“Never have I known a student body as ardent, as learned, as profoundly gifted as the students with whom I work at Yale.”

—Louise Glück, Rosenkranz Writer-in-Residence
Creative writing is a powerful part of literary study, forever at the heart of the Department of English at Yale. It is a deep way of knowing our world and finding a place for your voice in it. In workshops and seminars, through campus readings and close contact with writers, and above all with a strong sense of community, creative writing classes at Yale give students the tools and resources to help them become the writers they can be.

In creative writing classes at Yale, close attention is paid to the fundamentals of craft. The voice of each student is nurtured and challenged through intensive workshops and individual conferences. Students are given the closest attention in their work, as teachers guide them towards a wider scope and more urgent depths.

In our workshops, we ask ourselves, what does this story want to be? How could this essay be made more vivid, more startling, and less like anything else we've read before? We're committed to helping our student writers produce the most powerful, moving, and compelling work that they are capable of producing.

We offer classes in poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. One can find courses in such specific forms as humor, young adult literature, food writing, literary adaptation, the long poem, journalism, and writing drama for television.
With the skills introduced in the classroom, many graduates have gone on to distinguish themselves in their respective fields. Some have written influential plays or have written for the screen and television as well. They have become staff writers at such magazines as *The New Yorker, The New York Times, Mother Jones*, and *The Atlantic*. Many have published award-winning works of fiction and poetry collections. Others work as editors at the most important publishing houses in the country.

“At Yale, creative writers fail and succeed and grow together, so by the end of the semester, you’ve learned as much, if not more, from your peers’ work as from your own.”

— Charlie Polinger, ’13, Director, Playwright, Actor

“I know it sounds crazy, but in Anne Fadiman’s writing class, I could actually see and feel my writing get significantly stronger each week.”

— Brian Reed ’07, Producer, *This American Life*

“Part of the tremendous power of Yale’s writing program is that it asks you to build deep bonds – with professors, and also with fellow students who are passionate about words.”

— Sarah Stillman, ’06 Staff Writer, *The New Yorker*

“In writing classes at Yale, I built a community of other writers: writers to look up to, to mentor, to chew over ideas with, to exchange publishing and job opportunities with, and to edit and be edited by.”

English 123

“Introduction to Creative Writing” is the on-ramp to creative writing at Yale. It teaches the craft of writing through an intense focus on the building blocks of words, images, and sentences in fiction, poetry and drama. Frequent visiting writers allow students close contact with influential authors. Through workshops in seminar, students produce a final portfolio containing substantial work in all three genres. Unlike upper level workshops, English 123 (like its nonfiction counterpart English 120) does not require a writing sample, application, or past workshop experience.

Reading for Craft

In these classes we read poetry and fiction from a writer’s point of view. Each week we approach our reading with a different, specific question in mind. How, for instance, were the characters so thoroughly developed in a short story by Alice Munro? How does Terrance Hayes use line breaks to carry us through a poem? Brief writing exercises on weekly themes prepare students for final projects—a complete story or a portfolio of poems. The results run toward surprisingly powerful work, often from students who’ve never written fiction or poetry before.
**Intermediate & Advanced Courses**

Our upper level writing classes continue the instruction of our introductory courses with small workshops focused on individual genres. In these classes, students create a community of fellow writers and readers. Across multiple drafts and revisions, students hone their craft together. Applications, including a portfolio of writing, are required for admission.

**The Writing Concentration**

The Writing Concentration offers English majors who are serious about their creative writing an opportunity to create a complete program of studies. In the senior year, students complete the Writing Concentration Senior Project as the culmination of their studies in the craft. Like the senior essay, the senior project is read and commented on by a second faculty member who confers with the project’s advisor. Students present their work in an annual evening group reading, “The Concentrators Ball.”
Our Award-Winning Faculty

Our outstanding writing faculty are widely published and critically acclaimed. They have been recipients of the Pulitzer Prize, Los Angeles Times Book Prize, National Book Critics Circle Award, Pen/Faulkner Award, American Book Award, The Berlin Prize, The Bollingen Prize, The National Humanities Medal, Martin Luther King Memorial Prize, and American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for Literature, among many others, as well as fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Guggenheim Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation.

Visiting Writers

The number of visiting writers we host each year makes our campus vibrant center for creative writing. Visitors have included Amitav Ghosh, Malcolm Gladwell, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rita Dove, and Karen Russell. Reading series in fiction, poetry, and the essay are hosted by the English Department, the Beinecke Library, and by groups across campus. They include, among others, the Schlesinger Visiting Writers Series, the Windham Campbell Prizes, the Yale Collection of American Literature Reading Series, and the Grad Poets Reading Series.