Writing: A Brief Introduction.



A seminar plan for writing tutors. CreativeSharing.org

- **Ferdinand**

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"This is the tale I pray the divine Muse to unfold us.
Begin it, goddess, at whatever point you will."
-*The Odyssey*. Homer

What we're going to do:

- **About Carpe Diem Intelligence.**
  (CreativeSharing.org)
- **Introduction to Writing.**
  We'll look at what you need to get started, including creative flow, a writer's realisation: original is almost impossible, the structure & styles (fiction/non-fiction). Character Archetypes (exercise), how to write dialogue (exercise), developing world and plot.
- **While you write/writing workshop.** During this time I will discuss different options for the story, including comedy, drama & mystery styles.
- **Conclusion & how to continue writing**.
  Your audience, publishing, exercises, further reading for all genres.

This is about a years worth of writing in just under two hours so stick with it and there will be time to catch up during the exercises.

Opening exercise, get your pens working…
Who are you writing for? – There is a difference between writing for yourself and writing for other people. When writing for others you need to consider other people's opinions of your writing. This is where our company helps out…

☆ PASS AROUND WORKSHEET 0.9

Carpe Diem Intelligence
www.CreativeSharing.org

Since 2010, Carpe Diem Intelligence has been dedicated to providing amateur and professional artists with vital information and resources for creative development. We publish books, commission illustrations, and run productions internationally.

Our mission is to offer access to equipment and education for all artistic mediums and pursuits. We work with academic, and other creative experts from all art forms to develop and publish new resources, as well as to improve and increase access to already existing resources. We also strive to ensure that these resources are maintained and preserved as a historical record for the future.

We truly hope that our publications, productions, seminars, studio sessions and other works will inspire and empower you to create awe-inspiring artistic works that will last for generations to come.

We're here for you, let's see your work.

Yours sincerely,



Jessica Oliver
PR, Carpe Diem Intelligence Ltd.

Introduction to Writing [20 minutes]

A writer's realisation.

NOTE: In the fiction market about 25 titles make about 65% of the income, and of those books very few writers are household names. So if you want money and fame you may be disappointed.

Did you know? J.R.R. Tolken's publisher Stanley Unwin was so convinced the novel wouldn't sell he cynically offered Tolken a profit sharing deal. **Believe in yourself!**

The inner critic will say:

- You're not a real writer, you're just playing around.
- You haven't got any talent.
- Why bother, you'll never finish.
- You should be doing something better with your time.
- This will never get published so what's the point?

You will have experienced this 'it's not good enough' feeling with an educational system where work is compared and graded A* to F.

REMEMBER

Grading a creative piece of work is almost impossible. Think about the Impressionist artists who were turned down by the Paris Salon in favour of more conventional artists of the day. Those artists are now forgotten, while Manet and the rest are recognised as geniuses. I'm not saying all rejected writing or creative material is genius, however judging creative work, especially something innovative & new isn't easy.

Overcome the impossible, and accept your story won't be original. Film producer David O. Selznick once said that only one plot exists: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy finds girl again. 500 Days of Summer, where Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) finds Autumn (Minka Kelly) after…

The reality on originality is there are about 7 basic plots, and they go on repeating themselves in different ways. They are:
[Listed by Christopher Booker in The Seven Basic Plots]

- **Overcoming the monster / battle between good and evil.**
  Hero learns of a great evil threatening the land, and sets out to destroy it.
- **The quest.**
  Hero learns of a great McGuffin(desirable object) that he desperately wants to find, and sets out to find it, often with companions.
- **Voyage and return or coming of age.**
  Hero heads off into a magic land with crazy rules, ultimately triumphs over the madness and returns home far more mature than when he set out.
- **Rags to riches.**
  Surrounded by dark forces who suppress and ridicule him, the Hero slowly blossoms into a mature figure who ultimately gets riches, a kingdom, and the perfect mate.
- **The romance or classic comedy.**
  Hero and Heroine are destined to get together, but a dark force is preventing them from doing so; the story conspires to make the dark force repent, and suddenly the Hero and Heroine are free to get together. This is part of a cascade of effects that shows everyone for who they really are, and allows two or more other relationships to correctly form.
- **The tragedy.**
  The flip side of the Overcoming the Monster plot. Our protagonist character is the Villain, but we get to watch him slowly spiral down into darkness before he's finally defeated, freeing the land from his evil influence.
- **Death and rebirth or redemption.**
  As with the Tragedy plot, but our protagonist manages to realize his error before it's too late, and does a Heel Face Turn to avoid inevitable defeat.

