



JUST WRITE!



Quarterly Newsletter of the University Writing Center at UCF



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JUST WRITE!



LETTER FROM THE EDITORS:

We welcome you to the latest edition of *Just Write!*, a newsletter organized and sponsored by the UCF University Writing Center. This one was created by Amantia Menalla, Azlyn Cato, Courtney McCracken, Joheily Franco, Mia Pelletier, and Shia Kirby. As always, we'd like to thank our writing center leaders, Mariana Chao, Matthew Bryan, and Deborah Weaver. Their support has made this newsletter possible. Additionally, thanks to all our writers who take the time to bring their work to the center. Without you, we wouldn't have this cozy home away from home.

The UWC is and always has been a place that strives to embrace collaborative learning while engaging with writers from all backgrounds. A lot of different genres find their way into the writing center, and people from several studies come to work as tutors in the center, something we highlight in our Steps to Success column. As it turns out, anyone can be a writer, and we see that very plainly in this edition.

On that note, we're happy to introduce our seventh Flash Fiction contest winner, and—by popular demand—the triumphant return of our horoscopes column. We hope you enjoy perusing *Just Write!*, and we hope something here inspires you to come write with us!

FROM THE EDITORS:

AZLYN CATO, JOHEILY FRANCO, SHIA KIRBY, AMANTIA MENALLA, COURTNEY MCCRACKEN II, AND MIA PELLETIER



AZLYN CATO



JOHEILY FRANCO



SHIA KIRBY



AMANTIA MENALLA



**COURTNEY
MCCRACKEN II**



MIA PELLETIER

DIRECTORS WRITE

Professor Deborah Weaver Director of the UWC

Friday mornings this past spring, LIFE (Learning Institute for Elders at UCF) members paced outside the Writing Center windows around 9:40 a.m., waiting for me to open the doors at 10:00 a.m. Every week, we gathered in the WAC space for a writing workshop where they crafted and revised their personal, life stories. After much toil and deliberation, they read their work on April 4th at the Dr. Phillips Performing Arts Center during the annual UCF Celebrates the Arts event. Amongst their family, friends, and neighbors were a sizable group of writing center tutors seated near the front of the audience. Young people, who carpoled, dressed in their Sunday best, and came to listen to the tales of writers four times their age.

I worried when I encouraged the tutors to attend that they might find the stories of these old people unrelatable, even boring. But their reactions were just the opposite. After the readings, they commented on how they loved hearing about a pressure cooker struck by lightning, and how a navy nurse fixed a washing machine while her military husband was at sea, and how another woman survived a tornado and overcame her fear of bridges. I realized that our life stories do bring us together, regardless of age. We often forget how the power of our words can create a community or divide us.

Tutors, who engage with writers daily, may not be crafting personal stories, but tutors are helping writers choose the best words to convey a message, whether that be for one assignment or a dissertation. What we sometimes overlook in our tutoring practices is how helping a writer craft a message clearly and concisely for an assignment could result in them producing a text later that causes change or inspires something great to happen in the world. And if that seems like a far stretch to some of you, at the very least, the work we do here does convince writers that what they say matters. That words have power and influence. What we do in the center is important, and I am proud to work with such talented tutors who love talking about language almost as much as I do.



UWC STAFF ATTEND THE LIFE WRITERS EVENT

I thought the UCF Celebrates the Arts event was magical. Because of the writers who bravely shared their stories. Because of the tutors who came, listened, and supported these community writers. Because for one brief afternoon we sat in an astonishing room with floor to ceiling glass windows overlooking downtown Orlando where we celebrated writing.

WRITERS WRITE

Embracing Diversity: The Necessity of Authentic Representation in Young Adult Literature

Bianca Jimenez

UWC writer Bianca Jimenez explains the project bringing them into the center this semester!

As we bear witness to the rise of book banning and attacks on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in public schools and colleges, it becomes ever more important to be aware of the necessity of diversity and representation in Young Adult Literature (YAL). Compulsory education in the United States requires students to be proficient readers equipped with the comprehension and critical thinking skills to be able to make responsible and informed decisions in adulthood. However, with the increased opposition to diversity in books coupled with the nosedive in literacy skills since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the students in schools right now are being deprived of their right to access YAL with authentic representations of the complexity of adolescence and social issues that young adults will inevitably face in their lives.

