

AS91101: Writing Portfolio

2.4: Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing
Version 2

6 Credits

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas.	Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas and is convincing .	Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas and commands attention .

Being There

Outline

This task allows students to put into practice the creative writing skills they have been working on over the past few weeks in class.

A key feature of any gothic text is the setting, which cleverly reflects the key themes of the novels. Often, we can also learn a lot more about the characters in these texts as they colour their descriptions of the setting around them with their emotions.

Possibly, gothic fiction has one of the most distinctive settings in literature. It is characterized by a foreboding sense, dark colour palettes and aggressive weather. The buildings often show signs of decay or age and the characters within these settings are never quite 'normal'. To put it simply, a gothic setting encourages a sense of discomfort in the reader.

Your task is to write a description of a place that develops a sense of fear, discomfort or unease through the use of common elements found in gothic fiction.

You will be using Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* as a starting point. You will then choose your own scene (whether it is from a class or self-selected text OR an actual setting that presents this idea) and develop a description which evokes a sense of being there, of the place, its people, its sights and sounds. Your writing will be rich in imagery combining elements of both poetry and prose. Your writing in this particular style will be between 500 and 600 words.

Preparation

- Read and consider Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*. This can be found at the end of this handout. Notice the structure of the piece. Thomas commands you to look and listen to this small town which is just not quite 'comfortable'. Finally, he asks you to 'come closer now' and enter the dream world of people as they sleep, "From where you are, you can hear their dreams". He manages to, via his use of rich imagery and clever manipulation of language, draw the reader in and make them feel as though they really are in the small town.
- Select a scene that you can describe easily. You want it to be something that you can easily imagine. Sometimes, using a place you have been to before or know well is helpful. Some ideas to help you settle on a scene:
 - Look at pictures of your scene
 - Go for a walk in your scene
 - Talk to other people who know the scene well
 - Think about a place you know well and twist it slightly so it fits your purpose.
- Observe/research the scene carefully. Take notes on what you encounter. Record what may seem like small details, such as what particular people are doing or what parts of the scene look like. It might be that the trees move in a certain way when the wind blows or the sun striking a building makes it look different.
- Develop an outline for your description. There is a planning template attached to this blog post if you wish to use it.
- Plan how you will present the uneasy, foreboding and fearful atmosphere. Consider the common devices and characteristics of the settings we have explored. The brainstorm we came up with is on our class blog.
- Consider the elements of creative writing that we have explored over the past few weeks:
 - Personification
 - Metaphor and Simile
 - Use of Prepositions

- Connotative Language
- Strong and precise verb choices
- The use of syntax for effect (short sentences to build or break the tension. Long sentences for a drawn-out feeling).
- Showing emotions and actions rather than telling them.

The Final Piece

Size

Once you have completed this task, your piece should be approximately 500-600 words in length. This will allow you to develop a scene rich in imagery that pulls your reader in.

Conditions

The drafting and editing of your piece will happen in class over **8 periods**. You may use any of the notes you have created in class during our exploration of creative writing. You may seek feedback during the first 4 periods of writing. After this time, your teacher will be “hands off” and it will be up to you to polish your work.

Scope

Your proficiency with spelling, grammar and punctuation be assessed as well as your ability to organise your writing in a clear and cohesive manner. The development and clear expression of your ideas will allow you to create a piece that appeals to a reader.

Advice

You are advised to refer to the slides and notes that are on the class blog in relation to creative writing.

You are encouraged to seek advice from your teacher early in the drafting process to ensure you are on the right track.

Consider how to split your time between what you want to say in your essay and how you say it. It is wise to remember that this is a writing assessment so **how** you convey your ideas and the effectiveness of this is essential to your success in this assessment.

Exemplar

Under Milk Wood

Dylan Thomas

To begin at the beginning:

It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black, the cobble streets silent and the hunched, courters'-and-rabbits' wood limping invisible down to the sloeblack, slow, black, crowblack, fishingboat-bobbing sea.

