# Creative Writing

# Important:

At the end of this presentation, there is a link to a Microsoft Forms quiz. You must score at least 80% on the quiz to pass.

We encourage you to study the module carefully before taking the quiz.

# Objectives

- Learn how to organize an outline for a short story.

- Understand the process of drafting a short story.

- Be able to edit a short story (for personal use or publication).

# Table of Contents

# Why should we write?

- Writing is a skill that must constantly be practiced because if we leave it to rust, when we must write we do not know how to organize our thoughts and ideas.

- Creative writing is a tool to sharpen writing, critical thinking, grammar, vocabulary and most importantly, language skills.

- Writing can also be used as a way to express feelings, thoughts and ideas. Creative writing, however goes further because in this case, the only limit is yourself.

# Where To Start?

# Ideas, Ideas, Ideas

- **The Notebook:** Ideas are like a sneeze. It comes without a warning. You should carry a notebook. (Or in the modern world, smartphones have an application already installed). Put all your ideas in a notebook. Be sure to add the date to the page you are working on. Ideas may flow easily or rigidly. Either way, it's important to write them down, even if it feels like a dead end. The notebook is your friend. Trust in it and keep it safe.

# Ideas, Ideas, Ideas

- **Documents:** When you have an idea, it is important to organize it to save time. Remember to enumerate pages, date documents properly and name them. Put all of them in a place or file you can access easily.

- **What ideas do you have?**: Writing is not a linear process. The most important thing in a story is to answer the 5WH questions.

# Ideas, Ideas, Ideas

- **What, Who, When, Where, Why and How?** If you have a character concept idea or simply a description of their aesthetic, write it or sketch it up. That will give you an idea of the **"Who".** Same for the rest of the questions. Where is this happening? How did this world came to be or how did your character end up in X situation? What are their motives?

# Ideas, Ideas, Ideas

- **Summaries:** Your idea will soon evolve into a concept. Do your best to create a summary of what you are envisioning. Try writing down bullet points to create an outline or attempt to do free-flow writing.

# Organizing The Project

- **Filing:** Create a folder where you can put all your compiled documents. Be sure to name them correctly so you do not lose any of them in the computer.

# Organizing The Project

- **When writing:** If you finish writing the story but feel like changing important parts of the story, do not edit it in the same file. Make a copy of the document and edit it in the copy. Then you will be able to compare them and decide which one you like most. Separating the files will make the editing process easier.

# Organizing The Project



- **Outlines:** From character names to the description of the environment, outlines will help you organize your work. Use them.

# Now We Can Start:

# The Tree Technique

- Organize your projects like a tree:
  - Soil: (Base) [Outline]
  - Seed: (Draft 1) [Full Draft]
  - Root: (Draft 2) [Content Edit Draft]
  - Tree: (Draft 3) [Grammar Correction Draft]
  - Fruit: Final Product.

# Soil:

# Soil



- **Soil: The Concept, The Idea:** In your notebook, or "Soil.doc" file, write down anything that crosses your mind, from character names to the detailed description of environments. When you have all that written down and a developed concept,

# Soil

- When you have all that written down and a developed concept, you may start the filtering process by asking yourself the following questions: Is it **ORIGINAL**? Is it solid and clear? Is it interesting or something you would read? And most importantly; "**DO I LIKE IT?**"

# Soil

- **Plot:** Your world, your rules! Be flexible. Do not attach yourself to a single idea or concept. Open yourself to changes in your story. Your story should be something organic that changes through time. However, make sure you keep the style and concept uniform.

Once upon a time....

# Soil



- **Characters:** Do not let your characters control you. You brought them into this world and you can take them out too. Structure them with care and attention. Allow your characters to grow and change through the story.

# Soil

- **Setting:** Design the world to your liking. Where is this story taking place? Describe details such as the time, period, weather, and environment. This will solidify your story.

# Soil: Components of a Character



- **Components of your characters:** There are many aspects to consider when creating a character, be it the main character of a story or a secondary character with a smaller role. Here are some guiding elements you may use to create them.

# Soil: Components of a Character

- **Elements of a Character:** Name, physical description, traits, personality, philosophy, back story (origins), and other details you might deem important for the plot or for the character itself. **WARNING: Make sure you are consistent with character names, traits and descriptions.**