I have devoted my time throughout my Master's in Education to bringing to light how essential diversity is to education. English teachers face immense scrutiny for the books they assign, such as *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton and *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. As a disabled Latina, I grew up without representation of disability or authentic representations of Latin American women in the books I read in school. It was not until adulthood that I had the freedom to seek stories that resembled my own. In my own text set, I put great care into providing a wide array of backgrounds and experiences.

My main text, *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo, is about a 16-year-old Dominican Afro-Latina girl facing the universal challenges of adolescence, coupled with unique struggles that come with growing up as a Latina in New York. Similarly, *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros is a story of a young Mexican girl who lives on Mango Street, a community with a higher population of people of color, experiencing “White Flight,” or the phenomenon in which white families flee communities that experience a sudden influx of people of color moving in. These stories represent the authentic social issues that must not be ignored in the United States. It is our history, our present, and our future. Reading books that reflect reality gives adolescents and adults alike the vocabulary to describe their experience and remind them that they are not alone. *The Poet X* and *The House on Mango Street* represent the struggle of what it means to be Latina, the story of Women, and our collective strength. It is imperative that students have access to YAL that is authentic to the adolescent experience in schools, because it is only then will we have a better understanding of each other informed by compassion and empathy. The censorship of books must be challenged in order for children to be equipped with an accurate representation of real life, to become better informed individuals.



TUTORS WRITE

MIA MITCHELL

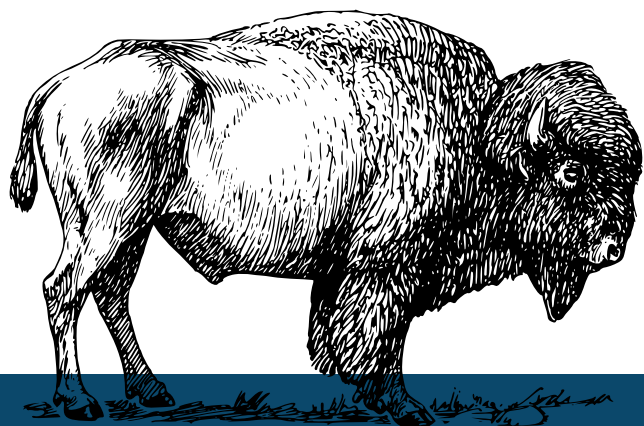
Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo. Will, will Will will Will Will's will? Rose rose to put rose roes on her rows of roses. No, I didn't accidentally copy and paste too many times on my keyboard. Those first three sentences are grammatically correct, but does that mean they are effective, or qualify as "good writing?"

"Good writing" is something that plagued me in school as I grew up. I categorized myself as "not good at writing," because I found it difficult to form every essay around five paragraphs, use academic-sounding words, and write the same three-point-thesis. However, ever since going through the first-year writing program at UCF and especially since I started working at the writing center, writing for me has turned into less of a chore and more of a medium for jotting down and expressing the ideas I have running around in my head.

Learning that I could write an essay with three or five or eight paragraphs sounds silly at first, but it truthfully broke the barrier that I had with writing. I have found that writers who have very distinct writing styles working on the same assignment can each have amazing papers, because writing is not just dictated by the way you write something, but by the content and purpose of your work. I enjoy getting to read personal statements because though I have seen numerous ways that writers have formatted their essays, it's truly the passion behind their writing that allows their voice to shine through and grab the audience's attention.

Never would I have thought that I would ever start a piece of writing by repeating the same word eight times in a row, but that's the beauty of writing; you can do (almost) anything as long as you do it with intent.

The biggest takeaway that I have for my writing while working at the writing center is that there is no end to the journey of learning to write. Rather than seeing writing as something to get good at one day and just stopping there, it's truly an extension of myself that will never stop developing. Just as we change as people when we go through life and learn new lessons, writing is similar: it also evolves with us. With this, I look forward to adding to my bank of writing knowledge as I continue through my journey at the writing center. I hope I can inspire others to see that their thoughts and ideas are important, and that they can produce amazing writing by freely expressing themselves.



LEGAL STUDIES

“For legal writing, there are two main types. The first is persuasive writing. This is done for opening statements in criminal trials, where the goal is to persuade a group of people about someone’s guilt. There’s also the type used for contracts, case briefs, and more.

