

# CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP PORTFOLIO GUIDE

Ms. Diana

---

Dear Students and Parents:

**Every writer, by the way he uses the language, reveals something of his spirit, his habits, his capacities, his bias...All writing is communication through revelation—it is the self escaping into the open. No writer long remains incognito.”**

**-E.B. White**

Our class is a workshop in creative writing. To those of you who may be unfamiliar with this phrase, it means that our time will be spent writing and discussing written work [both our own pieces and published works] of various types and styles. It is a class that is offered to upperclassmen for a reason—it involves a great deal of discipline on your part [meaning that the writing portion of the class is spent WRITING].

Much of our time will be spent with different types of writing exercises; these exercises are meant to free your mind and to spark your creativity. While I will be presenting the majority of the exercises, it is required that you bring in at least one writing exercise for our class to try. [Not to worry, we will go through a number of exercises before you will be expected to do this; this request is merely for us, as writers, to pool our sources of inspiration.]

In a nutshell, the goals of the writing workshop are as follows:

- To write frequently
- To experiment with new ideas, topics, and styles of writing
- To read and respond to the writing of your peers
- To revise your writing—to improve editing skills
- To bring several pieces of writing to completion and publication
- To share your writing
- To learn to write with confidence and ease
- To build a writing portfolio [with writing in different styles]

The Creative Writing portfolio is a performance assessment that tells the story of each student's effort, progress, and achievement. It is a collection of written work that exhibits the degree of student mastery in various genres of writing.

Why have students complete portfolios? Through portfolio assessment, students assume greater responsibility for their own learning. Students are given more control in their writing and in the grade they receive for their work.

What does the portfolio include?

1. A neat, attractive cover: personalize your portfolio—be creative!
2. A cover letter explaining the pieces the student has selected for his/her portfolio.
3. All writing assignments for that particular quarter.

Following is a description of the writing portfolio for and the rubrics used in its evaluation. Please take a bit of time to familiarize yourself with this project and to see me with any questions you might have [I can be reached at 256-4175, ext. 1179 or you may access the website for *Creative Writing* at <http://www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us/local>]. When you are through, please sign the letter on the last page and return it to me.

Thank you!

Michelle Diana

# Writing Portfolio

Our class will be graded by portfolio rather than assignment-by-assignment. Portfolio assessment is structured so you have more control and choice in your writing and in the final grade you receive; although all assignments must be completed, only those works selected by you will be graded. Course work includes the writing of several different types of essays, short stories, critiques, and poetry. When an assignment is due, you will hand it in on the due date for comments; you will then revise your assignment so you will have the option of choosing it as a part of your graded portfolio.

Each quarter, your portfolio will contain rough drafts, revisions, and peer critiques of all written works. All drafts and critiques must be stapled to the final copy, with the final copy on top; **ALL ASSIGNMENTS IN YOUR PORTFOLIO MUST HAVE FINAL, "CLEAN" COPIES, NOT COPIES MARKED BY PROOFREADING MARKS.**

Your portfolio grade will be improved by:

- Rewriting your assignments, rather than simply editing spelling errors
- Revising assignments more than once
- Handing in assignments on time

In order to receive a passing grade on your quarterly portfolio, all requirements of the course must be met. This means you must have completed all writing assignments and they must be of an acceptable quality [i.e. the same quality as the other work you hand in, not thrown together an hour before class]. Ten points per day will be deducted from portfolios handed in late—so please hand in your portfolio on time!

## **MATERIALS FOR CLASS:**

- Two [2 pocket] folders: one for portfolio, one for class notes, etc.]
- Writing Journal [a composition or spiral notebook]

## The Cover Letter

Since you are empowered to choose which of your written pieces are to be graded, self-assessment is essential in the portfolio grading system. You will address your self-assessment in your portfolio cover letter [which should be approximately one full typed page in length].

Your cover letter must include:

- A description of why you have chosen the pieces you selected for grading. Why are these pieces stronger? Is it because you enjoyed a certain style of writing? Is it because you spent a longer period of time revising a particular assignment? Or is it because you feel strongly about the issue you discuss or the point you make in a certain piece? Whatever the reason, be sure to answer the question: what makes this assignment stronger than some of your other written work? The most important thing is to discuss what you are learning about writing—and about yourself as a writer.
- Address at least TWO of the following questions:
  1. What kinds of writing have you tried this quarter? Which type of writing did you like best?
  2. What has helped you most with your writing [both inside and out-of-class]?
  3. What could you do better [what should you continue to work on]?
  4. What piece are you most proud of? Why?
  5. What important things have you learned about writing this quarter? [Please mention at least three specific things.]
  6. Looking over your written work, describe what you have learned about yourself as a writer this quarter.
  7. What surprised you most about your writing?
  8. What piece might you not want someone else to read? Why?

Portfolio Contents:

- Cover Letter
- Four to six pieces of writing [in different styles]
- One revised entry from your writing journal, typed and expanded to one full page [half a page = half a grade]

**Remember, your portfolio is YOUR responsibility. To protect yourself [in case your portfolio is lost or misplaced], please make copies of all drafts [or save them in your word processor/computer] so you will be able to make new copies.**

### Creative Writing Rubric: Criteria for Grading Creative Writing

Please fill in the self-assessment section on the bottom before handing in this assignment

	A	B	C	D / F
<b>Meaning/Content:</b> the extent to which the assignment exhibits sound understanding/interpretation/analysis				
<b>Story Structure</b>	Establishes strong plot/setting/character/pt. of view	Establishes plot/setting/character/pt. of view	Some elements of story structure; little blending of dialogue and narration	Few/no story structure elements present
<b>Character-ization</b>	Develops complex characters through dialogue, narration and action	Develops characters through dialogue, narration and action	Some character development	Characters are not developed

<b>Development:</b> the extent to which ideas are elaborated, using specific and relevant evidence				
<b>Ideas</b>	Develops ideas clearly and fully; uses a wide range of relevant details	Develops ideas clearly; uses relevant details	Develops ideas briefly; uses some detail	Uses incomplete or undeveloped details

<b>Organization:</b> the extent to which the assignment exhibits direction, shape, and coherence				
<b>Designing Organization</b>	Maintains a clear focus; exhibits a logical, coherent structure through approp. transitions	Maintains a clear focus; exhibits a logical sequence of ideas through appropriate transitions	Establishes but does not always maintain an appropriate focus; some inconsistencies in sequence of ideas	Lacks an appropriate focus, but suggests some organization
<b>Specific Assignment Directions</b>	Exceeds all requirements specified for this assignment	Meets all requirements specified for this assignment	Meets some of the requirements specified for this assignment	Meets few/no requirements specified for this assignment

<b>Language Use:</b> the extent to which the assignment reveals an awareness of audience and purpose				
<b>Description</b>	Creative, concrete language; uses literary devices and rich sensory detail	Assignment uses concrete language. literary devices and sensory detail	Some use of concrete language, literary devices, and sensory detail in assignment	Little use of concrete language, literary devices or sensory detail in assignment
<b>Word Choice</b>	Uses sophisticated precise vocabulary	Effective word choices	Some effective word choices	Few effective word choices
<b>Sentence Variety</b>	Well-varied sentence structure throughout	Good sentence structure and variety	Occasional use of sentence variety	Little sentence variety
<b>Voice/Sense of Audience</b>	Unique voice; strong sense of audience	Evident awareness of voice and audience	Some awareness of voice and audience	Mechanical/unsuitable voice; unaware of aud.

<b>Conventions:</b> the extent to which the assignments exhibits conventional grammar/spelling/word usage				
<b>Grammar/ Punctuation</b>	Smooth, fluid error-free punct./grammar	Mostly correct grammar; errors do not interfere with communication	Errors occasionally interfere with communication; verb tense errors	Grammatical errors are awkward and interfere with communication
<b>Spelling and Word Usage</b>	Correct spelling; error-free word usage	Mostly correct spelling and word usage	Errors in spelling and word usage	Misspelled and misused words throughout
<b>Overall assignment presentation</b>	MLA heading; unique title; professional presentation	MLA heading; appropriate title; neat presentation	Incomplete heading; average title/presentation	No heading/title; no attention to presentation

**Self-Assessment:** The best aspect of this assignment is: \_\_\_\_\_

One aspect of this assignment that may require further revision is: \_\_\_\_\_

**The grade I would give this assignment is:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

After you have read this portfolio guide, please tear off this sheet and sign the bottom; it needs to be returned by our next class.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the portfolio assessment we will use in *Creative Writing*—if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at 256-4175, ext. 1179.

**I have read the portfolio guide and I understand:**

- the contents of the portfolio
- the rubrics by which the portfolio will be assessed

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: [print]

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's email address [I will keep you posted as per your child's progress through regular email notifications, as well as comment slips and report card comments/grades]. Please try to write the address as neatly as possible, to avoid any confusion [for example, between an "i" and an "l"] 😊:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!

Michelle Diana

\*Our class website is listed at [www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us/local](http://www.newpaltz.k12.ny.us/local). To see what we are working on at any time during the school year, go to this site, select "High School," select "Teachers," then open up our class page.

