

COLLEGE GUILD

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CREATIVE LANGUAGE

Unit 2 of 6

LANGUAGE & CREATIVITY

No matter their educational background, writers can fill their lines with creative thought and language unlike that of any other writer. In fact, using your own unique voice, you might even be able to improve on some of the great writers of English literature!

We'll start with ADAGES, common wisdom passed down from generation to generation. One example is *Smile and the world smiles with you*. How could I make that line more creative? I could say, "Show what a great job your dentist did, and you'll leave a lot of grinning people wherever you go." That may sound stupid, but it's more unusual than the original. "*Frown and the world frowns with you*" is the same adage reversed -- the words are the opposite, but it has basically the same meaning. You can also play with adages by giving them opposite meanings, for example: *Smile and the world frowns with you*. Here are three common adages:

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
He who hesitates is lost.
The grass is greener on the other side of the fence.

1. **Reword all three so they have the opposite meanings.**
2. **Rewrite them so they say the same thing in a new way.**
3. **Write your own original adage for today's life.**

[Example: *If you don't plug in your radio, it won't work.*]

Take a look on page 5 for some funny modern day adages.

Here are three sentences:

They ate dinner.
It was snowing.
We danced.

4. **Rewrite each one so that they say about the same thing, but are more creative.**

Through the ages, writers have tried to find words to educate, convince, entertain, call to action and move their readers. Here's a quote about the potential power of language:

"When pack meets with Pack in the jungle, and neither will go from the trail, Lie down till the leaders have spoken -- it may be fair words shall prevail." Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

To me, what Kipling meant is that talking about a conflict can keep a fight from breaking out. However, language can mean different things to different people. A piece of writing can be moving and wonderful to one, yet leave the next person cold. (You'll probably discover that in this course, because it's not unusual for your reader and me to have opposite opinions about your work!)

In 1917, T.S. Eliot wrote the poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." He opens --

*"Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table."*

A "patient etherized upon a table" is certainly a unique metaphor for an evening sky.

5. What do you imagine Eliot's sky looks like?

As a writer, you can express this invitation of Eliot's in different ways and in different voices --

A cool dude might say: *Yo, babe, -- how's about me an' you boogie on out of here - the sky is some ol' weird tonight.*

A professor: *Excuse me, Ma'am. Please join me in an experience which I'm sure will prove educational. We rarely see an evening sky looking unconscious.*

These are silly translations, so it's your turn.

6. Express Eliot's invitation in the voice of a different character. Who is your character and who is he/she/it speaking to?

Here are some other quotations from English literature:

"There's small choice in rotten apples." William Shakespeare, 1593 (The Taming of the Shrew)

*"The human heart has many treasures,
In secret kept, in silence sealed."* Charlotte Bronte, 1846 (Evening Solace)

"My solitude grew more and more obese, like a pig."
Mishima Yukio, 1959 (Temple of the Golden Pavilion)

"Those who prefer victory to peace will have neither." (Anonymous)

7. Reword these 4 quotations in your own way while keeping the original meaning.

For example, go back to the quotation by Kipling. Another way of saying it is: *A country that practices diplomacy is a country with fewer coffins for the young.*

FICTION

One definition of fiction is “the class of literature comprising works of imaginative narration in prose form.... a made-up story”. In other words, in this section, let your imagination run wild. We’ll start with single sentences.

8. Imagine that the following sentences are each the beginning of a book. Write the next sentence to keep the story going.

"Before starting the car, Patricia slipped the Hostess Cup Cakes out of her pocket."

"There were 982 chickens in the parking lot -- Nancy had counted them all."

"For some reason, the ocean reminded her of Aunt Middy's orange apron."

"George knew it was going to be a tough day on the job."

"He dropped the mouse on the front porch and that's when he saw it."

"Well," said Stanley, "I'll never try that again."

"Mary watched the airplane take off with her boyfriend and luggage."

"The magician pulled a rabbit out of his sleeve, and what happened next surprised even him!"

To write full length stories, you'll have the help of the following characters from literature:

ROBINSON CRUSOE is a man shipwrecked on a desert island. His only companion is an island native named Friday.
(Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe, 1719)

TOM SAWYER is a boy who lives with his Aunt and drives her crazy because he hates getting dressed up and acting well-behaved. He would rather hang out on the river with his friend, Huckleberry Finn.
(The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain, 1876)

REBECCA is a sweet girl who likes living on the farm. She also likes to daydream.
(Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm by Kate Douglas Wiggin, 1940)

Fairy tales are different from fictional stories in that magical things happen. There are usually villains like wolves, giants, witches and evil step-mothers. Here are some well-known ones:

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD is on her way to Grandma's house, not knowing that a wolf is planning to eat her and her grandmother for dinner.

