two dissimilar things. On the surface, they might have nothing in common. For example, do war and a black cat have anything in common? How about a beach and a record? They are totally different things, but (according to two CG students) alike in one way: "*War is a black cat; we are always trying to avoid it.*" "*A sandy beach is an old record, familiar and full of memories.*" Other examples are:

*The moon is a skater, gliding across the ice at night.
A dog is a pair of socks, keeping my feet warm at night.*

6. Find metaphors for the following eight things:

Swimming is...

Fighting is...

A tree is...

Being alone is...

A hot shower is...

A dinosaur is...

A toothache is...

A drone is...

Metaphors are NOT definitions or descriptions. For example, "*A dinosaur is a creature from the past,*" is a definition. "*A hot shower is wet and warm and gets me clean,*" is a description.

If you insert the words "like" or "as", the comparison is called a SIMILE (pronounced SIM-uh-lee). For example:

*The child was quiet as a mouse.
An old barn is like a journey to the 1800's.
Visiting my family is like a trip to the zoo.
Teaching my son to drive is as nerve-wracking as competing in the Olympics!*

7. Look back at your #6 metaphors. Did you use "like" or "as"? If so, does removing it hurt the comparison or help it?

Going back to an earlier metaphor, the student could have written: "*War is like a black cat...*" However, that extra word between *war* and *cat* seems to weaken the connection a little.

8. Make up similes for the following six words and use them in sentences:

hungry

cold

bowl of oatmeal

wild horse

dieting

writing metaphors

What follows is an assignment written by a College Guild student. It challenges your brain in the areas of both vocabulary and metaphors.

9. For 8 letters of the alphabet:

a- think of a word

b- write a definition of the word

c- create a metaphor for the word.

Example: "A – acom / a seed from an oak tree / the miracle of such a large possibility in such a small package."

NON-FICTION

Now let's put all those words to use. This course will be covering lots of different writing formats, but it divides them into three categories – fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. The first two are PROSE, the ordinary form of spoken or written language.

NON-FICTION covers lots of kinds of writing (biographies, news, essays, letters and speeches, for example), but all are based on true facts.

10. Explain why creativity is important when writing about facts.

Reporters are writers whose work is read all over the country every day. They write NEWS for newspapers, TV, magazines and Internet sites. Good news reporters try to write unbiased articles. Their readers shouldn't even know what their opinions are. The article on page 7 is written as NEWS, which should mean it's purely factual. The journalist doesn't state his personal opinion.

11. Can an article report only facts and yet be slanted to one side? How?

A good news report covers the five "W's" – when, what, who, where and why. The purpose is to maximize the public's understanding of the event or issue being covered.

Here are 9 topics:

weather	substance abuse	teenagers
Mt. Everest	Congress	zoos
health care	UFO's	auto accidents

12. Pick one of these subjects. Write a "late breaking" news article, the kind you would see on the front page of a paper, or the lead story on the TV news.

In this course, creativity is what's most important, so when you have to write "news", it's OK to make it up – just write in the style of a newspaper reporter.

Another kind of report you can find in a newspaper is a REVIEW of a book, movie, restaurant, etc. It should also report facts, but end up giving a personal opinion and recommendation. Just a headline alone (see page 6) can tell you how the reporter feels.

13. Write a review as if you were a professional newspaper reviewer.

(As with news, you can write about a real movie/book/restaurant or you can make one up.)

In EDITORIALS and ESSAYS, writers use facts to win readers over to their own points of view. You may have experienced that personally. During a trial, opposing sides try to present the most convincing argument possible with the same set of "facts", but only one verdict is returned. The editorial on page 7 is built around facts, but its purpose is to convince, not just inform. The news story and editorial, despite being on the same subject, are written very differently.

A hint: a good way to lose credibility and turn people off is to exaggerate. No matter how often an injustice happens, not EVERY guard/judge/white person/black person/gay person/lawyer fits into one category. Stereotyping like that is the same as saying ALL prisoners are scum. When you use stereotypes, readers are likely to assume you exaggerate about everything.

A common recommendation for an essay is to have: a short paragraph introducing your subject, one on the issue you'll be discussing, a section explaining and justifying your position, ideas for dealing with the issue, and a closing paragraph tying it all together.

