

AGENDA

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Literary Arts Program at Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 is a seven-year, intensive course of study in creative writing, one of a dozen nationwide. Here at Pittsburgh CAPA, students with a love of writing and a commitment to achievement have opportunities to pursue their passion that are unavailable virtually anywhere else. Our young writers explore every literary genre: poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and drama. Each year, working with specialists in every genre, they take increasingly advanced courses, as they work to create a broad and sophisticated writing portfolio.

But Pittsburgh CAPA Literary Artists don't simply write. They edit; they publish; they perform. They use their writing to connect themselves to the larger world, the world beyond our school's walls. In their classes and in special collaborative projects literary artists explore mythology, literature, history, and many other art forms. They also connect themselves to one another, forming a community of writers that encourages and sustains their imaginative work.

LITERARY ARTS COURSE OF STUDY 7 -YEAR CURRICULUM

Grade 6

Reading Like a Writer with an Emphasis on Grammar

Reading Like a Writer with an Emphasis on Grammar provides young literary artists with a strong foundation in the tools of writing, so that they can learn to read a variety of texts through the lens of a writer. Students will engage in reading, writing, and sharing exercises as well as learning essential proofreading skills. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Playing with Language

Playing with Language provides young literary artists an exploration of how language is used across genres to create lively, detailed works of creative writing. Reading, writing and sharing work will be ongoing activities as students use creative word play to explore the options of language through imagination and creativity. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

The Tools of Poetry

The Tools of Poetry exposes young literary artists to poetry and will build on the young writer's natural abilities of metaphor making and imaginative word play. Writing exercises will emphasize noticing the world through a poet's eye, image making, and experimenting with form. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

The Tools of Fiction

The Tools of Fiction introduces young literary artists to fiction writing with an emphasis on narrative description, plot and character. Students engage in writing and revision, supported by readings that model elements of craft. All students develop speaking and feedback skills through classroom presentations. Independent reading is an ongoing expectation to deepen students' appreciation and understanding of the genre. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Grade 7

Introduction to Poetry

Introduction to Poetry formally introduces the craft of poetry and places an emphasis on a wide and frequent reading of contemporary, multicultural poets. The careful reading of such poets will encourage students to experiment with techniques and craft in their own writing. Students will begin to discuss poetry using the language of the genre. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Refining the Tools of Fiction

Refining the Tools of Fiction deepens students' study and practice of fiction writing through skills based writing and reading exercises and long term projects, focusing on an enhanced development of character, setting, dialogue, mood, and plot. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Tools of Story: An Introduction to Playwriting *Tools of Story: An Introduction to Playwriting* provides students an introduction to playwriting. This course will focus on character, plot, and dialogue. Improvisation and writing exercises help students gain fluency with fundamental parts of a scene. Short pieces lead to the completion of a one-act play. Students present each other's work in a collaborative, active environment. Published texts are studied as models of this genre. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Moving Off the Page: Production One *Moving Off the Page: Production One* addresses the challenge of showcasing creative writing amidst an environment of performing artists. In an effort to have literary artists' work recognized this course introduces ways to move original writing off of the page in innovative and unique ways with a variety of mediums. Students will gain exposure to new technologies that will allow literary artists to move creative works to a public venue. Digital media and desktop publishing technologies will be emphasized in this course. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Grade 8**Linking Poetry, Music, and the Visual Arts**

Linking Poetry, Music, and the Visual Arts recognizes that poets often gain inspiration from other art forms and that the poet's creative process can align with that of other artists, this course will be devoted to exploring those links in a variety of ways. Students will study a variety of contemporary poetry that connects to other art forms, and then move out of their classroom into the halls, studios, and performance spaces of their own school as well as into the galleries and museums of their city. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

From the Page to the Stage: Play Production

From the Page to the Stage: Play Production provides students' beneficial knowledge about the practicalities of play production. This course will provide students with hands-on experience of taking a play from the page to the stage. Students will have opportunities to act and collaborate on technical aspects of play production, as well as continue their work as playwrights in an ongoing revision process that will create stage-ready scripts. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Stories of Real Life: Introduction to Nonfiction

