

Bennington Young Writers Awards Preparation

A 20-Week Creative Writing Programme - Fiction, Nonfiction or Poetry

Develop a distinctive voice, build literary craft and revise an original piece for one chosen creative-writing category.

20 weeks, 20 sessions, 90 minutes per session. Four stages of five weeks each.

Rolling skills training. Entry eligibility and the intended award cycle are checked before enrolment and again before submission.

Provisional competition identification: prepared on the assumption that "Benjamin writing" means Bennington Young Writers Awards. Confirm before sharing for enrolment.

Stage and Progression	Wk	Session Topic	Core Content	Student Deliverable / Feedback
Stage 1 Literary Reading, Voice & Craft 5 weeks / 5 sessions Notice how writers create perspective, tension, imagery and emotional effect. Deliverable: Reading journal, craft exercises and category choice	1	The Writer, the Reader and the Award	Assess writing interests; check grade, category, sponsor and independent-authorship requirements.	Writing diagnostic, notebook and eligibility plan
	2	Reading for Voice and Perspective	Study how literary choices shape what a reader notices, feels and understands.	Two close-reading analyses and a voice exercise
	3	Specificity, Image and Language	Practise concrete detail, image, sound and precise language appropriate to the chosen genre.	Two original craft exercises with reflection
	4	Form, Tension and Movement	Explore scene and structure in prose, or line, stanza and turns in poetry.	A genre-specific form experiment
	5	Choosing a Creative Category	Compare the student's fiction, nonfiction or poetry interests and review early work.	Category choice, foundation portfolio and Stage 1 report
Stage 2 Original Material & Project Design 5 weeks / 5 sessions Develop student-generated material into a coherent literary project. Deliverable: Project brief, exploratory drafts and structure plan	6	Gathering Original Material	Develop ideas from the student's observations, memories, reading and imaginative exploration.	Student-authored idea notebook and two project options
	7	Perspective and Central Tension	Choose narrator or speaker and define the tension, question or emotional movement.	Project brief and perspective experiment
	8	Designing the Work	Plan scenes, reflective movement or a poem sequence without imposing an essay formula.	Story, essay or poetry structure plan
	9	Exploratory Drafting	Test openings and key passages; check factual responsibilities in creative nonfiction.	Two exploratory passages or poem drafts
	10	Project Workshop & Commitment	Discuss human-reader responses and select the project with the strongest potential.	Confirmed project plan and Stage 2 progress report
Stage 3 Drafting & Human Workshop 5 weeks / 5 sessions Build a complete work in the chosen genre and evaluate its effect on readers. Deliverable: Complete first draft or poem sequence and first review	11	Drafting the Opening Movement	Establish voice and stakes in prose, or the opening image and movement in poetry.	Opening prose section or first complete poem
	12	Developing the Centre	Sustain scene, reflection or imagery; manage pacing, contrast and complexity.	Middle sections or developing poem sequence
	13	Earning the Ending	Develop an ending or poetic turn that grows from the work and avoids explanation overload.	Ending draft and complete work in progress
	14	Completing the First Draft	Assemble the selected prose work or 1-3-poem entry and assess its intended reader effect.	Complete first draft and writer self-reflection
	15	Human Workshop I: Structure and Effect	Receive tutor feedback on coherence, tension and what the work actually communicates.	Written human feedback, revision plan and Stage 3 report
Stage 4 Revision, Authenticity & Submission 5 weeks / 5 sessions Revise for depth, voice and control, then prepare the chosen competition entry. Deliverable: Final creative entry, revision portfolio and sponsor pack	16	Substantive Revision	Rebuild weak scenes, reflective sections or poem order while preserving the student's voice.	Revised full work and change log
	17	Human Workshop II: Voice and Depth	Examine perspective, emotional complexity and language choices with a human reader.	Second written feedback report and revised manuscript
	18	Line Editing and Reading Aloud	The student revises rhythm, diction, syntax and unnecessary words, then proofreads aloud.	Student-edited manuscript and read-aloud notes
	19	Human Review III: Final Quality	Check the selected category, accuracy where relevant, text count and sponsor readiness.	Third written review and final candidate
	20	Final Reading & Submission Preparation	Complete student corrections; confirm sponsor approval, account route and required materials.	Final creative entry, sponsor checklist and Stage 4 report

What Students Complete and Receive

One final creative-writing entry. Choose one category: one short story, one personal/creative nonfiction essay, or 1-3 poems. Current rules cap all submitted text, including titles, at 1,500 words in total.

One original-development portfolio. A student-authored notebook, two project options, a project brief, structure plan and exploratory drafts. The student generates the entry's ideas and language.

One reading and craft portfolio. Six close-reading analyses and six original craft exercises completed across the programme, selected for the chosen genre.

Three human reviews and four progress reports. Written human-tutor feedback at three manuscript stages, successive student revisions, a change log and a parent report at each stage.

One sponsor and submission package. Typed English final entry, full-text word count, sponsor approval checklist, authorship record and verified account route. Grade 12 entry currently requires a prior college application to Bennington.

For students in grades 9-12 who enjoy literary reading and creative writing. Choose one category; exercises and feedback are adapted to that genre.

Allow 4-6 hours of independent reading and writing each week, rising to 6-8 hours during manuscript revision. The courses prepare competitive entries; awards are decided independently by the competition organisers.

Human-led instruction only. Bennington prohibits AI in brainstorming, drafting and revision. Check sponsor approval and the Grade 12 application requirement.

Official reference: <https://www.bennington.edu/events/bennington-young-creators-awards/bennington-young-writers-awards>