Here are some political/social issues:

welfare	reducing environmental protections to save jobs
the death penalty	increased funding for the space program
health care	prisoners wearing their own clothes
global warming	increasing taxes to improve education

You can argue for or against any one of these issues.

14. On a piece of paper, make two columns. On one side, list 3 facts that show your opinion is right. On the other side, list 3 facts someone with the opposite view would use.

To present your view convincingly, you need to know your opponent's and be able to explain why it's wrong.

[Example: If someone argued that President Obama is not an American, you could quote the Governor of Hawaii who has seen his Hawaiian birth certificate.]

15. Write an essay to convince your readers that your opinion is the right one.

16. Which kind of non-fiction writing (news, review or essay) did you like best? Why?

SPELLING & GRAMMAR

Spelling and grammar are not the focus of this course, but their correct use makes your writing clearer. There will be some information and assignments in these areas at the end of each unit. English grammar could easily be a whole course in itself. It is difficult to teach and to learn because there are so many exceptions to the rules! Note: The Pen America Center (588 Broadway-Ste. 303, New York NY 10012) offers a free handbook for writers in prison.

PARTS OF SPEECH – verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives

A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period or other punctuation. The part of speech that every sentence needs is a verb, the word for an action. It is possible to use only one word and have a sentence, as long as that one word is a verb; for example: *Go!* The other part of speech that makes up almost every sentence is a noun, the subject of the sentence, who or what the sentence is about.

An example of a complete sentence is, *The fish thinks*. The fish (a noun) is the subject of the sentence and it thinks (a verb). *Stars bright* is not a sentence because the subject (stars) is a noun, but there's no verb – *bright* isn't an action, it merely describes the noun.

17. Which of these are sentences and why? Which words are verbs and which are nouns?

- a- The yellow chair wobbly in the kitchen yesterday.
- b- Freddy saw the large grey gorilla in the cage yesterday.
- c- The bowl fell off the kitchen shelf and broke.
- d- Clouds floating in the sky with an airplane going right through them.

Two other parts of speech besides verbs and nouns are adjectives (that describe a noun) and adverbs (that describe a verb).

The fox is quick. (Quick refers to the fox, a noun, so “quick” is an adjective.)

The fox ran quickly. (Quickly refers to ran, a verb, so “quickly” is an adverb.)

It's incorrect to say “*the fox is quickly*”, or “*the fox ran quick*”.

Here are samples of the four different parts of speech we've discussed:

old, wander, sadly, funny, flower, mostly, jelly, boot, sing, silly, greedily, little, happily, gladly, relax, worry, people, fly, foolish, dinner

18. List the words above that fit with each part of speech below. (Note that some fit in more than one category.)

VERB	NOUN	ADVERB	ADJECTIVE
<i>bark</i>	<i>dog</i>	<i>constantly</i>	<i>brown</i>

19. Use words from each column to make a funny sentence.

20. Use words from each column to make a serious sentence.

21. Make up your own sentence using a verb, noun, adjective, and adverb.

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

Church group decries LePage comments

The Maine Council of Churches invites the governor to sign a pledge promoting civil discourse.

By EDWARD D. MURPHY
Staff Writer

The Maine Council of Churches on Saturday decried Gov. Paul LePage's recent comments on race and his obscenity-laced voice mail message to a state lawmaker as disgraceful - and invited him to sign a pledge to engage in civil discourse.

The group, which represents nine denominations and 550 congregations, said it was "dis-mayed" by LePage's statement on race, racial profiling, his "highly offensive language" in the voice mail and his "mention ... of a wish to shoot" Rep. Drew Gattine, D-Westbrook.

LePage said Wednesday

night that he had a binder full of stories about the arrests of drug traffickers in Maine, and "90-plus-percent" of the suspects were black or Hispanics. After he heard, incorrectly, that Gattine called him a racist for that remark, the governor left a voice mail for the lawmaker filled with profanities, warning him, "I'm after you."

In an interview Thursday, LePage said he wanted to shoot Gattine "right between his eyes," and then, in a press conference Friday, the governor effectively endorsed racial profiling, likening black and Hispanic drug dealers to "the enemy."