Stories of Real Life: Introduction to Nonfiction examines how fictional devices are used to create nonfiction essays. Students will read a wide variety of contemporary nonfiction writers and engage in creative exercises emphasizing elements of craft and personal experiences to produce personal essays and memoirs. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

Moving Off the Page: Production Two

Moving Off the Page: Production Two continues to introduce students to innovative and unique ways to move creative writing off of the page. Students will continue to explore new technologies as they develop new manners in which to showcase their writing. Publication and performance skills will be emphasized in this course. There will be an emphasis on sharing work with peers, performing, and publishing.

9-12 Cohort: Year One**Fiction One**

In *Fiction One*, students will craft a conventional, 10-15 page short story using a 3-dimensional character they spend significant time imagining. Readings include selections from *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*, and *The Truth About Fiction*, by Steven Schoen. Students are expected to maintain a writer's notebook that will include various assigned exercises exploring character, point of view, dialogue, theme, description, detail, setting and scene. Students will present an engaging and original character portfolio along with their short story as the final products of Fiction One.

Playwriting I

In *Playwriting I*, the focus is on the fundamentals of dramatic storytelling and introducing the concept of theatrical convention, whereby writers, directors, and actors get the audience to imagine the world of the play and/or certain elements or effects therein without producing them literally on stage. Students will complete a one act play (20-30 minutes in length) and submit it to City Theatre's Young Playwrights Contest.

Journalism

This introductory Journalism class will explore the ideas and concepts surrounding the field of Journalism from its early beginnings through the modern day. The course will cover issues ranging from the basic formula for writing straight news articles to the complexities of making sound ethical decisions as a journalist. Students will examine print and online mediums as they prepare to write their own news stories, features, editorial, and reviews. Students will also discuss the many important aspects of conducting a good interview.

Poetry I

Poetry I functions as a foundational course, equipping students with the necessary concepts and vocabulary to write, discuss, and revise their own poetry. Students will learn to understand and use imagery, figurative language, line breaks, and other craft elements. Students will also begin to consider larger questions about poetry and their relationship to it: What is a poem? What can a poem do? Why should we read poems? What distinguishes it from prose writing? Additionally, students will begin to learn about American poetry, beginning with Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson and covering nearly a century, up to the reign of the American Modernists. Through readings, class discussions, and writing assignments, Poetry I students will begin to understand and celebrate their place in a long and vibrant tradition.

Year Two**Fiction Two**

In *Fiction Two*, students will use their prior knowledge of conventional short story techniques to write a 5-8 page story. Using this basic structure, they will then explore more adventurous forms of contemporary fiction and use techniques of deep revision to reimagine and re-craft their original story several times throughout the course. Readings will include *Beginnings, Middles and Ends* and selections from various anthologies of contemporary fiction focused on non-traditional form and international authors. Students will continue to maintain a writer's notebook, which will include various assigned writing exercises, along with writerly responses to reading. A portfolio that includes the original short story, along with three deep revisions is the final product of Fiction Two.

Screenwriting I

In *Screenwriting I*, we review the concepts of dramatic storytelling with an emphasis on telling a story in images. We study the structure of both feature length and short films, and students learn how to assemble establishing and action scenes into sequences and develop both character and mood visually. They write their own original screenplay or adaptation from fiction, if they prefer, using the standard industry format.

Creative Nonfiction I

In *Creative Nonfiction I*, students will learn about the various subgenres (personal essay, lyric essay, memoir) that make up Creative Nonfiction, as well as the history and trajectory of the genre. This course focuses on the idea that in order to write engaging nonfiction, the author must turn her/himself into a well-rounded *character*. Students will draw on the tools learned in Fiction I to examine themselves, their quirks, their interests, and their behavior within the context of their lives and stories. Major authors to be examined may include Michel de Montaigne, St. Augustine, Basho, Henry David Thoreau, Susan Orlean, David Foster Wallace, Jonathan Franzen, Jamaica Kincaid, Rebecca Skloot, and Mary Karr, and/or others. An independent reading requirement will help students discover some of their own favorite writers. By the end of class, students will have one significantly revised personal essay ready to submit for publication, as well as a personal character project from which they can draw insight and ideas for the coming years in nonfiction.