Getting started…

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one."

~ **Mark Twain**

So how can you get started…

Well let's start with form -**A Way to Try Various Forms.**
(In your own time)
Sit in a café or restaurant and watch the customers. Invent a story about who they are, where they come from, why they're there, who they're thinking of, what they want.
Look at the newspaper. Pick a small item from the news; use it as the basis for a story.
Go to a lake at night. Look across the lake, at the moon, find a flower, or look at a tree. Describe it. Turn the writing into a poem. Find an old photo. What does it make you think of? What does it remind you of? Write what's on your mind.

FICTION vs. NON-FICTION

FICTION	NON-FICTION
➢ **Short Stories**	❖ **Journalism**
➢ **Novels**	❖ **Autobiography**
➢ **Plays**	❖ **Biography**
➢ **Screenplays**	❖ **Memoirs & Journals**
➢ **Children's Books**	❖ **Narrative non-fiction**
➢ **Poetry**	❖ **Travel Writing**
❖ **Blogging**	❖ **Blogging**

There are plenty of ways to trial different forms. Once you have discovered what you want to write; **The next question for creative writers is how do I develop world and plot?**

With The Hero's Journey…

Christopher Vogler (best known for being the author of The Writer's Journey) believes many theorists present a linear model when discussing plot progression.

Beginning --- Middle --- End

Joseph Campbell departed from this approach by bending the traditional straight line into a circle, as you will see in the diagram below.

The globular Hero's Journey suggests that the events in the life of the hero are part of a cycle — others have preceded the hero on this journey and more may be destined to follow.

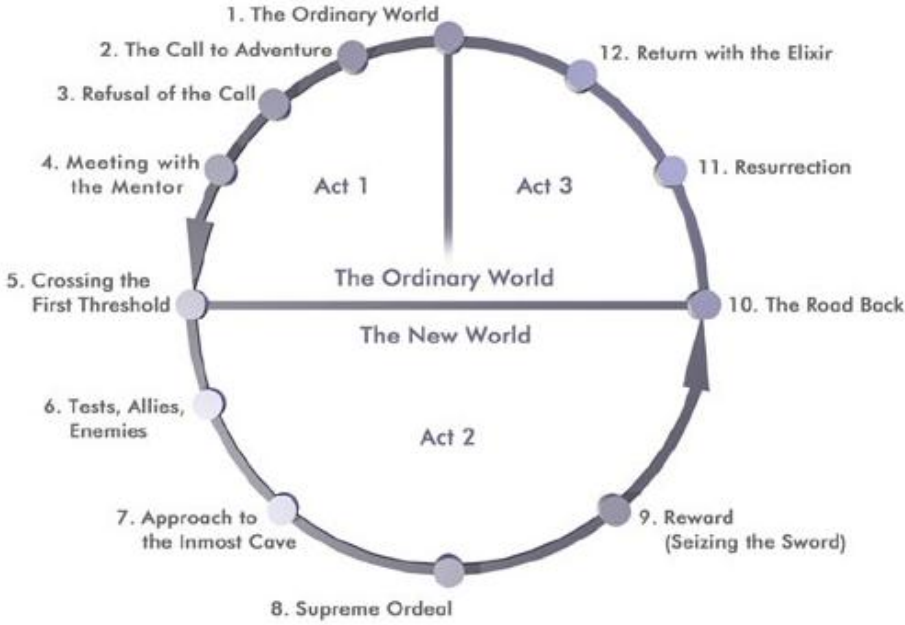


Figure.1 The Hero's Journey 12-Stage Model Diagram.
Based on the diagram by Heart (1999, [online]) which is based on the original diagram by Campbell (1993, p.245).
The text is based on Voglers 12-stage model.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY OUTLINE

1. The Ordinary World. The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.

2. The Call to Adventure. Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.

3. Refusal of the Call. The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.

4. Meeting with the Mentor. The hero comes across a seasoned traveller of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.

