

Modeled Writing Umbrella Project–Reading Like a Writer

There are two principle ways to get better as a writer: to practice writing yourself, and to read good writing. The intersection of these two skills is the ability to analyze and understand why good writing *is* good. When a reader can appreciate the components that go into good writing, they then gain perhaps the most important tool they have as a writer: the ability to edit and revise their own work– word by word, sentence by sentence. The goal of this project is to improve your abilities as a close reader and writer. The title is inspired in part by Francine Prose’s book, *Reading Like a Writer*.

There will be three sections to your portfolio: Close Reading, Modeled Writing, and Reflection.

Please note that the due dates I have assigned below are subject to change depending on scheduling! I will let you know if I need to change a deadline. I will assign the second semester dates as we get closer to winter break.

Close Reading:

Due Date: October 20th

- Copy five sentences you admire from published work. They should be from different authors and vary in length and style. Provide analysis (a few sentences to a paragraph) of each sentence and why you admire it. The goal is to be incredibly specific in your analysis–word choice, punctuation, rhythm, ideas, structure, story.
- Copy two paragraphs you admire from published work. They should be from different authors. Provide analysis of each paragraph and why you admire it. Again, the goal is to be incredibly specific.

Modeled Writing:

Length will depend on the selection we choose to model. In general, I would say from 1-3 pages would be sufficient, although if the exercise inspires a longer piece, that’s good too. We will meet once to read/analyze an example of published work. You will then write your own version or “model” inspired by the example. We will meet again as a group two weeks later to read and critique your drafts before handing in a final revised version. Dates of first two workshop sequences are below:

Workshop One: Sept. 11th
Revision Workshop: Sept. 25th
Revised piece due: Oct. 2nd

Workshop Two: Nov. 6th
Revision Workshop: Nov. 27th
Revised piece due: Dec. 11th

Workshop Three: TBD
Workshop Four: TBD

Reflection: Fourth Nine Weeks

Due date: TBD (Sometime in late May)

- 1-2 page comprehensive, honest account of where you are as a writer at the end of the year. Discuss the shifts, triumphs and struggles of the previous year, along with conveying your direction for the future...where you see yourself, what intentions (if any) you have with your writing...and so on.