Writer's Workshop is an English elective course that focuses on the exploration of short fiction and poetry, culminating in a written portfolio that includes one revised short story and three to five polished poems. Students draft, revise, and polish fiction and poetry through writing exercises, developing familiarity with literary terms and facility with the writing process as they study elements of creative writing.

Elements of fiction writing explored in this course include attention to specific detail, observation, character development, setting, plot, and point of view. In the poetry units, students learn about the use of sensory details and imagery, figurative language, and sound devices including rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They also explore poetic forms ranging from found poems and slam poetry to traditional sonnets and villanelles.

In addition to applying literary craft elements in guided creative writing exercises, students engage in critical reading activities designed to emphasize the writing craft of a diverse group of authors. Students study short stories by authors such as Bharati Mukherjee and Edgar Allan Poe, learning how to create believable characters and develop setting and plot. Likewise, students read poetry by canonical greats such as W. B. Yeats and Emily Dickinson as well as contemporary writers such as Pablo Neruda, Sherman Alexie, and Alice Notley. Studying the writing technique of a range of authors provides students with models and inspiration as they develop their own voices and refine their understanding of the literary craft.

By taking Writer's Workshop, students find new approaches to reading and writing that can affect them on a personal level, as the skills they gain in each lesson directly benefit their own creative goals. Students who are already actively engaged writers and readers learn additional tools and insight into the craft of writing to help them further hone their skills and encourage their creative as well as academic growth.

This course is built to state standards and informed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards.

Length: One Semester

Unit 1: Introduction to Creative Writing and Fiction, Part 1

- Get Excited about Writing!
- Who Are You Anyway? Developing a Character
- Who's on First? Establishing a Point of View
- Stable and Shifting Vantage Points
- Wrap-Up: Introduction to Creative Writing and Fiction, Part 1

Unit 2: Fiction, Part 2

- You Are Here: Getting Inside the Setting

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- Action! Plot, Part 1
- Story Arc: Plot, Part 2
- Time Is on Your Side
- Wrap-Up: Fiction, Part 2

Unit 3: Fiction, Part 3

- Dialogue in Fiction
- Fiction Forms: Flash Fiction and the Vignette
- Truthful Lies and Imagined Truth: Fiction and Creative Nonfiction
- Revise, Revise, Revise!
- Wrap-Up: Fiction, Part 3

Unit 4: Poetry, Part 1

- What Makes a Poem a Poem?
- The Image Inside Imagination
- Make It Strange and New: Figurative Language
- Loaded Images and Power Objects
- Wrap-Up: Poetry, Part 1

Unit 5: Poetry, Part 2

- Poet's Toolbox: Sounds
- Poet's Toolbox: Rhyming
- Poet's Toolbox: Rhythm
- Poet's Toolbox: Lines, Sentences, and Stanzas
- Wrap-Up: Poetry, Part 2

Unit 6: Poetry, Part 3 and Revision

- Building Connection, Feeling, and Inference
- Free Verse and Open Forms
- Getting Familiar with Formal Poetry
- Revise! Revise! Revise!
- Wrap-Up: Poetry, Part 3

Unit 7: Wrap-Up

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