

COURSE DETAILS – WEEKEND WE0099

TITLE: COMPELLING STORY WRITING, 1 – PLOT AND CHARACTER

TUTORS: LED BY GREG MOSSE

LEVEL: BEGINNERS/INTERMEDIATE

GENERAL CONTENT OF COURSE:

COMPELLING STORY WRITING, 1 is an enjoyable and varied weekend course for beginner to more experienced writers who want to develop a clear sense of *plot* and *character*. It is designed to stimulate and unblock participants' creativity by using a variety of teaching and learning techniques. (A description of these techniques is available in the course timetable notes below.)

A careful mixture of teacher-led classes, individual study and collaborative writing, the course uses a variety of visual stimuli, including paintings. The course includes question-and-answer and professional advice. (In order to provide time for private writing, one of the afternoon sessions on the Saturday will be replaced by an extra after-dinner session on Saturday evening.)

The overall goal of the course is to help the participants to make objective, writerly judgments around planning and developing *plot* and *character*.

Within this overall goal, the weekend focuses on reinforcing the following key points:

1. a story is a sequence of imaginary events
2. however interesting the events, readers need characters to get them involved in the story
3. a gripping plot is driven by convincing characters
4. the events of the story happen because of what the characters are like
5. how characters react to events in their story reveals what the characters are like
6. in each scene the author must be aware of whether they are trying:
  - a) to show more about each character (depth)
  - b) to show characters changing and growing (progression)

**Health and safety:** The tutor instructs students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. There are no health and safety restrictions on access to the teaching spaces in the absence of the tutor.

THE TUTORS: The course is led by author, translator and educator Greg Mosse.

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MATERIALS FOR THE COURSE:

**Please bring with you:**

Laptop, if you have one                      Notebook                      Pencil                      Pen

Students also have access to PC's in the IT Suite or Library.

General timetable for 2–9 day courses – each course starts with a welcome session on the first evening of the start date of the course and is followed by 2–9 days depending on the length of the course.

<b>Arrival Day</b>	From 4.00pm 7.00	Arrival for residential students. Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner. Dinner.
<b>Daily</b>	10.30 12.45pm	Coffee.                      3.30                      Tea. Lunch.                      7.00                      Dinner.
<b>Departure – last day</b>	10.00am 3.30	Residential students are asked to vacate rooms. Tea then departure.

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## COMPELLING STORY WRITING, I

## COURSE TIMETABLE:

Day	Time	Session	Content
Friday	19h00-20h00	Dinner	<i>Introductions</i>
Friday	20h15-21h15	Session 1	<b><i>Beginnings</i></b> A rapid, wide-ranging introduction to the weekend, focusing on opening paragraphs from a selection of fiction and non-fiction titles suggested by participants on the course. These will be examined to identify how successful authors give early clues to <i>character, style, atmosphere and genre</i> .

Day	Time	Session	Content
Saturday	9h15-10h30	Session 2	<b><i>Who?</i></b> What constitutes a character? When does a 2-dimensional idea of a person become a <i>believable, 3 dimensional</i> protagonist?
Saturday	11h00-12h30	Session 3	<b><i>Relationships</i></b> Using photographs taken by the course leaders and submitted by the participants, we will develop ideas for possible stories, focusing on the relationships between the characters in the paintings. We will concentrate on the way our stories grow out of <i>what our characters are like</i> .
Saturday	14h00-15h30	Session 4	<b><i>Synopsis / story</i></b> Using a data projector, we will write a collaborative <i>synopsis</i> which can be typed and shared simultaneously using a large screen. Once we are happy with the overall structure of the story, we will use the remaining time to begin the <i>full text</i> of the story. At the end of this session, we will give each participant a copy of the <i>story so far</i> ; on disc or on paper.
Saturday	16h00-17h30	Session 5	<b><i>Private writing</i></b> Participants are invited to use the time between tea and the after-dinner session to <i>develop ideas</i> begun collaboratively in session 4.
Saturday	20h15-21h15	Session 6	<b><i>Sharing</i></b> In this short 1-hour session, we will hear participants read their various <i>developments</i> of the ideas we discussed in session 4.

## COMPELLING STORY WRITING, I

## COURSE TIMETABLE – CONTINUED

Day	Time	Session	Content
Sunday	9h15-10h30	Session 7	<p><b><i>Who does what?</i></b></p> <p>In pairs and small groups, participants will write sequences of events and, independently, character descriptions. We will then combine the characters with the events to see how one is shaped by the other. We will see how one character will create <i>more new narrative opportunities</i> than another.</p>
Sunday	11h00-12h30	Session 8	<p><b><i>Unexpected</i></b></p> <p>It is very important that writers surprise their readers from time to time. This session will focus on how, having established a character, authors use <i>reversal</i> to intrigue and hold their readers.</p>
Sunday	14h00-15h30	Session 9	<p><b><i>Question and answer</i></b></p> <p>This session will focus on reinforcing the following <i>key points</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a story is a sequence of imaginary events</li> <li>2. however interesting the events, readers need characters to get them involved in the story</li> <li>3. a gripping plot is driven by convincing characters</li> <li>4. the events of the story happen because of what the characters are like</li> <li>5. how characters react to events in their story reveals what the characters are like</li> <li>6. in each scene the author must be aware of whether they are trying: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to show more about each character (depth)</li> <li>b) to show characters changing and growing (progression)</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Participants will be able to ask <i>questions</i> of the facilitators and of each other and share their appreciations of what they have learnt or rediscovered.</p>