# Chekhov's Gun

- **Presenting an item or a character:** Russian playwright Anton Chekhov once stated, if you present a weapon in the first act of the play, by the second or third act of the play, it HAS to be fired. Otherwise, what was the use of presenting it in the first place? In other words, if you present a character that seems unimportant at some point of the story, it is ideal that its existence is justified with actions later on.
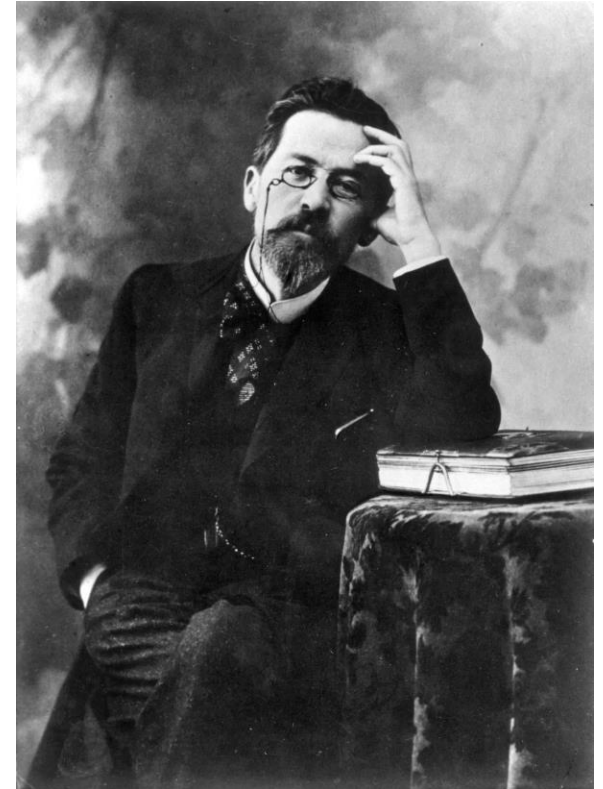
# Chekhov's Gun

- **Purposes:** If you add a character or a trait to said character make sure that this plays a role in the development of the story. **Example:** Character is allergic to nuts? Show. Don't tell. How is this going to influence the story?

# OH NO! DEAD END?

- **Getting stuck sucks:** When you write, you may find yourself stuck at times. Moments where your main character is pinned against wall and sword, surrounded by enemies. That is how writer's block feels. Some tips to ease through it or to prevent it from happening the first place are: Taking a walk, listening to music, taking a break, consuming media with a similar topic or genre, hydrate, fuel and rest properly. Remember to take breaks.

# OH NO! DEAD END?

- **3:00 a.m. Ideas** You might wake up in the middle of the night with the perfect solution for the character's situation. Get out off bed and write it down. You do not need to write it all as a developed scene, but make sure to take some keynotes.

# Seed:

# Seed Draft

- **Novel format:** If you are writing a novel, by now you should have chapters in separate documents. Make sure to edit them as much as possible. Take all those documents and merge them into one document. Now continue to edit but now in novel format.

- **Short story/Poems :** Simply edit the document as much as possible. In this draft, you will be able to make major and minor changes. Do not stick with the original draft. Tell the story from a different point of view. Change the perspective. Compare them. If you are comfortable with the results, move on.

# Seed Draft

- **Consistency:** When we write, especially when we focus on finishing, we might miss out on some details. It is of the utmost important that you **TRIPLE** verify everything is as is intended to be. The passing of years, names, places, descriptions and plot details. **E.G:** A character lost their phone. That means they cannot use it until they get it back or replace it, but that must be explicitly stated.

# Seed Draft

- **Keywords:** When it comes to editing, make sure to add some keywords. Try to avoid word repetition in excess, because your story may turn cacophonic. Adding keywords will make the editing process easier. Remember to use the word searching tool in your favor.

# Beginning of The End

- **Closing the story:** By now you have probably finished or are close to finishing It is important to remember certain things before you end the story and share it with others.

  → DO NOT RUSH ENDINGS!

  → Remember to be precise and concise when writing your story.

  → Do not fear plot twists and dramatic closings. (Especially cliffhangers) Do what feels right and if it doesn't work, make it work.

  → Feel happy to have thought of this at all. This is YOUR work.

  → Make sure everything is in proper order. Prepare for Root draft.

# REWINDING

- **Da capo:** Go back to the beginning and read everything again. Read your work carefully and critically. Assume everything you did was wrong and think how you can improve it.
- **Allow changes:** Before you jump into the Root Draft, make all the changes you must, from changes in character's names to the existence of a character entirely. Sometimes they just don't work and kicking them out is necessary for the story to flow better. Remember you may use the word search tool to replace any word you want. (Assuming they are  written correctly everywhere)

# Root:

# ROOT DRAFT

- **Root-ing for you:** Plant the completed **SEED** draft into a new "pot" (A folder). Here you will edit grammar, wording and maybe even entire paragraphs, but do not do anything that may affect the plot of the story.

- **Editing:** Focus mainly on details of the story. Keep away from drastic changes that may deeply affect the plot or format of the story. You may also change bigger things such as paragraph order and wording of certain scenes.

# Tree:

# TREE DRAFT

- **The Final Step:** On this draft, you will focus solely on grammatical review. Use any means necessary to ensure you have ZERO mistakes.
- **Final ideas:** Think of a good title if you have not already. If possible (if this will be a larger project like a novel or a poem anthology, sketch a cover art that conveys the feeling of the book.)

# Fruit:

# FRUIT

- **Review:** Read your story one more time and seal the writing and editing process.
- **Sharing is caring:** Congratulations! You finished the story. Now you will be able to share it with your friends and family. There are ways to independently publish stories in the internet. However, you do not have the obligation to do so. Share only if you are comfortable with it. It is all up to you.

# References

Eldridge, S. (2022, October 4). *Chekhov's gun. Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chekhovs-gun

After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

https://forms.office.com/r/3TcaRLnw7M

Thanks for using our resources!

To know more about our Center and the services we provide, visit http://generales.uprrp.edu/competencias-linguisticas/