RAPUNZELL is locked in a high tower, but her hair is so long that when she lets it down, it reaches the ground.

SLEEPING BEAUTY is under an evil spell, and can only be woken up by the kiss of a handsome prince.

9. Write a short story which includes at least three of the characters from the six stories/fairy tales.
(You don't need to be familiar with them – use your imagination from the brief descriptions.)

10. Pick any fairy tale (or make one up) and tell it as if you were the villain, (such as a wolf, witch, evil step-mother, giant, etc.). You want the world to hear your side of the story.

11. Make up an original fairy tale in which all the characters are pieces of furniture, or one in which all the characters are clothes.

DIARIES can be fictional or non-fictional. There are many reasons to keep a real diary: to keep track of all that is going on in your life; leave an accurate historical record of events for your descendents; express your feelings in a safe way. A "trip diary" describes what happens during a special vacation, a "seizure diary" to help your doctor make treatment decisions.

Diaries have been the framework for many books and movies, both true stories, like The Diary of Anne Frank (the written record of a Jewish girl during Hitler's reign), and fictional, like the 1970 movie, The Diary of a Mad Housewife. To show you that diaries can be by and about anything you can dream up, read the poem on page 5, a diary entry by a vegetable!

Now it's your turn --

12. Write an entry from the diaries of each of the following 6 characters:

- an airplane pilot**
- a police officer**
- an 80 year old rich dowager on the day of her tea party**
- a show dog**
- an ice cube**
- a cloud**

13. Think of a movie or TV show you've seen. Write a diary entry as if you were one of the characters in the show describing his/her day.

14. Describe a movie plot based around the discovery of a diary.

15. Why is it effective to write in the "first person", (as if you are the character), instead of the "third person", where you are writing about a character from the outside?

MODERN DAY ADAGES

Smile first thing in the morning – get it over with.

Be yourself. Nobody is better qualified.

All power corrupts. Absolute power is kinda neat.

Never eat more than you can lift.

When you're in it up to your ears, it pays to keep your mouth shut.

You can't stay young forever, but you can be immature for the rest of your life.

I have one nerve left and you're getting on it.

from Furry Logic by Jane Seabrook (Copyright © 2002, Seabrook Publishing Ltd.)

Green Victims

Gathered together like this
she should feel outnumbered
afraid

but for almost a week now
she comes out wearing that
bonnet like an executioner's
hood
and jerks one of us up by
the head.

The sound of roots snapping
sends shivers up my leaves.
We watch another victim hauled
away in the cabbage basket.
The mourning ends around noon
when the smell of corned beef
wafts across the garden.

by John Yarbrough (Copyright © 2002, Boiled White)

SPELLING & GRAMMAR

APOSTROPHES

If you can always remember to correctly distinguish between "its" and "it's", you'll be doing better than most college graduates. Here is a simple rule to memorize:

It's always means "it is." "Its" means belonging to.

Examples: The dog chewed on its bone. It's too damn hot!

The way to check is to stop and read the sentence to yourself, substituting "it is" to see which one fits. You would say to yourself, "The dog chewed on it is bone. It is too damn hot!" This is also true of the verbs didn't (did not), he's (he is), weren't (were not), we're (we are), etc.

16. Put apostrophes where they belong in the following sentences:

The oak tree loses its leaves in the fall.

Hes taking a College Guild course.

Its going to be a problem for his horse if he doesn't give it its medicine.

THE OTHER USE OF APOSTROPHES

In the examples above, we were talking about the common verbs (is, was, did, can, etc.) However, when used after a noun (for example *rabbit's carrot*), it means that the carrot belongs to the rabbit. It's a possessive like prisoner's cell, teacher's student, etc. What gets tricky is when you have more than one rabbit; then the apostrophe goes after the "s": *three rabbits' carrot; two prisoners' cells; eight teachers' students*.

Example: All the players' footballs were falling apart because the coach's assistant forgot to order new ones.

17. Put apostrophes where they belong in the following sentences:

The tables top got damaged when the boys wet towels were put on it.

When the tree loses its leaves in the fall, the squirrels nests are filled with acorns.

The students lunch money was stolen, so he asked if he could share several other students lunches.

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