Poetry 2

Poetry 2 builds on the foundations of Poetry 1 while also widening the young poet's perspective. Craft concepts are reinforced, but the emphasis is on challenging and stretching students' imaginations and ideas. Students will be introduced to non-metrical forms, such as ekphrastic poems and epistolary poems, which ask them to search in unusual places or write in unusual frameworks. Students will continue their reading in American poetry, covering the latter half of the twentieth century and up to the present day.

Year Three

Fiction 3 is a study of flash fiction. Students will conceptualize a chapbook-length project and include at least ten pieces of connected and revised flash fiction in their final manuscript. Students will explore the traditional forms flash takes, including: snapshot, monologue, tale, scene, experiment, and meditation. Readings will include selections from *Sudden Fiction International* and *Flash Fiction Forward*, along with readings about craft from *The Rosemetal Press Field Guide to Flash Fiction*. In addition to writing and revising, students will make aesthetic choices regarding the design of their chapbook before publishing their collections online.

In **Playwriting II**, we focus on the ten-minute play. Now that students are familiar with dramatic storytelling and characterization, we will concentrate on deepening their knowledge of theatrical convention (how to get the audience to imagine a world and/or effect that cannot be produced literally on stage) and experimenting with the form. We will also do intensive revision on these pieces and submit them to the CAPA Theatre Department for possible production in CAPA's yearly Ten-Minute Play Festival.

In **Creative Nonfiction 2**, students will build off the skills and knowledge they acquired in CNF I to focus more heavily on thematic writing and the craft of the lyric essay. One of Creative Nonfiction's most famous hallmarks is an emphasis on place-based writing; from Rachel Carson to Paul Theroux, VS Naipaul to Alexandra Fuller, many of our most well-respected CNF writers rely heavily on their ability to evoke place. This year, students in this course will examine how the places of their lives affect the nuances of their identities. As we'll see, place can even function as an additional character. Student assignments will include writing scenes, composing a travel essay, and attempting a series of short lyric essays, as well as daily writing prompts to heighten their awareness to the world around them. Group-led discussions, workshops, and significant revisions will help us master this important aspect of CNF.

Poetry 3

Poetry 3 again challenges young poets with a change of perspective by introducing meter and classical forms. Students will craft their own sonnets (in iambic pentameter, no less!), villanelles, and sestinas, as well as explore and write other forms with non-Western origins, such as haiku, tanka, and ghazals. These poems create a larger project that explores, from many facets and in many forms, a subject of the student's choosing. The emphasis is on encouraging ingenuity and looking at the big picture. The literature focus of Poetry 3 is international poetry; students will read and discuss poetry from around the Western and non-Western world.

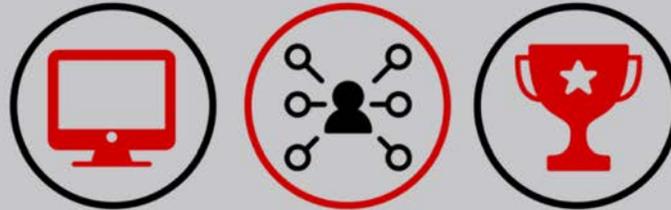
Year Four

In **Fiction 4**, each student will begin work on a novella-length piece of fiction. By the end of the quarter, each student will submit at least four chapters of a novella, along with a professional treatment outlining the remainder of the manuscript. Students will complete an independent reading project that includes at least 1000 pages of reading, of both novellas and other forms of fiction. Students will work closely with the instructor to edit and deeply revise their work.

In **Screenwriting II**, we study the narrative structure of serial television series, and students work in small groups to create their own with each student responsible for writing one episode. Together, they plan out their series, starting with the pilot, so that the template and tone of the show is consistent and the overarching story introduced and developed through each episode.