5. Crossing the Threshold. At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.

6. Tests, Allies and Enemies. The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.

7. Approach. The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special World.

8. The Ordeal. Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.

9. The Reward. The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.

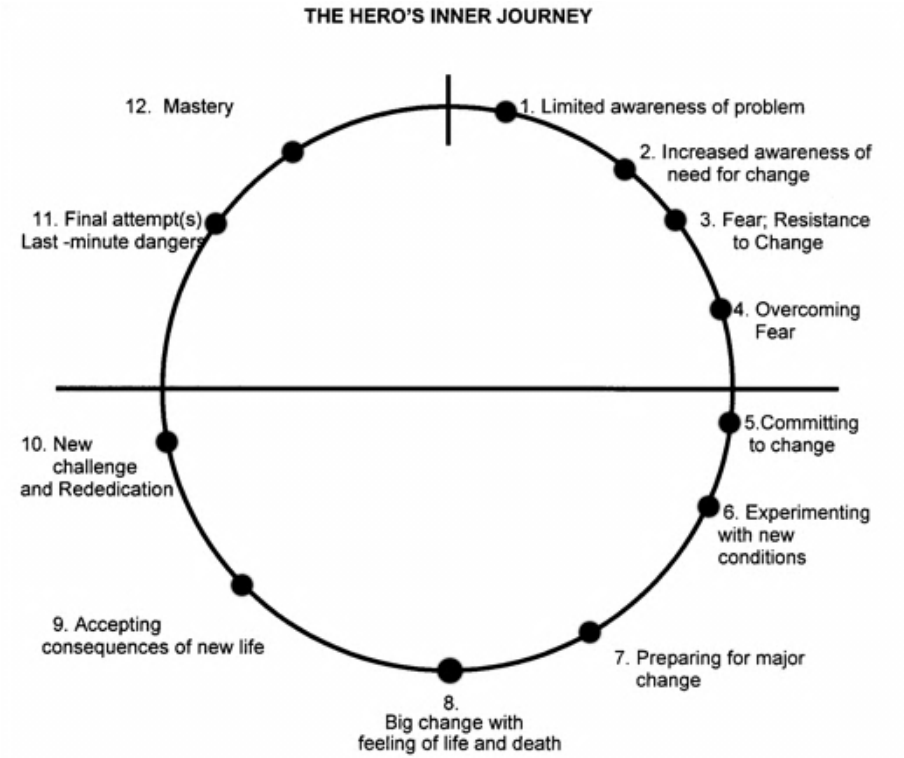
10. The Road Back. About three-fourths of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.

11. The Resurrection. At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

12. Return with the Elixir. The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

THE HERO'S INNER JOURNEY

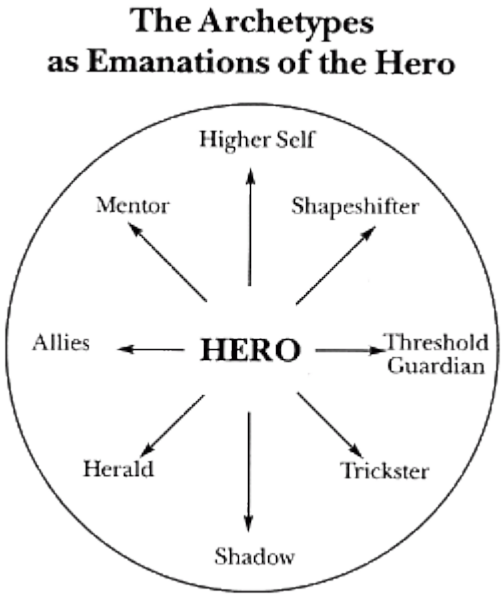
With the Hero's journey we are given a skeleton for the plot, the next thing to add depth is Hero's Inner Journey, which is summarised in the following diagram.



CREATING CHARACTERS

THE ARCHETYPES

Carl Jung the Swiss psychologist discusses archetypes as a mode of expression of the collective unconscious. This develops on the personal unconscious hypothesized by Freud, into multiple personalities or character traits, these transfer into story. Archetypes are recurring patterns of human behaviour, symbolised by standard types of characters in movies and stories.



We see these archetypes everywhere, here are some movies where you can work out who goes where. There may be more than one archetype or archetypes without characters…

☆ HAND OUT WORKSHEET 1.2

Harry Potter: Harry Potter, Dumbledore, Voldemort, Quirrell, Snape, Ron Weasley.
Star Wars: Luke Skywalker, Yoda/Obi-Wan, Darth Vader, Stormtroopers, Han Solo, C-3PO & R2-D2
The Matrix: Neo, Morpeous, The Matrix, Agent Smith, Cypher.
Lord of The Rings: Frodo, Gandalf, Sauron, Aragon, Boromir, Merry & Pippin.
Finding Nemo: Nemo, Crush, Darla, Bruse, Gill, Dory.