"The type of vitriolic personal attack and disrespect in the governor's voice mail message and interview flagrantly violated the principle of maintaining respectful civility when speaking to or about those with whom one

disagrees," the Maine Council of Churches said in a statement released Saturday. "The words he chose to use in the message and interview were unspeakable - and yet, he spoke them, disgracing the office of governor and dishonoring our state in the eyes of the nation."

LePage also "violates fundamental principles of civil discourse" by "framing the devastating drug trafficking and addiction problem our state faces as being fundamentally about race when it simply is not, and by promoting racial profiling," the statement said.

The Maine Council of Churches went on to invite LePage to sign its Civil Discourse Covenant, an agreement it is circulating to all candidates for statewide office to treat one another with respect, avoid personal attacks and untrue statements, and

"value honesty, truth and civility" while working toward solutions to Maine's problems.

Although LePage is not a candidate this year, the Maine Council of Churches said he could sign the covenant "as a sign he intends to change his behavior so as to act in a manner befitting the office of governor of our great state."

Emails seeking comment from the Maine Council of Churches and LePage were not responded to Saturday night.

The Maine Council of Churches represents the Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Roman Catholic, Swedenborgian, Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ denominations.

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Maine Republicans should speak out against LePage

Criticizing the governor for his erratic and reckless behavior should not be a partisan activity.

Maine gave the country a good laugh last week, providing a late-summer diversion from the presidential campaign.

Our governor offered a series of text-book racist comments to refute allegations that he has created a "toxic environment" regarding matters of race. He followed that performance the next day by recording an obscenity-filled rant on the voicemail of a lawmaker - who LePage then publicly joked to reporters about killing.

Wow! No other state in the country has a governor quite like that. He's one of a kind, leaving the nation's eyebrows raised, jaws gaping and heads shaking in disbelief. It's quite a show.

But no one in Maine should be laughing, particularly not Maine Republicans. They are the only ones who could rein in the governor at this point, so they bear special responsibility for what he does next.

The governor is erratic, reckless and apparently unable to control his behavior. He doesn't have the emotional make-up to do his job, or the skills he would need to bring people together - an absolute necessity in our system of government. The next two years under his leadership will be a time of stagnation at best, and likely a period of decline.

For the good of the state, LePage should resign. We encourage him to do it, but we have not seen anything in his character to indicate that he would ever be that generous to the people of Maine.

Democratic leaders have also called for him to resign and seek the help he needs. If he doesn't do that, they warn, he could be forcibly removed from office, but that is just as unlikely as a voluntary retirement. This looks like it will be a divisive political battle that will last through the election and over the next two years.

That's what makes what Republicans do now so important. If they line up behind their leader and allow this to look like a typical partisan dispute, nothing meaningful will get done in Maine until there is a new occupant of the Blaine House. But if they stand up to him and say that there are standards of common decency that are more important than partisan ties, they will set an example of states-

manship that would undo much of the damage LePage has done to Maine's reputation and political culture.

Republican lawmakers and party officials should declare that LePage is unfit for his high office, and join Democrats in calling for his resignation. If he won't step down, they should pledge to work with Democrats to do what they can to limit his ability to do harm for the rest of his term, and do as much as possible to work around him for the good of the state.

If there are any Republican lawmakers still deciding how to respond, they should take half a minute and listen to the message that LePage left on state Rep. Drew Gattine's voicemail. They should listen not only to the words, but also to the anger behind them.

These lawmakers should ask themselves: What would happen at their workplace to an employee who left a message like that for a co-worker? What do they think would happen to a student at a Maine school who recorded a message like that, and then made comments about shooting the recipient between the eyes?

The Republicans know what would happen. The offenders would be gone, and they would have to have a long talk with a mental health professional before they could come back.

As state Rep. Sara Gideon said Friday, what LePage is doing is not normal. It's not just an example of a highly stressed public official slipping up. He's not going to change. We are going to see more of this and maybe worse for the rest of his term, unless someone does something extraordinary.

So far, the Republican response has been nothing but ordinary. House Minority Leader Ken Fredette attended LePage's Friday news conference and tried to equate LePage's outrageous behavior with a false claim that Gattine had called the governor a racist.

Nice try. Even if it were true, and it's not, there is no adequate provocation for the governor's tirade. Listen to the tape.

If the Republicans are going to try to play this as normal political banter, we are in for a long two years. The outrage might blow over until the next time LePage finds a new line of civil behavior to cross, but the state will suffer.