The houses are blind as moles (though moles see fine tonight in the snouting velvet dingles) or blind as Captain Cat there in the muffled middle by the pump and the town clock, the shops in mourning, the Welfare Hall in widows' weeds. And all the people of the lulled and dumbfound town are sleeping now.

Hush, the babies are sleeping, the farmers, the fishers, the tradesmen and pensioners, cobbler, schoolteacher, postman and publican, the undertaker and the fancy woman, drunkard, dressmaker, preacher, policeman, the webfoot cocklewomen and the tidy wives. Young girls lie bedded soft or glide in their dreams, with rings and trousseaux, bridesmaided by glow-worms down the aisles of the organplaying wood. The boys are dreaming wicked or of the bucking ranches of the night and the jolly rodgered sea. And the anthracite statues of the horses sleep in the fields, and the cows in the byres, and the dogs in

1. *A direct statement to open about the time of year.*
2. *A complex sentence sets the scene. Many details are linked together to set up the place where this description takes place.*
3. *Clear imagery- simile and personification- are used to set the tone.*

Onomatopoeia is used to introduce the next paragraph. The sound sense will be targeted.

4. *Very specific word choices develop the scene.*

5. *The syntax is long and drawn out. It reflects the*

the wet nosed yards; and the cats nap in the slant corners or lope sly, streaking and needling, on the one cloud of the roofs.

You can hear the dew falling, and the hushed town breathing. Only your eyes are unclosed to see the black and folded town fast, and slow, asleep. And you alone can hear the invisible starfall, the darkest-before-dawn minutely dewgrazed stir of the black, dab-filled sea where the *Arethusa*, the *Curlew* and the *Skylark*, *Zanzibar*, *Rhiannon*, the *Rover*, the *Cormorant*, and the *Star of Wales* tilt and ride.

Listen. It is night moving in the streets, the processional salt slow musical wind in Coronation Street and Cockle Row, it is the grass growing on Llaregyb Hill, dewfall, starfall, the sleep of birds in Milk Wood.

Listen. It is night in the chill, squat chapel, hymning in bonnet and brooch and bombazine black, butterfly choker and bootlace bow, coughing like nannygoats, sucking mintoes, fortywinking hellelujah; night in the four-ale, quiet as a domino; in Ocky Milkman's lofts like a mouse with gloves; in Dai Bread's bakery flying like black flour. It is to-night in Donkey Street, trotting silent, with seaweed on its hooves, along the cockled cobbles, past curtained fernpot, text and trinket, harmonium, holy dresser, watercolours done by hand, china dog and rosy tin tea caddy. It is night nedding among the snuggeries of babies.

Look. It is night, dumbly, royally winding through the Coronation cherry trees; going through the graveyard

quiet and calm nature of the town at this time of the night.

6. A clear personification of the town. It is alive on its own.

7. There is a clear sense of 'something special' happening if you listen very closely.

8. The use of second person narration ensures the reader imagines themselves in the scene.

9. Instructions to listen and look are direct. The beauty that will emerge if you follow the instruction is clear after the imperative.

10. The tension is built through the use of short, single word or phrase sentences.

of Bethesda with winds gloved and folded, and dew doffed; tumbling by the Sailors Arms.

Time passes. Listen. Time passes. Come closer now.

Only you can hear the houses sleeping in the streets in the slow deep salt and silent black, bandaged night. Only you can see, in the blinded bedrooms, the combs and petticoats over the chairs, the jugs and basins, the glasses of teeth, Thou Shalt Not on the wall, and the yellowing dickybird-watching pictures of the dead. Only you can hear and see, behind the eyes of the sleepers, the movements and countries and mazes and colours and dismays and rainbows and tunes and wishes and flight and fall and despairs and big seas of their dreams.

From where you are, you can hear their dreams.

11. The appeal to the single reader is clear- this night is just for you if you look and listen carefully. If you pay close enough attention, you will see the sleepers dreams.