While these writing styles are very different, there are a few things they have in common. The information that is presented must be as accurate as possible. While you can persuade an audience from one side to another based on how information is presented, you cannot change facts as it lessens your credibility as a legal writer.

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

“Like the discipline itself, writing done within Cultural Anthropology is motivated by the exploration of human behavior. Anticipate your experiences in this major to be no different. Summarizing research, crafting presentations, and annotating ethnographic studies are just a few ways you will have the opportunity to deepen your cultural knowledge through writing.

Learning to implement cultural relativity and thoughtful language is the biggest tip I can offer to writers in this environment.

JOURNALISM

“Studying Journalism requires you to be curious, driven, attentive, and skeptical. To be successful in this major, you’ll first need to be curious about the world around you.

Prepare to get out of your comfort zone, talk to strangers, and be persistent. Start paying way more attention to everything around you- local and global news, public events, and people in your community. One thing I’ve learned in this major so far is that a good journalist should be able to find a story anywhere. Attention to detail is another crucial aspect.



Furthermore, regardless of what type of legal writing you’re doing, you should always be precise. When conducting legal writing, for most case briefs it is always best to keep them on one page because you are shuffling through so many.”

- **RACHEL STILLWORD**

To accomplish this, writers must assume the responsibility of educating themselves on the differing practices, traditions, and norms of the cultures they do not occupy.

Make certain your writing is intentional and accurate. If you have accomplished this, Cultural Anthropology will be a fulfilling experience not just for your writing but for your character as well.”

- **MAGGIE HAGARTY**

When working on a story we’re taught to check, check, and double-check all names, spellings, sources, and facts before sending it off. Two areas of focus are offered, electronic and digital print. Both are a large time commitment, and you’ll be expected to work on self-driven stories and projects for a final portfolio that determines your graduation eligibility.”

- **AZLYN CATO**



Starlight, Stars Write!

SHIA KIRBY

Horoscopes- a fun and interesting topic. Whether you indifferently know your sign or have religiously memorized your chart, it's always fun to see how each sign factors into our daily tasks, especially writing! We won't explore the complex variations of one's astrological makeup (there are a LOT of planets out there!), but we will explore the 12 signs and how their writing is influenced by the universe:

Capricorn: Detailed and organized, Capricorns benefit greatly from good structure. A strong outline before writing is a Capricorn's best friend and strongest suit!

Cancer: Cancers are always down to take on relaxing hobbies. They can be found curled up in their room, journaling the day away!

Aquarius: Aquarians have so many thoughts and so few pages to put them down on. They experiment with writing techniques to best make sense of all these unique ideas!

Leo: A Leo's writing should be in the spotlight alongside them! Leos are more than equipped to turn their writings into speeches and presentations.

Pisces: Sweet and emotional, Pisces are in tune with the words of their heart. Pisces should play around more with poetry and flash fiction to truly express these feelings!

Virgo: As strong communicators, Virgos know how to use their words to help others. A Virgo's best strength in their writing is their ability to connect with their audience!

Aries: Strong and confident writers like Aries are always innovating new ideas to write about. There is never a dull topic in a paper that an Aries has touched!

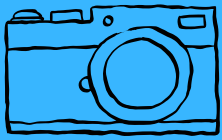
Libra: Libras' balanced attitudes reflect greatly in their writing. They are able to combine their bold ideas and their love of art and creativity seamlessly into their work!

Taurus: Tauruses work diligently and timely on any writing tasks. If there is ever a need for a research paper of any kind, a Taurus should be the first one notified!

Scorpio: Scorpions pour their heart and soul into their writing to discover the truth behind each word. They have a wide variety of sources and facts at their disposal!

Gemini: Geminis excel in any writing sphere due to their high creative intellect. Hand them a pen and paper, then prepare for magic!

Sagittarius: Their passion for curiosity and freedom leads Sagittariuses to dip their toes into many genres of writing. When it comes to a Sagittarius, why stick to just one?



This Semester at the UWC



Workshops, Open Mic, Book Swap, Knights Write

SHIA KIRBY

From the enchanted forest where stories were shared to the résumé must-haves discussed over Zoom, this semester at the UWC was full of fun, charm, and of course, writing! Here's the scoop on everything the center did this semester:

Knights Write Panel

Interested in understanding the behind-the-scenes investigations of the UWC? Or maybe you want more insight as to what tutors learn through their sessions and seminars? Then you won't want to miss out on the UWC's future panels at the Knights Write Showcase.

