

Vern Tutoring Summer Program Creative Writing Curriculum— Grades 5–7

Activities are subject to change.

Please get an email account before the first day of class! (August 3)

Day 1:

- Personal introduction for tutors+students
- Icebreaker: “Two Truths and a Lie”
- Genre brainstorm + examples
- Quick intro to sensory details, strong verbs and specific nouns
- Guided practice: Boring sentence transformation activity
- Break (10 min)
- Intro to story structure
 - i. exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution
- Character creation workshop: brainstorm characteristics, traits, motivations, flaws (optional: students can draw their character)
- Main writing activity: write a 2-paragraph story (3-5 sentences each) based on your specific character description and story structure template (make sure to save your work!!)
- Share circle: everyone shares their short story+feedback

Day 2:

- Warm-up: sensory detail practice— describe a specific location on paper in detail, focusing on sights, sounds and smells (you’re welcome to share if you want!)
- Intro to figurative language
- Mini-lesson: world building
 - i. setting details, mood & tone, unique elements
- Guided practice: create your own world (creative name, one unique rule, one problem, an optional sketch/map)
- Break (10 min)
- Mini lesson: conflict deep-dive— internal vs external conflict
- Main writing activity: write a short story about your character you created (yesterday’s activity) reaching an unexpected conflict (internal/external) in the world you created (today’s activity)
- Share circle: everyone shares their short story+feedback

Day 3:

- Mini lesson: dialogue

- Warm up: one-word story— students will be split into 2 groups, character 1 and character 2. They will need to work together to brainstorm a word that they want to add to the dialogue between the characters.
- Guided practice: write a 10-line scene using only dialogue based on the given prompt with no narration or description
- Break (10 min)
- Main writing activity: write a 3-paragraph (3-5 sentences each) dialogue based off of your favorite book, play or movie (research is allowed)
- Share circle: everyone shares their writing+feedback

Day 4:

- Warm up: emoji story starter— 5 random emojis will be selected, and students must write a 5-7 sentence story connecting them
- Mini lesson: difference between short story and essay
- Brainstorm final project: a 5-paragraph short story based on the given prompt(s)
- Start your final project! (Feel free to ask questions if you're struggling or confused)
- Break halfway through (10 min)
- Share circle: share your short story idea!

Day 5:

- Warm up: Free write (must have 10+ full sentences)
- Work on final project
- Break halfway through (10 min)
- Share circle: everyone shares one aspect that they improved on this week and how they incorporated that into their short story