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# Creative Writing

SYLLABUS OVERVIEW  
13-15 YEARS OLDS

**immerse**  
EDUCATION

## About Immerse

**Immerse Education is an award-winning academic summer school provider offering programmes for 13-15 year olds in Cambridge University colleges.**

The aim of these introductory programmes is to provide participants with academically challenging content in a classroom environment based on the university style of learning. Through 40 hours of academic sessions, the programmes also offer young students unique and valuable insights into what it would be like to study their chosen subject at an advanced level.



This Syllabus Overview provides a summary of the topics and subject areas that participants can encounter during their studies with Immerse. It has been carefully created by our expert tutors who are current members of world-leading universities, and who have experience in teaching undergraduate students.

## Academic Sessions

The academic sessions at Immerse are arranged into modules to enable participants to explore a broad range of topics over the course of two weeks. The modules included in this syllabus overview are indicative but not prescriptive.

Tutors are encouraged to include their own specialisms and also focus on any particular areas of interest expressed by participants within the class. They may choose to provide further detail on a specific topic, or they may include new material and information that builds on the knowledge already developed during the programme.

## Personal Project

Each programme includes an element of individual work, generally termed the 'Personal Project'. This can take many forms but is commonly an essay or presentation delivered on the final day of the programme. Participants will receive feedback on this work which may also be mentioned in the participant evaluation which is provided in writing by the tutor once the programmes have ended.





## Preparatory work

Some tutors may ask participants to complete some preparatory work, such as reading or a series of exercises in advance of the programme. Participants are strongly encouraged to complete this work since it will be included in the opening sessions of the programme. Any preparatory tasks will be provided in advance of the programme directly to the participant.

## Academic Difficulty

**As all of our programmes are designed to provide a unique introduction to advanced material, the syllabus will be academically challenging at times.**

This is something to be excited about and all of our tutors will encourage and support participants throughout the programme. Immerse Education aims to develop every participant regardless of ability, and our tutors will adapt their teaching to individual needs.



## Aim of the Creative Writing Programme

Creative writing is an innovative, interdisciplinary subject combining creativity with attention to detail, novel means of expression with a rich history of past examples upon which to build. The ability to write compelling, engaging and fresh content is prized, not only in the literary world but in a vast range of industry and business contexts. The aim of the Immerse Education Creative Writing programme is to introduce participants to the foundations of this subject and highlight the pathways that are available to those who would like to pursue creative writing further in the future. Participants will get to grips with a variety of practical skills as they explore both their own work, and that of their peers.

# Introduction to Creative Writing

Creative writing in the 21st century provides its own unique set of standards and challenges. In this introduction, we will be exploring participants' preferred writing methods and routines, introducing foundational guidelines to combat 'the blank page' and discussing what participants hope to gain from their time with Immerse. We will examine our assumed beliefs about writing by discussing some of the themes and questions that came up in the preparatory materials. We will also introduce some ideas and concepts to consider for the portfolio of creative writing/novella that participants will aim to have completed by the end of the course.

## Editing – Critiquing and Workshopping

The editing process is essential to producing polished work at a very high standard, that is attractive to both readers and publishers. Editing involves more than just smoothing away grammatical errors and misspellings. It is the process of revision where the writer enhances their style, considers why they made certain choices and learns from their mistakes for the betterment of all their future writing. We will work on the ability to give constructive and useful criticism as well as training participants how to manage the criticism they receive, and to what extent it should influence their writing.



## Form and Plot

The backbone of storytelling is plot. We will be critically examining the truth of this statement and deconstructing what it means to be 'plot driven'. This topic will consist in equal parts of examining plots established in popular media and investigating what structures participants might include within their own work. Participants will be introduced to 'The Flat Tyre Story' writing exercise as well as fundamental critical theory such as 'The Hero's Journey'. We will also discuss how plot can either complement or undermine other aspects of creative writing like characterisation and setting.



## Character Creation

Empires of fiction have been based around captivating characterisation. The ability of readers to engage in fiery arguments over whether a certain action is 'in character' for a fictional creation is due to the skill of authors to make characters that seem to have their own internal lives. As part of this topic, we will be weighing what aspects are essential to consider in the creation of a compelling character as well as ways of balancing multiple characters. Participants will analyse how character traits can shift the tone of any piece of work, from comedic characters to deeply paranoid ones.

# Character Development

A well-conceived character can become a bland and uninteresting stereotype of themselves, if not permitted to change. Character development is the opposite side of character creation. As characters take actions or experience events – when they simply traverse the plot – they become altered. It is critical for good character writing to acknowledge this. Participants will delve into how characters arcs can complement the happenings of plot and vice versa. We will also examine the circumstances under which it is more effective for characters not to develop and discuss why that is.

## Dialogue

Two farmers with regional accents casually discussing their current yield are going to have a conversation that sounds very different from a BBC news presenter interviewing a parliamentary guest. In this topic, we will practise what it means to produce convincing and engaging dialogue between two or more characters, within the context that they encounter one another. This topic looks not only at established literature but introduces participants to dialogue-heavy screen writing, theatrical exposition and how your plot and characterisation can be enhanced by writing moments of verbal communication between characters.







## TOPICS LIST

## First and Third Person

One of the first choices an author makes is the grammatical person they will write with. This topic will examine how stories can radically change because of that choice. Stories are always focalised through someone, although this someone may change. Important aspects of narratology will be introduced as we determine the best perspectives for storytelling in written fiction and the most effective uses of narrative distance. Participants will have the opportunity to rewrite fiction in the first or third person as well as practise writing from a number of points of view.

## Setting and Time

Established genres can be both restrictive and inspiring, often fraught with either problematic tropes or filled with potentially useful preexisting conventions and 'rules'. This topic will cover the creation of a consistent and credible world, whether realistic or fantastical. We will also investigate the ways that time, either as a setting itself or as a convention to navigate the plot, can be a vital consideration in storytelling and plot development. We will be looking at both fantasy and historical fiction to examine how details can bring the setting to life.

# Learning the Industry: An Introduction

Inspired by the developments we have made, this topic focuses on how to convince others that you are a good writer. The very best of authors with a finished manuscript can experience setbacks from not knowing the publishing industry. Participants will learn about their publishing options, from competitions, magazines and traditional publishing to e-books, self-publication and film writing. We will debate the usefulness of finding an agent, why and how participants should market themselves and what resources might help, if participants decide they wish to share their writing with the world.



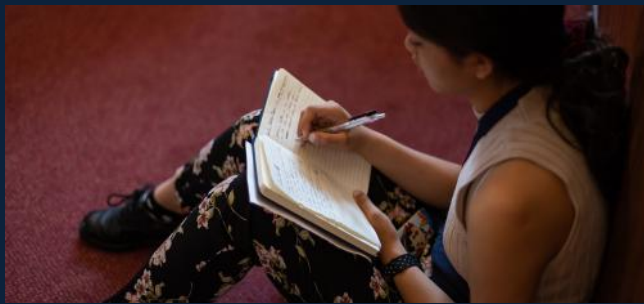


## Personal Project

Throughout the fortnight, participants will be working on their own personal project. For the Immerse Education Creative Writing programme this comprises of either a novella or a portfolio of work based on the exercises we begin in class. Participants are encouraged to continue their work independently of the lessons and bring excerpts to class for review and critique with their peers and tutor. By workshopping their writing as they go, participants can expect to leave Immerse with a good foundation upon which to build their portfolio. Your tutor will review the work that you have produced and may comment upon this in the personal written evaluation shared with participants after the programme has ended.

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OUR AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS

