

The New Senior Secondary Curriculum for Sierra Leone

Subject Syllabus for Creative Writing
Subject stream: Languages and Literatures





Curriculum elements for Creative Writing - an applied subject

Subject Description

Creative Writing (CW) exposes pupils to a variety of genres and provide them opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills to produce creative pieces of their own. The subject aims to introduce pupils to the fundamental techniques of writing fiction, poems and plays as well as explore the techniques used by established / well-known authors in different genres.

Rationale for Including Creative Writing on Senior Secondary (SS) Curriculum

Teaching CW is crucial because it provides opportunities for:

- training pupils to use their imagination in constructive ways
- giving learners fresh perspectives about life, the world and their place in it
- improving self-expression and figurative representation of real and imagined experiences through using the five senses in a story, play and poem writing
- learning the skills of conscious sentence crafting, self and peer-editing for a more concise and effective communication
- acquiring basic Microsoft Word processing skills for writing, spell-checking, editing and track changing documents.
- Acquiring basic information communications technology (ICT) skills of publishing stories, poems and short plays through blogging, etc.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Pupils offering CW will be required to produce an imaginative piece of writing – a poem, a short story or a creative non-fiction that demonstrates artistic potential. The work/s will portray:

- a voice and style original and unique to the pupil
- a subject matter representative of the writer's real or /an imagined experience
- an understanding of the creative process as a forum for critical thinking as well as for problem solving
- an awareness that all kinds of creative works are anchored in social, cultural and historical contexts
- an ability to shape a poem in verses /stanzas and to effectively work within the parameters of poetic forms
- an ability to invent and organise ideas in a convincing structure; develop credible characters; create pictures with words; produce writing in whole texts that are controlled and perceptively shaped
- the ability to establish a distinctive voice and a clear sense of purpose; provide insightful description of a subject matter; match a text to purpose, form and audience



Suggest Content (Topics)

- Types of texts - fiction and non-fiction
- Differences between fiction (Imaginative) and non-fiction texts (factual, real, scientific)
- The creative writers' toolkit
- Figures of speech
- Using the five senses in writing to enable readers to taste, smell, feel, hear and touch - creating pictures with words
- Figures of speech – anecdote, alliteration, repetition, chiasmus, pun, simile, metaphor, irony, personification, symbolism,
- Sentence Types – simple, compound and complex sentences
- Sentence Length, topic sentences, using sentence variety for impact
- Thesis statements
- Paragraphs lengths, using paragraph variety for impact
- The different genres of fiction – story, poetry, play
- Elements of each genre
 - Reading and writing poems – theme, tone, voice, rhyme, rhythm, performance poetry
 - Reading and writing a short story – character, point of view (1st, 2nd and 3rd person's point of view), setting & atmosphere; plot (linear – exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution /denouement); modular/episodic, flashback
 - Reading and writing a short play – Elements of the play genre; characters in a play, acts and scenes, stage directions, plot, setting, writing dialogue, turn taking, props, costumes, voice overs, etc.
- Writing workshop
 - Producing short paragraphs
 - Writing a short story
 - Writing a poem
 - Writing a scene of a play
 - Writing a short play
 - Basic computer skills – Microsoft word; spell-checking documents; Microsoft publisher; writing blogs; hyper texting



Structure of the Syllabus Over the Three Year Senior Secondary Cycle

	SSS 1	SSS 2	SSS 3
Term 1	<p>Introduction to Creative Writing Understand the overall outline of the course</p> <p>Types of texts - Fiction and non-fiction Make a comprehensive list of genres of texts to be covered by CW</p> <p>Differences between fiction (Imaginative) and non-fiction (factual, real, scientific) Reading non-fiction texts; Identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features;</p> <p>Reading samples of Fiction texts</p> <p>Comment on writers' use of language; Identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints.</p> <p>Relate texts to their social, cultural, and historical contexts and literary traditions</p> <p>Experiment with matching texts to form, purpose and audience in short paragraphs</p>	<p>Planning and writing a Short Story. Think about key moments. Sketch out a sequence of events (these might change)</p> <p>Step 1 Brainstorm one solid concept Flesh it out: make note of any characters, setting and dialogue</p> <p>Having a difficult time to start? Try writing a stream of consciousness - set a timer for a minute or two, write whatever comes to mind.</p> <p>Identify key characters the main characters; the minor ones What do they want? How do they change? Answers to these questions will form your plot, and makeup the outline.</p> <p>Step 2 The theme of your story e.g., Central Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict/theme forms the rising action. Conflict can be internal/ external • When to introduce your character in a conflict situation /encountering an obstacle that will lead to the conflict. <p>Outline your story An outline for a short story could be a brief overview of the plot. It can be bullet points or a mind map. The idea is to know where</p>	<p>Recap every unit covered from SS1 – SS2</p> <p>Introduce the key focus of the term:</p> <p>Basic computer skills – Microsoft word, spell-checking and track changing a document a document, Microsoft Publisher, blogging, hyper texting etc.</p> <p>Writing workshops</p> <p>During the Writing Workshops, pupils could work independently, or in groups, on a project – writing or polishing a short story they had already written. Mixed ability groupings could be more productive at this stage, with more-able pupils playing supportive roles to the less-able ones.</p> <p>Teacher interventions, which should be limited, should focus on Assessment for Learning for all the students. Also, teacher should challenge the more-able pupils to extend their learning through extension activities that could progress their learning further.</p> <p>Motivational Talk by a Resource Person With availability of funds, a Resource person (like a local publisher) could be invited for a motivational talk to the pupils on the importance of writing and publishing.</p>



your story will go, so if you have a **writer's block** later, you can come back to the plan to move you forward.

The **outline could be:**

- A Sketch or flow chart of events including interactions between the characters and key moments.
- Make note of characteristics and traits of your characters
- Think of a back story (a flashback moment that will shed light on the present situation).

Step 3

Pick a point of view

First person, second person, third person (omniscient narrator), multiple points of view.

Whichever POU you choose to use; ensure you focus on the lead character to ensure a consistent read.

Step 4

Select the right story structure

- Linear narrative (chronological)
 1. You could begin your story in media- res which means opening the story in the middle of the action
 2. **Draft**

The point to remember about drafts is that you do not stop! You have a chance to edit it later and make it better. Push through the bits that are sticky, or even skip them entirely.

The outcome of the writing workshops for Term One is a polished short story ready for publishing on a writer's blog, or by a local publisher.



3. Editing

After finishing the draft, you have a chance to go through carefully and correct mistakes you might have made.

- Developmental edits- structural changes
- Do your character motivations make sense?
- Does your opening and ending make sense?
- Copy edits - more technical, grammatical changes, check punctuation marks, dialogue tags.

4. Get a second opinion

To get the most of your feedback, give your second readers specific questions.

- What they liked
- What they didn't like
- How you could improve the aspects they did not like.

5. Title

Either the first thing to think about, or the last thing to ponder about. Usually, the perfect title comes last.

Tips about titles

- Imagery - eye-catching images from the story; descriptions that stand out. Write these down
- Theme – overarching themes
- Tone

Read through the whole draft from the title and submit story for assessment



<p>Term 2</p>	<p>Introduction to Creative Writing The creative writers' toolkit</p> <p>Appropriate vocabulary, concise diction figures of speech</p> <p>Using the five senses in writing to enable your readers to taste, smell, feel, hear and touch</p> <p>Creating pictures with words</p> <p>Sentence types; sentence length; sentence variety</p> <p>Topic sentences; Thesis statements Identifying and composing different sentence types in a text. Using sentence variety in texts to create impact.</p> <p>Paragraphs – opening and closing paragraphs; using paragraph variety to create impact in a text</p> <p>Punctuation marks – capital letters and their uses; full stop, comma, semicolon, colon, exclamation mark, apostrophe, question mark</p> <p>Advanced punctuation marks – ellipses; brackets; ampersands; consciously crafting sentences and paragraphs to achieve impact</p> <p>Experiment with conscious sentence and paragraph crafting in a short story, a poem.</p>	<p>Planning and writing poems. A poem can be about anything- love, death, grandpa's grumpy car, mum's favourite dish, the groaning house gate, our sonorous science Teacher, the Terrible Taxi driver.</p> <p>Part 1 -Select an idea Brainstorm Love/Beauty Blue eyes, like the ocean waters, colour, skin-smooth, hair.</p> <p>Use the world around you for inspiration</p> <p>Brainstorming ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean page, think for 5-10 minutes and start to write. • Lookup poem prompts online or come up with your own. • Make a list of mind map images. • Think about a situation that is full of emotion for you and write down a list of images or ideas that you associate with the feelings. <p>Starting a poem Finding a topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone you love, someone you hate, a building that is an eyesore, a magnificent tree, someone you care about • Love -heartbreak; romance, agape. <p>Pick a theme or idea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow down what images and adjectives to bring up. 	<p>Recap every unit covered from SS1 – SS2</p> <p>Introduce the key focus of the term:</p> <p>Basic computer skills – Microsoft word, spell-checking and track changing a document a document, Microsoft Publisher, blogging, hyper texting etc.</p> <p>Writing workshops</p> <p>During the Writing Workshops, pupils could work independently, or in groups, on a project – writing or polishing poems they had already written. Mixed ability groupings could be more productive at this stage, with the more-able pupils playing supportive roles to the less-able ones.</p> <p>Teacher interventions, which should be limited, should focus on Assessment for Learning for all the students. Also, teacher should challenge the more-able pupils to extend their learning through extension activities that could progress their learning further.</p> <p>Motivational Talk by another Resource Person With availability of funds, a Resource person (like a local publisher) could be invited for a motivational talk to the pupils on the importance of writing and publishing.</p> <p>The outcome of the writing workshops for Term Two is a collection of polished poems ready for publishing on a writer's blog, or by a local publisher.</p>
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	<p>Practise Self-editing using established criteria</p> <p>Practise Peer-editing using an established criterion</p>	<p>Choose a poetic form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A Haiku- A Limerick- A Cinquain- A shape poem <p>There are different forms to choose from: free verse, sonnet, rhyming couplets, a ballad, etc.</p> <p>Read examples of poetry</p> <p>You may read poems written in the same poetic form you are interested in, or poems about themes that could inspire you further.</p> <p>Writing a poem</p> <p>Show, don't tell!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use concrete imagery of people, places, and things.• Describe something using the senses: smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound. <p>Make the images come alive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Simile – e.g., “Life without dreams is like a broken winged bird, that cannot fly.”• Use Metaphor – “A dreamless life is a broken winged bird.”• Personification• Alliteration – Avoid clichés - e.g., “busy as a bee” <p>Polishing the Poem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read your poem aloud to yourself and to others.	
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Term 3	<p>Introduction to Creative Writing</p> <p>Different types planning a piece of writing</p> <p>Before you begin to write, it is important to have a rough idea (a plan) or a guide to focus your thinking.</p> <p>Some examples of planning methods Spider-gram / Visual plans / Mind Mapping / Brainstorming</p> <p>Begin with a small circle on the centre of a page, draw arrows from the centre circle with other smaller circles at the end of each, as shown in the sample attached. Fill each of them with relevant key words or phrases</p> <p>Mind mapping – see image of a mind map on time management attached.</p> <p>Other types of planning Bullet Points / Linear plans</p>	<p>Planning and writing a short play</p> <p>Before you even start, first things first:</p> <p>Get Inspired! Research about plays; watch plays and take note of what other playwrights do. Take some notes.</p> <p>Choose a theme Think of the genre – tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, historical, etc.</p> <p>Create a plot Plot constitutes the events that will take place in your play and will drive the action in the entire story Your plot does not have to be linear, but the reader or audience should be able to follow it.</p> <p>Decide on characters – major and minor The relationship between the characters (love / conflict)</p>	<p>Recap every unit covered from SS1 – SS2</p> <p>Introduce the key focus of the term:</p> <p>Basic computer skills – Microsoft Word, spell-checking and track changing a document a document, Microsoft Publisher, blogging, hyper textung etc.</p> <p>Writing Workshops & Exam Preparation</p> <p>During the Writing Workshops, pupils could work independently, or in groups, on a project – writing or polishing a play script they had already written. Mixed ability groupings could be more productive at this stage, with the more-able pupils playing supportive roles to the less-able ones.</p> <p>Teacher interventions, which should be limited, should focus on Assessment for Learning for all the students. Also, teacher should challenge the more-able pupils to extend their learning through extension</p>