1. **Heroes.** Central figures in stories. Everyone is the hero of his or her own myth.
   [Harry Potter, Luke Skywalker, Neo, Frodo, Nemo]
2. **Shadows.** Villains and enemies, perhaps the enemy within. The dark side of the Force, the repressed

possibilities of the hero, his or her potential for evil.
[Voldemort, Darth Vader, The Matrix, Sauron, Darla]

3. **Mentors.** The hero's guide or guiding principles. A great coach or teacher.
[Dumbledore, Yoda/Obi-Wan, Morpeous, Gangalf, Crush]
4. **Herald.** One who brings the Call to Adventure. Could be a person or an event.
5. **Threshold Guardians.** The forces that stand in the way at important turning points, including jealous enemies, professional gatekeepers, or your own fears and doubts. Usually the first problem the hero must face.
[Quirrell, Stormtroopers, Agent Smith, Aragorn, Bruse]
6. **Shapeshifters.** In stories, creatures like vampires or werewolves who change shape. In life, the shapeshifter represents change. Ambiguous characters whose loyalties are not always clear.
[Snape, Han Solo, Cypher, Boromir, Gill]
7. **Tricksters.** Clowns and mischief-makers, comic relief to offset tension. Our own mischievous subconscious, urging us to change.
[Ron Weasley, C3PO & R2D2, Merry & Pippin, Dory]
8. **Allies.** Characters that help the hero through the change. Sidekicks, buddies, girlfriends who advise the hero through the transitions of life.

You'll probably remember that Star Wars not only has two or more mentors with Obi-Wan & Yoda, but also multiple shadows, Vader as an overwhelming enemy to Luke Skywalker, but also as Anakin Skywalkers inner shadow.

☆ HAND OUT WORKSHEET 1.0

Independently have a go at creating your own character; we are just about to enter the practical part of the workshop.

While you write/writing workshop

[30-40 minutes]

Let's now use some of the ideas discussed in the Hero's journey & ideas of plot in practice, let's look at the work sheet & either in small groups or all together we'll develop a story.

☆ HAND OUT WORKSHEET 1.1a

Let's sit together & each person add a sentence to "It was a dark and stormy night" as you pass it on tell the other person to read & continue the story. As the time for a conclusion draws near, I'll announce that the next writer will begin to finish up the story and the one after that will conclude the story. I'll then read it out to the group.

Now it's time to work independently, on worksheet 0.9 there is a list of sayings that will be randomly given to you. You are to use this as an idea or opening phrase to develop a story on the theme: "Capitalism" or "Fading Beauty" You can write this as a short story or screenplay.

☆ HAND OUT WORKSHEET 1.1b

Read 25 Things about Plot & Dialogue (Chuck Wendig)
[+ Description & Screenplay if there is time]
Run with the story for as long as you can, try to include the character that you created earlier!
These exercises are helpful in showing the function of "theme" by being absent and then present.

Conclusion & How to Continue Writing

[10-30 minutes]

TOP TIPS FROM VOGLER

1. Get into it as a fast as you can.

When Vogler worked at Disney, the saying was that most writers' stories are like aeroplanes getting loaded up. At a certain point you want the plane to take off but it's taxing down the runway and gathering speed while the writer is busy gathering more and more characters, who keeping jumping in through the windows. Then the plane hits a fence and goes into the surrounding neighbourhood (and through the local orphanage) without ever taking off. The moral? Get into it as fast as you can.

2. Study one thing.

You must have a theme — a one-word statement that sums up what your story is about. Usually, this is a word from a list of human drives or qualities, such as love, trust, loyalty, ambition or faith. Knowing this one word will have a unifying effect on the whole work of art, governing the choices you make about how the story plays out.

3. A story is a metaphor.

A story is a comparison or model of some aspect of human behaviour that the storyteller wants to isolate and study. The habit of active comparison is a survival mechanism fundamental to human nature. We naturally ape the successful behaviour of others, cherry picking aspects of "successful" characters in order to upgrade our own performances. We will also try to avoid the mistakes of others, including the errors of downcast or foolish characters. The best stories create what Vogler calls "explosions" in the minds of audience members, causing their frames of mind and ideas of the world to shift.

