

How to Improve Your Creative Writing

- **Write about what you know** - personal, first person, reflective writing. You are most convincing when you can lend your own perspective and experience to your writing.
- Explore scenarios - describe a scenario from **multiple perspectives**. For example, the person who took the journey, and the person who did not.
- Think about **capturing a moment** - describing a moment in absolute detail or two moments on two different days.
- Consider **changes and shifts** -
 - Causes/ catalysts/ motives
 - Relationships and how they change
 - Changes in perspective at different ages
 - Consider how this impacts upon self image/identity/growth
 - Beginning of a journey / end of a journey
- Consider your **audience** - this means thinking about your register (level of language) and the tone you want to establish.
- **Structure** could be - linear / cyclical / flashback / series of vignettes or journal entries.
 - Your orientation needs to be brief (character and setting). You can start in the middle of an event that will hook the reader early. Also, it is not necessary to 'tidy up' the story and provide all the answers. Sometimes it is more interesting for the reader (and honours their intelligence) if you do not provide all the answers.
- Use a variety of **sophisticated language conventions** - but don't forget the basics like paragraphing, varied sentence structure, punctuation, word choice, and an engaging opening paragraph and interesting concluding paragraph. For example -
 - **A variety of sentence beginnings and sentence lengths.** You could use short, simple sentences and fractured sentences to create tension or complex sentences to slow the action down. Remember the power of short sentences and the effect of longer, flowing

sentences. Make your sentence beginnings interesting by swapping the sentence around.

Eg:

I moved slowly towards the door curious to see who was there.

Curious to see who was there, I moved slowly towards the door.

- **Ellipsis (...)** is a dramatic way of leaving something not said or hinting that what will happen is too difficult to describe.
- **Vary paragraph lengths** – don't be afraid to use a single sentence paragraph to make a dramatic statement.
- Develop a strong **distinctive voice** - adopt a believable persona and maintain his/her voice. This could mean using colloquial register and slang so that you convincingly capture the voice of the character.
- **SHOW DON'T TELL** - Avoid too much information and focus on appealing to the senses through effective descriptions. Remember our most powerful tool is our imagination! A text that suggests rather than tells all has a powerful impact on the reader.
- **Use contrast** - Juxtaposition can be very effective. For example, you could start by describing the beauty of a place, stressing its quietness and tranquility and in the next paragraph have a bomb drop.
- **Have a number of layers/levels** - explore different types of journeys. For example, physical , inner, cultural.
- Consider using **multi-modal texts** - include a snippet from a newspaper report such as a headline, a text message, part of a letter or journal entry. Rather than describing that your character received a letter, actually "insert" part of the letter into your writing.
- **Imagery** - paint a picture with words. Engage and embrace your reader with your descriptions.
 - For example, *"From the water's edge you couldn't even see our street. I found eggs in the reeds, skinks in the fallen log, a bluetongue lizard jawing up at me with its hard scales shining amidst the sighing wild oats. I sat in the hot shade of a melaleuca in a daze."* - Tim Winton

- See how a simple simile can present us with an effective image -
“Reeds bristled like Venetian blinds in the breeze.”
- **Be inspired by a current event or individual OR** draw inspiration from a unique historical perspective - a war torn country, a 1960s prison, a freedom march, a specific cultural influence - Japanese geishas, Auschwitz survivors, first settlers.
- **Be clever with dialogue** - You must be very **VERY** good to write effective dialogue that doesn't detract from the narrative.