<p>Plan using a list Plan using a flow chart Plan using a writing frame</p> <p>Format & Style - matching texts to purpose, form and audience</p> <p>Writing workshop</p> <p>Choose one from the following titles and develop a plan for a Newspaper Article, a poem or short story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Worst Nightmare • Dream Lover • An Accident Waiting to Happen • A Time Bomb • A Dickensian School Teacher <p>Write the opening paragraph of your article / story or the first stanza of your poem.</p>	<p>Make your characters credible, believable. You could also have minor characters who support or challenge the lead character/s</p> <p>Personality of the characters - character profiles or traits</p> <p>Consider the relationship between all your characters, especially the ones that have conflict – conflict creates tension, and this will interest your audience.</p> <p>Setting – the physical place and time. Stage directions offer opportunities to create setting</p> <p>Limit the number of settings, it improves produce ability - consider how a production crew can quickly transform one setting into another. Creating new settings can slow down production and flow of the play /production.</p> <p>Historical context – at what time in history is your story set?</p> <p>Time – this information could be conveyed through costume choices, narration or through dialogue</p> <p>Decide your structure – many plays follow a structure of exposition, rising action and resolution</p> <p>Exposition – at the beginning of the play, establish who, what, where, when, and why of your plot. If there is a central conflict, you could hint at it at this stage</p>	<p>activities that could progress their learning further.</p> <p>Motivational Talk by a Resource Person With availability of funds, a Resource person (like a local publisher) could be invited for a motivational talk to the pupils on the importance of writing and publishing.</p> <p>The outcome of the writing workshops for Term Three is a collection of a polished play script ready for publishing on a writer's blog, or by a local publisher.</p> <p>Exam / Assessment Preparations</p> <p>CW is better assessed by continuous assessment of pupils' progress, through an evaluation of portfolios built on short story writing, on a collection of poems and a play script written over the three-year cycle. The portfolio could be internally and externally assessed by the teacher and external examining body - West African Examinations Council.</p>
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Rising action – middle of the play, more problems may arise. The conflict may deepen until it reaches a climax

Resolution – tension lessens after the climax. During this stage, characters may overcome their conflict or learn to live with them. At this stage in the play, your readers or audience should be able to make out the moral lesson of the play

Pick a structure

A one-act play – runs all the way through without an intermission

Two-act play – has two parts and a break (Intermission) in between the acts. The audience prefer such breaks, they could use the toilet or simply stretch themselves and chat

Three-act play - much longer with two intermissions and require two rising actions

Note! Whereas Novels can have different locations or settings, plays do not lend themselves to this because the more settings you have, the more difficult it becomes to translate it on stage.

An Outline of your play

- Acts
- Scenes
- When characters appear
- Narrative arc
- General stage actions

When writing the script, stay within the general outline. Very helpful!



Start writing following these components!

Dialogue – the words (lines) uttered by each character

Action – what the character does; the stage direction should be explicit on this

Technical elements – costume changes, lighting props and change in setting

Know your audience!

As with writing a story, match your play to age, gender, demographic, background, education, etc.

Edit and rewrite your script.

Seek the opinion of second reader.

Do all corrections and amendments/recommendations by your editors/second readers

Submit your play for assessment