Four tutors at the center were invited to speak at our Knights Write Panel on February 7th, 2024. They talked about the day-to-day functions of the center, activities and events offered throughout the semester, important things they've learned during their time working at the UWC, and the ongoing research being done to improve consultations for both writers and tutors. In addition, a few tutors ran a booth during the duration of Knights Write to give faculty and students more information about the center.

The UWC is proud to have such amazing tutors who were able to represent and showcase our center's values, a love of writing, and UCF Pride!

Valentine's Day Book Swap

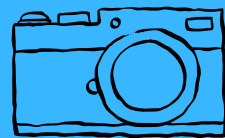
On Valentine's Day, the Writing Center became cupid and helped UCF find its one true love- reading! Right outside the UWC, our tutors hosted a Valentine's Day Book Swap, where anyone could stop by, drop off a book, find a new story to fall in love with, grab a snack, and write inspirational messages on hearts that would go on to decorate the outside of the center.

There were around 70 total visitors, made up of students and faculty combined. Tutors who worked the booth remarked on the ability to share the joy of reading and positivity to people around campus with warm smiles and a good book!





This Semester at the UWC



Workshops, Open Mic, Book swap, Knights write

SHIA KIRBY

Open Mic Night

What made Open Mic Night so magical? Well, not only did several incredible speakers share their stories, but the decorations, lighting, and music all helped to build the enchanting event. On March 14, 2024, the UWC hosted its Spring Open Mic Night in Trevor Colbourn Hall. This year's theme was "Enchanted Forest," and writers were encouraged to tell fantastical tales and put on their most whimsical outfits.

The event featured special guest Kianna Greene, a MFA Poetry Candidate and Graduate Teaching Associate at UCF, who shared a collection of her brilliant and heartfelt poetry. The winner of our Open Mic Contest is Genevieve McFadden, who has that "Anybody can start to write. Use your writing to be true to yourself and inspire others along the way!"

We'd like to send out a special thank you to all the incredible volunteers and Kianna Greene who helped to make this fantasy a reality, and another thank you to all readers and viewers who participated in the event!



Virtual Workshops

Over the course of this semester, the UWC hosted four workshops. They covered the how-to's of cover letters, résumés, synthesizing sources, revision, and recognizing common writing errors. Mckenzie McElroy, a graduate tutor at the UWC and member of the Workshop Planning Committee, told us more about her favorite workshop—Résumés and Cover Letters. She revealed that the high engagement between the tutors running the workshop and the writers who were present created a fun environment to improve growth and learning in these genres of writing.

If you missed out on these insightful workshops, you can get updates on upcoming workshop dates as well as resources regarding the topics discussed at our website: UCF University Writing Center!

TUTOR'S CHOICE FLASH FICTION

ELEMENT: MAGENTA

One of my great prides in this life is that I am difficult to wake from my dreams; then, I am hardly phased by the world that lies outside. This capability was not adopted by choice. As many things do, this knack crept its way into my brain, starting when I began my stay in this apartment, located unfortunately close to an elevated railroad. As train horns no longer disrupt me, it was quite strange that what did the job was nothing but a simple message on my television.

During my first waking glance, the strangeness of the previous scene almost distracted me from the screen's message itself—almost. My still-hazy eyes struggled to make out the “PLEASE STAND BY,”; however, loud and clear, I could identify the vertical lines of rainbow that preceded it. Sure, my vision was fuzzy, but these colors announced themselves silently to some; yet, they screamed for me.

The dimmest hue I still made out was that warm yellow. Old memories still yelled and clawed at me, and reluctantly, I let them in. In particular, this memory seemed it should go by some other name, as it isn't a moment I reminisce about, but rather a thought that has persisted since I began living it. When staring at the television, I was staring at the same faint yellow he held on that first night.

He ordered a Corona. He was at the bar, alone, and he wanted to talk to girls—and he ordered a Corona. I accepted the invitation to poke fun.

“Ew.”

“What? I ordered my beer wrong? ‘Sthat something you can even do?”

“Yeah. All you have to do is order exactly how you did, and you've done it wrong. The only difference between that ‘drink’ and piss is the can it's in.”

