



# ELA Virtual Learning

# **Creative Writing**

April 28, 2020



# Creative Writing

## Lesson: Tues., April 28

**Objective/Learning Target:** Students will learn new types of sentence structures.



## Creative Writing

**Review:** Yesterday, we practiced adding detail into “syntactic slots” using John Gardner’s techniques in *The Art of Fiction*.

## Creative Writing

**Review:** In his collection of essays, *The Art of Fiction*, John Gardner shows us that, in English, sentences “tend to fall into meaning meaning units or syntactic slots—for instance, such patterns as:

1

subject

1

subject

2

verb

2

verb-modifier

3

object,

or

## Creative Writing

**Review:** For example,

(1)	(2)		(3)
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>(preposition)</b>	<b>Object</b>
<i>The man</i>	<i>walked</i>	<i>down</i>	<i>the road.</i>

( ) = syntactic slots



## Creative Writing

**Review:** *syntactic slot 1 loaded with detail*

*The old man, stooped, bent almost double under his load of tin pans, yet smiling with a sort of maniacal good cheer and chattering to himself in what seemed to be Slavonian, walked slowly down the road.*



## Creative Writing

**Review:** *syntactic slot 2 loaded with detail*

The old man walked slowly, *lifting his feet carefully, sometimes kicking one shoe forward in what looked like a dance, then slamming the foot before the sole could flop loose again, grinning when it worked, muttering to himself, making no real progress* down the road.



## Creative Writing

**Warm-up:** Try another sentence, either from your own writing (choose a simple sentence structure), or the following!

*The dog fell asleep on the rug.*





## Creative Writing

**Model:** *syntactic slot three loaded up with detail.*

*The dog fell asleep on the rug, **the scratchy jute rectangle by the door where his master had twisted off his shoes each day after coming in from the garden.***



## Creative Writing

**Practice:** Today, we're going to try another exercise that could very well turn into a short-short story (a term that typically indicates a story of about 250-1,000 words in length). From the following slides, choose a *translated* prose passage and "mistranslate" it back into English, keeping the sentence structures exactly the same.

Take a look at an example first...

## Creative Writing

**Model (1/2):** (translated lines) Obviously, this is a foreign language. What I'm considering here is sentence structure. I see two commas in the first sentence, then six *and* an em-dash in the second.

În micul oraș Vevey, în Elveția, există un hotel deosebit de confortabil. Există, într-adevăr, multe hoteluri, pentru divertismentul turiștilor este afacerea locului, care, după cum își vor aminti mulți călători, este așezată la marginea unui lac remarcabil de albastru - un lac pe care îl privește pe orice turist să-l viziteze.



## Creative Writing

**Model (2/2):** (“mis”translated lines) *Without using a translation tool*, I am going to “translate” the words into English. Obviously, I don’t know the foreign language. What I’m focusing on is sentence structure!

In the middle of Venice, in Italy, there exists a hotel designed for maximum comfort. Existing, it is said, among the best of all hotels, still tourists can become lost if they are too trusting, careless, duped through their friendliness and vanity, stuck forever among the margins in remarkable boredom and solitude - a peaceful and private eternity for the price of their willingness.



## Creative Writing

**Practice:** These were actually lines from “Daisy Miller” by Henry James. Had I translated back using an online tool, it would read like this:

At the little town of Vevey, in Switzerland, there is a particularly comfortable hotel. There are, indeed, many hotels, for the entertainment of tourists is the business of the place, which, as many travelers will remember, is seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake—a lake that it behooves every tourist to visit.



## Creative Writing

**Practice:** However, we're not interested in translating. We're interesting in "mis"translating. Any words I translated correctly were by accident. **Keep the sentence structure; invent the words.**

This will help us stretch and flex our ability to compose new kinds of sentences. And, you never know, you might just come up with a riveting introduction to a story!

## Creative Writing

**Translated passage #1:** Hvernig læra þeir alla þessa hluti? Hundar til sýningarstarfa eru kenndir vandlega af körlum sem eru færir um að höndla þá; en þegar öllu er á botninn hvolft kenna þeir sig meira en karlarnir kenna þeim. Það lítur út eins og áunnin þekking kynslóða hafi verið send frá hundi til hunds. Hvolpurinn, sem er kominn úr keppni sauðfjárhunda, byrjar með allar deildir hans sem beinast að sauðfjáreldi; hann er hálfmenntaður um leið og hann fæðist. Hann getur ekki hjálpað til við að vinna sauðfé en fæddur tónlistarmaður getur hjálpað til við að vera söngleikur, eða hebreskur getur hjálpað til við að safnast saman í siklum. Það er ræktað í honum.

## Creative Writing

**Translated passage #2:** Bhí sé - mar ní fhéadfadh aon amhras a bheith ann faoina ghnéas, cé go ndearna faisean na linne rud éigin chun é a cheilt - bhí sé ag sleamhnú ag ceann móin a chuaigh ó na rachtaí. Ba é an dath a bhí ar shean-pheil, agus cruth ceann amháin nó níos lú air, ach snáithe nó dhó de ghruaig garbh, tirim, cosúil leis an ghruaig ar chnó cócó, a chur ar na leicne bháite. Bhí athair Orlando, nó a sheanathair b'fhéidir, tar éis é a bhualadh ó ghuailí Págánach ollmhór a bhí tosaithe faoin ngealach i réimsí barbaracha na hAfraice; agus anois chuaigh sé ag snámh, go réidh, go síoraí, sa ghaoith nár scoir riamh ag séideadh trí sheomraí áiléir theach gruama an tiarna a mharaigh é.





## Creative Writing

### Additional Resources/Practice:

[Purdue Owl on Sentence Variety](#)

[“Common Errors,”](#) from *The Art of Fiction* by John Gardner.

(see pp. 104-106)