4. The hero may be more like Pac Man than a demigod.

A hero is not necessarily all-powerful and may even be a reluctant leader. The word 'hero' means someone dedicated to protect and serve the group — a definition suggesting humility, generosity, a

lack of selfishness and an element of sacrifice. Furthermore, the hero — like Pac Man — may be missing a wedge. He or she might not be a team player, might blame others all the time, or might be unable to forgive him or herself for a past action. The hero therefore needs to learn a lesson along these lines and the story teaches that lesson, giving the hero a "final exam" at the end of the journey to test whether or not the lesson has been learnt. If the hero fails the exam, the story becomes a tragedy.

5. The audience must be able to relate to the hero.

You may detest the hero in a story but he or she does have to be relatable, possessing a recognisable human quality or lack. In The Sopranos, for instance, Tony Soprano desperately wants to be good on some level, so we tend to forgive him his flaws.

6. Audiences need somewhere to plug their umbilical cords.

We all have umbilical cords that we want to hook up to things in life such as love, society, friends, clubs, or ideals. In films, people want to plug their cords into characters they like on screen. As Vogler says, "you can't be nobody in a movie". You have to relate to, align with, or be someone in a movie, although this may shift as the movie progresses.

7. There must be a cheering interest.

It's hard for audiences to connect with a story until they know what the main character wants. Once you know what the hero wants, you want it too. Vogler advocates writing into the text what the hero wishes for, even if this overt reference doesn't remain past the first draft. The character might say: "This is a boring town. I wish something would happen for a change." That will get the story's attention. Sometimes the character's wish isn't expressed verbally but, if we like them and relate to them, the wish may be implied.

8. Good stories are sadistic to their heroes.

A good story gives the hero his or her wishes but in a twisted, sadistic way, setting up obstacle after obstacle for the hero to overcome. Essential to this sadism is the Ordeal. If you don't have an Ordeal (Stage 8 of the Hero's Journey), you don't have a story.

Here, you are bringing another character into the drama: Death. The Ordeal is the crux of the Hero's Journey, bringing the hero into a difficult situation and causing him or her to die, or appear to die, literally or metaphorically.

9. "It has to get muddier before it gets clearer."

This was a favourite saying of the late Laura Ziskin, Vogler's boss at Fox, who is best known for her work on films like Pretty Woman, Fight Club, The Thin Red Line and Spiderman. She always said it's good to kick up the dust and smear the story around — then it will settle and become clear.

10. The ending must be both inevitable and surprising.

According to Ziskin, you should already have expected an ending like the one the story gives you but you should not have known exactly how the story would end.

11. You want audiences to get that sparkly, "champagney" feeling.

A physiological reaction determines if something is good or not. That shiver you get down your spine doesn't just happen when you're watching films — it can happen when you realise a story idea is just right. By the time Vogler came to work on The Lion King, the team had already created a scene where the new born Simba is held up and presented to the crowd. Vogler recalled that, in the Catholic Church, the light coming through the stained glass windows creates a halo around the priest. So he suggested incorporating that halo effect into the scene. It was the sort of idea that immediately felt right. Suddenly, all the animators in the meeting room, who have a habit of doodling and sketching the heads of the people in front of them, began drawing haloes around those heads.

12. The Hero's Journey is not a formula, it is a set of guidelines.

The Hero's Journey is free to interpretation and should be adapted to suit your storytelling needs. After all, a great artistic ambition is to do unexpected things. For instance, although the Hero's Journey begins in the Ordinary World, where you put this on screen is adaptable. You don't need to show it first up. Vogler

notes, however, that many a script has failed because the filmmakers "didn't set the table correctly" at the beginning. In other words, there hasn't been enough orientation — showing what is up and down in the Ordinary World, what is good and bad, as well as what to wish for and cheer for.

13. The Hero's Journey is not just a template for conventional storytelling.

The Hero's Journey has proven useful for unorthodox, avant-garde storytellers, a prime example being the director Darren Aronofsky (*The Wrestler* and Black Swan), who first encountered The Writer's Journey in classes at Harvard and consulted Vogler regarding the screenplay for The Wrestler.