I'm new to the area. This sentence is etched into the back of my teeth. Every few months, it rings true again, and I must declare it with everyone I encounter. Moving homes at a nomad-like speed, I've become an expert in meeting people, and I've learned that you mustn't patronize your prey during the first approach. On this night, I slipped up. I introduced myself with a coy grin rather than a well-intentioned one, and yet, he didn't leave. We talked until the bar performed its nightly door-slam-and-lock in our faces, and we walked home together.

This green line on my screen was from the trees during night walks that became routine faster than we could stop ourselves from getting comfortable. Most nights, the same bar, the same trees, until the leaves began their yearly rot, and embellished the woods with their seemingly-new branches. The sound of leaves crackling under our feet swiftly turned into snow crunching. This winter, that was when it started. The distance.

Blue insisted itself upon me, as it is tonight. While we walked home one night, the blue lights from those cars, office buildings, broken streetlights, and maybe even the mood of the world, reflected that coolness upon the snow beneath my feet. The magnetism of the ground was deemed strong by my eyes; I couldn't look away, my only other option was to look at him, and in that moment, he was telling me about how he “met someone.”

The last color I see tonight is magenta. Every night after the last, I staked out in that bar, waiting for him to come back, but the lonely boy who ordered a disgusting beer wouldn't return, for the world has now returned the best thing it gifted me. He's gone now. It's his fault, those magenta kisses on his collar erased our past of yellow and blue and green. The last thing he saw was gray, the last thing he heard was the train horn, and the last thing he felt was my palm on his back. Even then, I graced his back lovingly, tenderly, in a way he won't forget, even though it'll forever be his last persisting thought.

The red and blue flashing lights and matching siren seem magenta in this sleepy haze. They're reflecting this shade onto the once-white sheets of his I sleep in now. My television is fixed now, it's clear. I can watch the magenta lights get closer and closer as police arrive. I shut my eyes, I try to dream. For once, I cannot—those screaming colors are screaming at me, and I can't ignore them now. I only see magenta, everywhere.



Barrett Vargas

CONTEST WINNER



About the Author:

Barrett Vargas is a junior at the University of Central Florida. Born and raised in Florida, she has lived here her whole life. Now, living in Orlando, she loves to write, visit record stores, and watch movies in her free time. In school, she studies Advertising, Health Administration, and cinema. When not working at UCF's Undergraduate Admissions office or Arboretum, she also loves to write and create content for the organizations she is involved with.



Our Flash Fiction contest is a running column of Just Write! The contest is held each semester.

Our next element is **GOLD**. Open submissions will run through November 21st, 2024. To submit visit this link or scan the QR code: <https://tinyurl.com/uwcgold>

Upcoming Contest:

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

- Original Flash Fiction 750 words or less
- The poignant and meaningful use of our next element: **GOLD**
- You are free to explore any theme you wish!

WHAT WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR:

- Fanfiction
- Excessive or over-reliance on profanity
- Gory, sexual, and/or graphic imagery
- Writing that promotes racism, sexism, and/or other forms of discrimination.



JUST WRITE!



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UWC.CAH.UCF.EDU

SCHEDULE AN
APPOINTMENT WITH
ONE OF OUR
AWESOME PEER
TUTORS!

Check out the
UWC Instagram:
[@ucfuwc](https://www.instagram.com/ucfuwc)



RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

Publication Opportunities:

Convergence Rhetoric: A peer-reviewed online journal for upper-division undergraduate writing in the Humanities!

- <https://convergence-rhetoric.net/>

Cypress Dome: Publishes an annual literary magazine of student work and hosts a variety of events.

- Open submissions are November 1st–December 31st.
- cypressdome.org

Stylus: A journal for the exemplary writing and research produced by students in ENC 1101 and 1102.

- Check with your ENC 1101 or 1102 professor.
- writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/

IMPRINT: A UCF student magazine supported by the Department of Writing and Rhetoric.

- writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/imprint

The Pegasus Review: A UCF literary magazine published twice yearly.

- Open submissions all year!
- floridareview.cah.ucf.edu/



Future Events:

UWC:

- Check out [@ucfuwc](https://www.instagram.com/ucfuwc) on Instagram for more updates about upcoming events, or visit our website for more details
<https://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/events/>

Additional Resources:

Health Care Research & Writing Lab:

- Assists students in healthcare programs in strengthening their research and writing skills
- Available both in-person and online. For more information visit our website at
<https://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/about-hrwl/>