

Welcome, Everyone!

This eight-week course is aimed at beginning writers who wish to write novels. I'll post some exercises and writing that will clarify each section. We'll be using Moodle* as our platform to meet, post, discuss, and read. Expect to post comments 4-5 times a week. We'll look at examples of beginnings, developing characters, and crafting memorable endings, as well as discuss your own work, because that's what we're here for. This class is designed to support you as you start that journey to write a novel and leave you with the tools to carry on after it ends.

· Moodle is an easy way for us to meet in the cloud (I'm learning it, too!). I hope to have 2 meetings on Skype with everyone who has access to the Internet.

In my experience, there are only a handful of books a writer needs to own:

Writing Fiction—Janet Burroway (any edition, I currently use the 8th edition)

Elements of Style—Strunk & White

What If?—Pam Painter

You won't need these to complete this course, but I recommend you have them no matter what you're writing. They are lifelong vital sources and writing examples that you can reach for anytime you're stuck.

January 8--Create dimensional characters

January 15—Show versus Tell

January 22—POV—How does point of view work? Who is the narrator of your novel?

January 29—Use setting to create layers in fiction

February 5—Write dialogue that reveals your characters

February 12—Plot—the story arc, how to approach

February 19—Returning to Plot

February 26—What constitutes a Chapter? How to Love Revision.

March 2—Farewell and words to go on

In Week #1. We'll begin with some posted reading excerpts of famous novels, And we'll be thinking about favorite characters from novels you've read, and then writing your own. Creating/developing characters. Whose story are you writing? How to create a narrator who is right for the novel.

In Week #2. Show Versus Tell. The lifelong words of any kind of creative writing.

In Week #3 Intro to plotting. After years of frustration with other definitions and ways to approach this, I made up an exercise to use myself. It's simple, it keeps your story on track, and best of all, written in pencil.

In Week #4. Setting and layering. Setting to me is the foundation of your story. No matter where you're writing about, this exercise shows how to use description, when to include history, and current events in the timeline of your novel.

In Week #5 Dialogue is difficult to get right. Through posted examples and a few exercises, you'll learn how and what kind of dialogue is called for, and a simple way to make dialogue sound authentic. Dialogue is different for every character who speaks in the novel. Making this happen is much easier than you'd think.

In Week #6 Point of view. Ways to use it, Choices every writer faces, and narrative stance. What is the best way to place your narrator in your story.

In Week #7 Returning to Plot, because now that you have one, you can learn how to carry it through the entire story. We'll also talk about Revision.

In Week #8 Devoted to Revision, What constitutes a Chapter? Making a writing life, and writers groups.

Looking forward to meeting everyone!

Jo-Ann Mapson

Jo-Ann Mapson has been teaching some form of creative writing for over twenty-five years and at every level. She has published twelve novels, many short stories, poems and essays. One of her novels was made into a movie for television. She describes her teaching theory as down to earth, using tools you already have, and essential to success, reading widely, developing a community, and making the occasional bonfire.