

The Lifelong Learning Centre Creative Writing Competition Guidance

We have put together some pointers for you as you get started with your entry!

Short stories

Watch this animation on this page, created for one of our classes, which introduces some short story conventions:

<http://www.llc.leeds.ac.uk/news/creative-writing-competition>

Short Script

If you would like to write a script then have a look at this interview conducted by Charlie Brooker with a number of scriptwriters. You will need your username and password to access the interview via Box of Broadcasts (BoB).

http://bobnational.net/programme.php?archive=12613&view=flash_player

For script formats check out the BBC Writersroom:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/insight/scriptsmart_formats.shtml

Poetry

If you are working on a poem then you may find Simon Armitage's checklist useful!

The Poetry Book Society's Top Tips for Poetry Readers , by Simon Armitage:

Here's a Poetry Testing Kit. It can't produce a precise result in terms of a poem being good or bad - it's more of a finger-in-the-wind, rule-of-thumb job, that might tell you why you like a poem (or why you don't). Remember, the reading of poetry is not an exact science: it does not require the wearing of protective glasses and need not be carried out under strict laboratory conditions.

The Eye Test - How does it look on the page? Has some thought gone into its shape? Does the form bear some resemblance to the content?

The Magic Eye Test - If you look for long enough into the poem, will it reveal another meaning or picture hidden within it? Will further readings uncover further meanings and new rewards, and so on?

The Hearing Test - How does it sound? Read it out loud - does it work on the ear in some way?

The pH Test - A test for Poetic Handicraft. Does the poem use recognizable poetic techniques, of which there are hundreds? Are the techniques subtle, or do they poke out at the edge?

The IQ Test - Not a test for Intelligence Quotient, although that might come into it, but a double test for Imaginative Quality and Inherent Quotability: does the poem

have some sort of dream life you can respond to: does it have lines or phrases that might stick in the memory?

The Test of Time - Would the poem outlive its immediate circumstances? This doesn't mean it has to be 'classic' or 'great' or have some eternal message - it might just be a case of the poem withstanding a second reading. Remember, good poems can create their own contexts, and have poetic value way beyond their apparent shelf-life or sell-by date.

The Test of Nerves - Somebody once said that a poem shouldn't just tell you not to play with matches, it should burn your fingers. In other words, does the poem create a sensation, rather than simply an understanding?

The Lie Detector Test - Poems don't have to tell the truth, but they have to be true to themselves, even if they're telling a lie. Give the poem a thump - does it ring true?

The Spelling Test - Does the poem cast a kind of spell or charm? At the very least does it create a world, even just a small but distinct world, capable of sustaining human life; a world whose atmosphere we can breathe and whose landscape we can inhabit for the duration of the poem?

The Acid Test - This is the final test and the one that really counts. It's like a test for the mystery ingredient that separates a truly great tomato sauce from its rivals. It's the X-factor, although it might be to do with the author's experience of poetry. Is it possible to write a good poem if you've never read one? Somehow I doubt it.

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http://www.poetrybooks.co.uk/PBS/pbs_new_to_poetry.asp