



Oxford  
Scholastica  
ACADEMY

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# EXPERIENCE CREATIVE WRITING ACADEMY



## *READING LIST*

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# WELCOME

to the Oxford Scholastica

## Experience Creative Writing Academy!

We're all looking forward to meeting you and delving into the world of creative writing together!

## Preparing for your classes

Many of our students ask us how they can make the most out of their courses by doing some pre-course preparation, so we've given you some ideas here. Don't worry though – we don't expect you to do all this! We know how busy you are, and the preparation is optional. But if you'd like to make a head start, here are our suggestions...



## Activities to do

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Choose a writer whom you particularly admire, and write down some bullet points about them and why you like them. We'll then share your thoughts in the first class.

We would also recommend trying to find out whether your favourite (living) author has an online presence - whether a blog, Twitter/X account or website dedicated to them. This will give you some insight into their thought processes and experiences. Some authors (e.g. Neil Gaiman - [journal.neilgaiman.com](http://journal.neilgaiman.com)) and screenwriters (e.g. John August - [johnaugust.com](http://johnaugust.com)) are extremely active online. Others are completely absent. It's worth thinking about why that might be the case. Which kind of writer would you choose to be?

# RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

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If you would like to get to grips with some of the topics we will be covering during the Academy, the following links will be of interest.

1. We think anyone can benefit from reading what Kurt Vonnegut has to say to young writers. Read "How to Write With Style" here.

<http://www.peterstekel.com/PDF-HTML/Kurt%20Vonnegut%20advice%20to%20writers.htm>

2. "The Hero's Journey" structure has been extremely influential on Hollywood cinema, genre fiction, and all kinds of writing that want to tap the power of myth, whether in an obvious or a very subtle way. You'll probably be able to think of dozens of examples that make use of this kind of storytelling - often in quite unexpected places.  
[https://www.movieoutline.com/articles/the-hero-journey-mythic-structure-of-joseph-campbell-monomyth.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.movieoutline.com/articles/the-hero-journey-mythic-structure-of-joseph-campbell-monomyth.html#google_vignette)



3. Here J.K. Rowling, best-selling author of the Harry Potter series, shares her writing advice.  
<https://www.bustle.com/articles/181377-13-writing-tips-from-jk-rowling-because-she-knows-a-thing-or-two-about-perseverance>



4. For some advice on how to write descriptively, check out this video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSoRzTtwgP4>.

5. For more top writing tips, check out this video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeYM8TKGEyc>.





# BOOKS TO READ

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There are so many books you could choose to read - just pick one that takes your interest!

## **6. The Emotional Craft of Fiction: How to Write the Story Beneath the Surface, by Donald Maas**

If you want to write a strong piece of fiction, you must make your readers feel. This book shows you how to make your readers really experience your characters' journeys.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emotional-Craft-Fiction-Beneath-Surface/dp/1440348375#:~:text=Veteran%20literary%20agent%20and%20expert,beyond%20showing%20versus%20telling>

## **7. How NOT to Write a Novel: 200 Mistakes to avoid at All Costs if You Ever Want to Get Published, by Howard Mittelmark and Sandra Newman**

This book helps you identify the common errors that writers make, and gives you tips on how not to fall into these traps in your own writing.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/How-NOT-Write-Novel-Published/dp/0141038543#:~:text=Guardian%20Award%20shortlisted%20novelist%20Sandra,and%20for%20anyone%20who's%20ever>

## **\*8. The Creative Writing Coursebook: Forty Authors Share Advice and Exercises for Fiction and Poetry, by Julia Bell**

Forget the myth that good writing can't be taught! Based on real advice from real authors, this book will help you get started on your writing journey. You'll then learn how to shape and refine your pieces, and finally edit and publish your work. Learn from the experts!

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Creative-Writing-Coursebook-Authors-Exercises-ebook/dp/B018XQPZKW#:~:text=The%20Creative%20Writing%20Coursebook%2C%20edited,character%20and%20setting%3B%20and%20Finishing%20%E2%80%93>

## **\*9. A Midsummer Night's Dream, by William Shakespeare**

If you're interested in a classic, give this Shakespeare play a try! If you don't have much time, the film starring Michelle Pfeiffer is a good adaptation.



# TRY IT OUT!

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## First and foremost - get writing!

You will have the opportunity to work on - and rework - longer pieces over the course of the Academy. It would be great if you could bring a piece of your writing to the summer school. The further you can get before you arrive, the better. Good luck!

## Read *The Book Thief*

Our class will focus on character, plot, setting, dialogue, and other pillars of creative writing. Please come ready to share the details of a fiction book you read recently - think about all these features in the writing as you read.

If you would like a recommendation, you can read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak.

*The Book Thief* is set in Nazi Germany at the start of WW2. The story is narrated by Death, who tells the story of Liesel, a little girl who is adopted by a new family when her mother can't afford to take care of her. On Liesel's journey to her new home, her younger brother dies and she steals her first book: *The Gravedigger's Handbook*. Haunted every night by nightmares of her brother's death, Liesel and her new Papa set themselves the challenge of reading the book, Liesel's last link to her brother.



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**If you'd like any more resources, please feel free to ask us!**

**To explore a full course outline of what you will be studying, please see here.**

**<https://www.oxfordscholastica.com/oxford-summer-courses/creative-writing-summer-school/experience/#outline>**

**We hope you're as excited as we are to start the course and join us in Oxford!**