14. How clearly you articulate the stages of the Hero's Journey is up to you.

In the early days, Disney adapted the myth of Persephone in The Goddess of Spring. She was drawn using a method called rotoscoping, where the animators traced over a live-action film of a person acting out the character's movements. Persephone ended up with unrealistic rubber hose arms. When the company began working on Snow White, Walt Disney decided that the animators needed to articulate the skeleton better. So, they drew dots where the joints were, giving the arms angles that more accurately resembled the natural movement of the human body.

Likewise, a storyteller has an artistic choice regarding to what extent he or she brings articulation to a story. Filmmakers have a lot of tools at their disposal to punctuate the different stages of the Hero's Journey, including music and architecture. They might have one musical segment for the Ordinary World and a more exotic one for the Special World. Hitchcock sometimes punctuated his films with stairs.

Vogler likes clear articulation but warns that, if you show the joints too expressly, the audience will get ahead of you or be disappointed. It is useful to compose to the joints but remember to flesh it over later, like the animators did in Snow White.

15. When writing a TV series, think about fractals.
Fractals are designs that are exactly the same at every level of magnification. Similarly, the Hero's Journey should work at all levels, with every shot, scene, episode and series of episodes each having a beginning, middle, climax and end.
16. The Hero's Journey can be applied to short films.
Commercials can fit in every stage of the Hero's Journey, so short films should be able to do so too. Vogler has written about this on his blog, where he says that "the absolute bare minimum, I would venture, is an implied Ordinary World, an efficient Call to Adventure, a Threshold Crossing, an Ordeal (or Resurrection) and a Reward (or Return with the Elixir). In reality, almost always the other pieces are either implied or present in truncated form, and the audience will labour mightily to fill in any blanks you leave."
17. Take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding stories.
In developing his theories about storytelling, Vogler has drawn on his knowledge of the military, Disney, physics, human dynamics, psychology and vaudeville. In his most recent book, Memo from the Story Dept.(2011), Vogler conducts a dialogue with the Columbia University film professor, David McKenna (whom he describes as "virtually [his] twin brother in New York"), in which they discuss — among other things — some of the influences on their work, including vaudeville, Propp's Morphology of the Folktale and Theophrastus' The Characters.
18. Finally, "Trust the Path".
Each storyteller is not the first or last on the path but has a unique view. You should trust your own instincts and the stories you have been given to tell. In other words, trust the story — it knows the way. Go out and tell the best stories you can because the world needs them.

GETTING PUBLISHED!

CDI (Carpe Diem Intelligence) English writers' fellowship

Carpe Diem Intelligence will be publishing writers starting from Christmas 2012, then every two years a new writer will have the chance to be published, selected from the creative pool of writers online; you've got to be on it to win!

Publishing 101

Getting published varies from country to country here's an idea of how to start:

- Get a literary agent

  then or in the search for….

- Submit Manuscript

  An agent's interest must be won before they represent you and your work. The enquiries you submit to them must be as polished as your MS. Your package must include a cover letter, an addressed stamped envelope, three chapters of the MS - or about 10,000 words, and a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the full work.

- Write a Cover Letter

  Your cover letter should be one page and its first paragraph must capture their attention. But avoid hyperbole like "a sure-fire bestseller!"

- Try to send it to publishers (Carpe Diem)

  Not usually successful, but work a try.

- eBooks & Kindle/ Amazon Self-Publishing

  eBook publishers like Amazon, Smashword, and Lulu will help digitally format your work and make it available to online buyers. The royalties vary, and you'll need to create your own marketing campaign, but your work will be out there. If sales happen to raise a publisher's eyebrows, you might even get offered a print deal.

- Vanity Press

  Publishers that print on demand.

Places to practice writing when you get home:

- Clear the kitchen table
- Go to the garden shed
- Tuck into a beanbag in the corner
- Cafes and Libraries
- Go on CreativeSharing.org,
  Look out for the book **Writing: A Brief Introduction**

A final hint on…

Overcoming writer's block

- **Go outdoors**: Take a walk, come back and try again.
- **Go to an art exhibition**: Really examine the work, put yourself in the artists mind while they were working, then go to a nearby place to write.
- **Listen to music**
- **Meditate**
- **Find a writing buddy**! Meet up regularly.

Bibliography & Further Reading.

Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey*. Michael Wiese Production; California: 2007
Voytilla, Stuart and Petri, Scott. *Writing the Comedy Film*. Michael Wiese Production; California: 2003
Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*. New World Library; California: 2012

Various online sources.

WRITE A SAYING & PASS IT ON

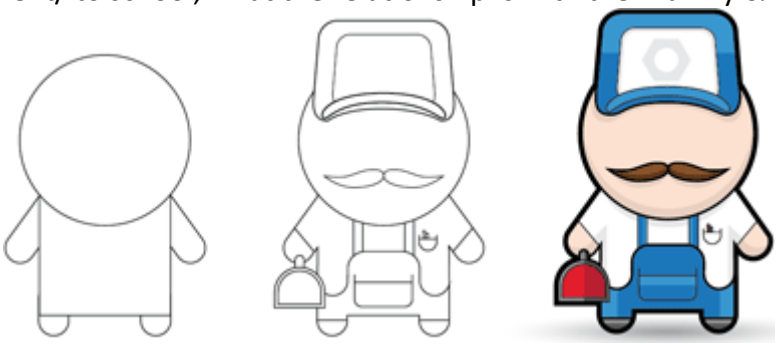
E.g. Once upon a time…

Worksheet 1.0

CREATE A CHARACTER

Do you remember the characters from earlier?

The Hero, The Shadow, Mentors, Herald, Threshold Guardian, Shapeshifters, Tricksters.
Have a go at creating your own character. Think about, physical description: age, height, eye/hair colour, backstory: where they went/ to school, what the relationship is with their family & the other characters.



Worksheet 1.1a

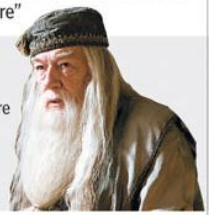
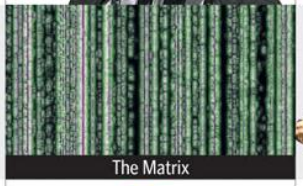
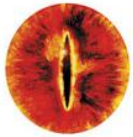
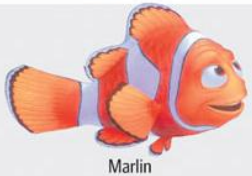
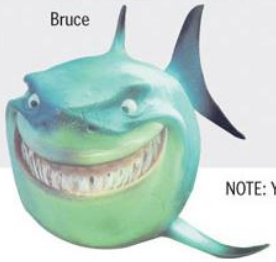
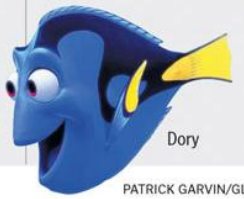
Continue this story:

It was a dark and stormy night...

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Worksheet 1.1b

With A THEME - “Capitalism” or “Fading Beauty” write a short story, screenplay or poem.

	The Hero "More or less human in character, through whom the world destiny is realized"	The Ancient Mystagogue "The Wise Old Man... whose words assist the hero through the trials and terrors of the weird adventure"	The Enemy "Great and conspicuous in the seat of power"	The Threshold Guardian "The first problem of the hero to surpass"	The Shape-Shifter An ambiguous character whose loyalties and values are not always clear	The Trickster Comic relief, to offset the dramatic tension
"Harry Potter" series	 Harry Potter	Dumbledore 	Voldemort 	Quirrell 	Snape 	 Ron Weasley
"Star Wars" series	Luke Skywalker 	 Obi-Wan	Darth Vader 	Stormtroopers 	 Han Solo	 C-3PO and R2-D2
"The Matrix" series	Neo 	 Morpheus	 The Matrix	 Agent Smith	Cypher 	There's not much to laugh at in "The Matrix."
"Lord of The Rings"	 Frodo	Gandalf 	 Sauron	Aragorn 	 Boromir	 Merry and Pippin
"Finding Nemo"	 Marlin	 Crush	 Darla	Bruce 	 Gill	 Dory

SOURCES: Joseph Campbell, "The Hero With a Thousand Faces"; Internet Movie Database

NOTE: Your opinion may vary.

PATRICK GARVIN/GLOBE STAFF

THE HERO

THE SHADOW

CARPE DIEM INTELLIGENCE

THE MENTOR

THE HERALD

CARPE DIEM INTELLIGENCE

THRESHOLD GUARDIAN

SHAPESHIFTER

CARPE DIEM INTELLIGENCE

TRICKSTER