In **Creative Nonfiction 3**, students will examine the power of true storytelling in the world. The goal of the course is for students to learn about, engage in, and practice the ways in which nonfiction is being written and performed for audiences. Students will research and listen to various live storytelling outlets (the Moth, This American Life, Radiolab, etc.) and, in groups, will create collaborative podcasts or performances that showcase their work as well as their knowledge of thematic storytelling and nonfiction craft. As seniors, students will be given a generous amount of creative freedom to produce a nonfiction collection that speaks to their personal interests in the world, using both revised and new work. The course will include an independent reading assignment focused on memoir, continued writing assignments, group collaboration, and will culminate with a live performance of their storytelling collaborations.

Poetry 4 is a capstone course; students will bring everything they've learned in Poetry 1-3 to an independent, largely self-directed project. Students will write a chapbook-length manuscript (at least 25 pages) of poems centered around a general theme, such as place or time; complete a multimedia accompaniment to the manuscript; and present both in a public reading that will be planned by the class. Though the content and direction of the manuscript will be left largely to each individual, the instructor will conference with students frequently, providing feedback, encouragement, and direction.



AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DEPARTMENTAL ACCOLADES

Our writers are recognized nationally and throughout the region. Several, a literary artists have been awarded the Scholastic Portfolio Award in Writing. In 2007, a literary artist was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts by Department of Education. CAPA writers have also been awarded major prizes. The winners of Carnegie Mellon University Martin Luther King Jr. Writing Awards, The Pittsburgh Public Schools Power of the Pen Awards, the City Theatre Young Playwrights Festival, Pittsburgh New Works Children's Festival and the Heinz Endowment High School Writing Awards have all been literary artists.

Off Site Essay & Writing Portfolio

Students must craft one short essay that answers all of the questions for your chosen art department. Submit your essay via the online application by the deadline.

Remember that essays have a strong introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion that leaves the reader with a thought or idea to ponder. Please include a heading on this essay in the upper left hand corner that includes: your name, art department applying to, and the grade you will enter in the 2020–21 school year. All essays must be typed using 12 pt. Times New Roman and should not include any images.

In addition, literary arts' applicants need to complete a writing portfolio.

Pittsburgh CAPA 6–12 is a community of artists in dance, literary arts, piano, production technology, theater, visual arts, vocal and instrumental music.

Why do YOU want to be an artist?

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Off Site Essay: Literary Arts

What can you contribute to a community of writers? What are your strengths and your challenges as a writer? Share a triumph that you have had as a writer.

Writing Portfolio

Students applying for the Literary Arts department at Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 should submit a writing portfolio that includes:

Neighborhood Essay

Pittsburgh CAPA 6–12 is an educational community that draws from all of the unique neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh. Write a creative essay that does not exceed 750 words in length that describes for the literary arts faculty in vivid detail, the neighborhood you come from. Be sure to use sensory details when writing this creative essay. Remember each neighborhood has a story to tell. Do not forget to give this creative essay a title. Most of all, you should enjoy writing about where you are from.

Free Choice of Creative Writing

This writing may be in any genre, that you feel represents you and your best work as a creative writer. This should be one piece of writing, 1-10 pages in length that you wrote on your own, not for a school assignment.

Include a cover sheet with the portfolio that includes the student's name, date, and the titles of the creative work. The student's name should only be on the cover sheet—do not include a name on the actual pieces of writing. Please note that student writing will not be returned and that writing portfolios must be submitted by the deadline for Pittsburgh CAPA applications.

HOW TO PREPARE & WHAT TO EXPECT ON AUDITION DAY

Students should be prepared to engage in the following activities during the audition for literary arts.

- Be prepared to talk about yourself and your work. Think why CAPA Literary Arts.
- Be engaged and an active participant in the audition. We want you to talk. It is essential to talk during the audition.
- Practice reading the piece of writing you will share with the audition panel. Be familiar and comfortable reading your writing. This piece of writing should be from your writing portfolio that you submitted with your application.
- Be prepared to write a creative response to a prompt after reading a prose piece and discussing it.
- Ask questions. Find joy in the process.

