

8-10 Writing & Literature (Lost Tools of Writing 1/Lit. 1)

Summary Class Description: Good writing does not spring up from formulas or systems. There is no "secret" or "break-through" method that will make your students good writers or you a good writing teacher. **Good writing is the product of dedicated practice developing key skills.** To write well one must look at it like an art or a craft that demands careful attention and persistent hard work. In fact, learning to write well is not so different from learning to play the piano or sculpt a human figure or shoot a three point shot in basketball.

*The Lost Tools of Writing*TM uses time-tested exercises as tools that will guide your student to become better writers.

This program is based on the idea that all writers (from 14-year-old students to Pulitzer Prize winners) face three universal problems: every writer has to come up with good ideas, organize those ideas clearly, and express them effectively.

Three Canons of classical rhetoric have been adopted to solve those problems.

- **Invention**, a series of tools and skills that teach aspiring writers to come up with good ideas.
- **Arrangement**, which is made up of tools and skills that help students organize their thoughts in an organized, effective, and coherent fashion.
- **Elocution** (a fancy word for style), which is made up of skills and tools that allow the young writer to creatively, effectively, and purposely express their thoughts.

Once the aspiring writer grasps how to employ these tools effectively the stresses and confusions that accompany writing begin to fade and with it the fear that often comes with writing assignments.

We will include literature in our discussing of the writing tools. Students will need to read one book, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, over the summer to be prepared for the first day of class. Other literature selections include:

The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury

Night by Eli Weisel

Selections from *The Odyssey* by Homer

And various short stories including those by O'Henry, Edgar Allen Poe, Guy de Maupassant