



CREATIVE WRITING

2025-2026

Teacher Name: Mrs. Elizabeth Cairns

Teacher E-mail: eacairns@madisoncity.k12.al.us

Course Description:

In this course, students analyze and create original works in the categories of prose, poetry, performance poetry, creative nonfiction, drama, comics, journalism, film, graphic design, and multimedia.

Course Objectives:

- *Students will practice the writing process from pre-writing to the refining and celebration of completed products.
- *Students will study existing works and create original works in a variety of mediums and genres.
- *Students will demonstrate an understanding of terminology and formatting requirements as they pertain to each medium and genre.
- *Students will create content for an authentic audience in class and for school publications.
- *Students will compile a writing portfolio and submit their best works to contests and The Eclectic literary and arts magazine.
- *Students will improve communication skills through class discussions, group activities, and projects.

Classroom Expectations:

You are expected to conduct yourself in a respectful and productive manner. In addition to all the rules and expectations listed in the student handbook, I expect you to have a positive attitude, treat others with respect, practice self-discipline, and demonstrate responsibility.

Classroom management process includes: verbal reprimand, conference with student with parent contact, withdrawal of privilege(s) with parent contact, and other consequences determined to be reasonable and appropriate by the school administration.

Cell Phone Expectations

ALL electronic devices are prohibited to be used during the instructional day. This is from 8:12-3:28. This includes: cell phones, smart watches, earbuds/ headphones/ airpods, tablets, and personal computers (school issues laptops will be allowed). Discipline will be given to ANY student who uses an electronic device. If you bring your device to school, it MUST be placed in your bookbag. It cannot be on your person.

Tardy Policy

Students late to ANY class, without a pass, will report to a tardy scanning station. You will input your identification number on the pin pad. A tardy slip will be printed for you to report to class. Parent email will be sent for every tardy. Discipline will be as follows: 3 total tardies will result in 1 day of ISS; 6 total tardies will result in 2 days of ISS. Progressive discipline to follow.

Grading Policy:

Grades are based on a 100 point scale. We have two types of grades: daily grades (30% of final grade) and tests (70% of final grade). The percentage based grading scale is as follows: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (65-69), and F (below 65). Grades will be a reflection of mastery of the standards. Make sure all absences are excused as class work can be made up and graded for excused absences only.



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Cheating and plagiarism of any kind are never tolerated. The academic misconduct policy of the school will be followed in this course. Students are expected to use their own voices in their creative writing projects. The use of AI is only allowed when the teacher permits.

Exam Exemption Policy:

Any student in grades 9-12 are eligible to earn an exam exemption for the 2025-2026 Exams for each class IF they have earned an 85% or higher as the final grade for that course. Any of the following will EXCLUDE a student from exempting for that class:

- More than five EXCUSED absences
- Any UNEXCUSED absence
- In School Suspension (ISS) for 3 days or more
- Out of School Suspension (OSS)
- One or more days of Alternative School placement
- Not participating in the state standardized assessment for their grade level (10th PreACT, 11th ACT with Writing, 12th WorkKeys, and AP exams)

Attendance and full participation in reviews and assignments for the class leading up to the day of the final exam are required.

Make-up Work Policy:

Make-up tests will only be given to a student who has an excused absence. The student must make arrangements with the teacher to take a make-up test. Tests may be taken during Patriot Path with prior arrangement from each teacher. A student only has two chances (the next two Patriot Paths after the absence) to make up a test. All make-up tests will be administered in the designated classroom on the Patriot Path session roster.

Homework/Classwork: Students who are absent for excused reasons will be permitted to make up missed work. It is the student's responsibility to get their work assignments the day upon return to school and complete the assignments according to a time frame determined by the teacher within two weeks of the date of the last absence. Grades of zero will be assigned for assignments missed because of unexcused absences.

Late work creates a backlog for you and your teacher. Work not turned in on time will receive a grade of zero until completed. Daily assignments that are turned in after the work has been checked by the teacher may receive no higher than 50%. Late tests/grades may not receive higher than 75%. Exceptions may be made at the teacher's discretion, especially for extenuating circumstances. Please communicate with your teacher.

Text and Suggested Reading:

The College Handbook of Creative Writing
On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King (suggested reading only)
Method and Madness: The Making of a Story (suggested reading only)
Creating Poetry (suggested reading only)
Save the Cat: Screenwriting (suggested reading only)
Dramatic Writers' Companion: Theatre (suggested reading only)
Feature and Magazine Writing (suggested reading only)
Understanding Comics (suggested reading only)



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Materials and Supplies Needed:

Please bring daily:

Your **CHARGED** Chromebook or personal device; Chromebook charger
Headphones
8.5 x 11 copy paper
Red pen, highlighter

Access to a computer and an internet connection at home is necessary from time to time. If you do not have these materials, please communicate with me.

Teacher Wish List: If possible, the following items would be appreciated in maintaining a clean and engaging environment for students: hand sanitizer, Kleenex, Clorox wipes, paper towels, Lysol or Clorox disinfecting spray, post-it notes, notebook paper, highlighters, pencils and/or pens as well as any other donations fit for an English classroom.

Assignments:

Laptops

Completion of daily, weekly, and semester-long assignments, including a final portfolio

Concerning laptop utilization: 1. Student laptops should not be hard-wired to the network or have print capabilities. 2. Use of discs, flash drives, jump drives, or other USB devices will not be allowed on Madison City computers. 3. Neither the teacher, nor the school is responsible for broken, stolen, or lost laptops. 4. Laptops and other electronic devices will be used at the individual discretion of the teacher.

18 – WEEK PLAN *This is a tentative plan and may change at the discretion of the teacher.	
Weeks 1-3	Unit 1 The Writing Process; Creative Writing Bootcamp
Weeks 4-7	Unit 2 Fiction, Comics
Weeks 8-9	Unit 3 Poetry, Multimedia
Weeks 10-12	Unit 4 Creative Nonfiction
Weeks 13-15	Unit 5 Stage and Screen
Weeks 14-15	Unit 6: Picture Books and Podcasts
Weeks 16-18	Unit 7: Final Project and Portfolio



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Mrs. Cairns' Creative Writing Parent/Guardian & Student Contract

_____ **We have read the syllabus** for Mrs. Cairns' Creative Writing course and understand the expectations for the course and classroom policies.

_____ We understand that Mrs. Cairns will contact us about any concerns or classroom information via the information supplied on this page.

_____ We understand that phones should be on silent and be put away during class.

_____ **Plagiarism Statement:** We understand that the downloading of material in part or whole, cutting and pasting sections from online sources or copying material from other sources (to include other students) **WITHOUT giving credit to the source by citing it properly, is considered plagiarism** and will result in ZERO for the assignment and teacher communication with parents and administration. Students will be given opportunities to check their work before submitting it. All outside sources must be credited, including the use of AI (artificial intelligence.)

PLEASE NOTE: AI may be used as a tool but not in place of skills students are to be mastering in the classroom. Student's work should demonstrate their own thinking and ability. Suspected use of AI will receive a grade of zero until the student and teacher have a conversation and parents may be contacted.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have received, read, and understood the syllabus.

Student name: _____

Student signature: _____

Parent/guardian name: _____

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Parent/guardian, please provide two ways for me to contact you (email address, phone numbers):

Parent/guardian Email:

Parent/Guardian Phone number:

***Please feel free to email me with any questions, concerns, or anything you would like me to know about your child at eacairns@madisoncity.k12.al.us