



LOFT LEARNING LEVELS

Are Loft classes for beginning, intermediate or advanced writers?

Educational offerings are tailored to writers at all levels of development, including:

Basics: Classes identified as “Basics” are designed for the creative writer at the earliest stage of development. Perhaps you love to write and have done so on your own, but have never taken a class. Basics classes may cover more than one genre and provide a safe environment for exploration.

Beginning: Classes identified as “Beginning” are for the writer who has little experience in formal writing instruction, but knows they want expand their knowledge of the craft, usually in a specific genre. Terms of craft are introduced and practiced.

Intermediate: Classes identified as “Intermediate” are for the writer who has had formal instruction in creative writing but seeks to deepen their understanding and hone their craft. Often these individuals have been writing for a few years. Generally, students in these classes are familiar with genre specific craft terms such as “plot” and “point of view” or “rhythm” and “alliteration.” Intermediate classes may introduce the workshop model, though classes do not exclusively focus on student texts.

Advanced: Classes identified as “Advanced” are for the writer who has been writing for some time but seeks assistance and feedback with revision. Advanced classes usually have a workshop component to them, which means student texts/manuscripts are shared and critiqued by the entire class. It is assumed that students have workshop experience. All students at the advanced level have completed a manuscript of some sort, whether that is a short story, a personal essay, a memoir, a novel, or a collection of poems. Students at this level do not need to be published, though many are.

Open to All Levels: Classes identified as “Open to All Levels” sounds like what it is: the class content can be useful to a writer at any level. Perhaps these classes offer instruction on networking for writers, or perhaps they focus on a specific area of craft.

Youth classes: Classes for youth are intended for learners between the ages of six and seventeen. The Loft divides classes into the following age-based categories: 6 – 8 years; 9 – 11 years; 12 – 14 years; 15 – 17 years. In addition, Loft teaching artists are comfortable teaching a variety of students, from youth learning basic literacy skills, to college preparatory youth hoping to brush up on essay writing before taking SAT exams.

Designating a class as a workshop: The workshop model of instruction operates as a roundtable discussion of student writing, in which participants provide critical feedback to each other’s work. In

other words, critique and commentary do not lie solely with the teaching artist. A successful workshop requires that participants are able to articulate why a piece/section/line of writing does or does not work. (For example, “I don’t like it” or “It doesn’t sound right” does not help a writer identify problems and revise. “The dialogue on page 2 was well-written, but seemed incompatible with the character’s actions,” points to a specific problem for the writer to consider.) Discussion is facilitated and contextualized by the teaching artist. While most advanced classes do not rely solely on the workshop method, it is integral to the success of each class that participants have practice with providing useful feedback to others’ writing.

Providing potential students with a clear class description indicating learning outcomes and the level of writing expected of students is key to successful enrollment. Teaching artists will also need to be flexible to meet the needs of students who self-select their writing level.