

Creative Writing 09-10
Rancho Buena Vista High School
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Creative Writing is a class that offers students an opportunity for personal expression in a variety of literary forms in an open and artistic environment. Students will be encouraged to think and communicate in ways that are not always utilized in other courses. Unlike the usual English class where literature is studied for the purpose of cultural understanding, reading comprehension and writing skills, they will study literature with the goal of creating it too.

The short story and poetry will be the major genres emphasized during the class. At times, it will be expected that all students will do the same assignment so that students may have a backlog of common writing experiences that can serve as reference points throughout the year. At other times, students will work on individual, self-originated assignments.

The class will also participate in the annual Poetry Slam and the production and publication of Artistic Rhapsody, RBV's literary art magazine.

Classroom activities will include written assignments, selected readings, lectures, group discussions, peer response groups, sustained silent reading (ssr), the author's chair, various writing activities, and publication of student work. Students must bring a spiral notebook for journal writing and a book of choice for silent reading.

A powerful tool for developing writing skills is the act of reading, so all students are expected to have something to read each day: a novel, book of poetry, magazine article, etc.

Requirements & Grades: Grades are not given based on a student's "creativity" but the effort, participation, responsibility, and growth shown in class.

Students are required to write 4 pages of journal writing per week. These will be checked but not read.

Required assignment and self-originated assignment drafts/final copies must be typed and labeled as such. Points will be given for effort, revision, and growth.

Students will maintain a portfolio of written work that is expected to grow and develop throughout the year.

Some writers draw heavily on personal experience and emotions. Others routinely invent topics or use other people's experiences. Most writers fluctuate between the two. In any case, it is important to maintain a safe working environment that encourages creativity and risk taking, so privacy and discretion are necessary ingredients of the Creative Writing classroom. No student is to assume that anyone's work is autobiographical or even true, and it is off limits to ask of someone's writing: "Did that really happen?" or "Do you really feel that way?"

In the same way, it is critical that we all respect each person's individual tastes and styles when giving feedback or critiquing another student's work. It is also important to remember good judgment and taste when submitting a piece of writing for a writer's workshop or public reading.