



WRITING CLASS MATERIAL

COMPILED & TAUGHT BY CLARA JACK.

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Title: Shaping your writer Identity

- WHO IS A WRITER?

A writer is a person who writes. Simple as that. A writer is a person who feels enough to document, to remark, to comment. A person who has something to say, and says it.

- Recommended Texts

1. 'Letters to a young poet' by Rainer Marie Rilke

(<https://kbachuntitled.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/rainer-maria-rilke-letters-to-a-young-poet.pdf>)

2. "Tell all the truth but tell it slant — (1263)

By Emily Dickinson

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind —”

3. Leonard Cohen on being a writer

“...If it is your destiny to be this laborer called a writer, you know that you’ve got to go to work every day, but you also know that you’re not gonna get it every day.

You have to be prepared, but you really don’t command the enterprise.

Sometimes when you no longer see yourself as the hero of your own drama, you know, expecting victory after victory, and you understand deeply that this is not

paradise — we somehow embrace the notion that this vale of tears, that it’s perfectable — you’re not gonna get it all straight. I found that things got a lot

easier when I no longer expected to win...

You understand that, you abandon your masterpiece, and you sink into the real masterpiece...”

4. Alive, Well and Breathing by Clara Jack on Medium

(<https://clarajack.medium.com/alive-well-and-breathing-5f633e7b4d50>)

• Further Reading

1. ‘On the Quest for Originality, recomb the familiar’

<https://behavioralscientist.org/on-the-quest-for-originality-recombine-the-familiar/>

2. A conversation between Bjork and Vuong

<https://www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/14347/bjork-ocean-vuong-in-conversation-another-magazine-aw22>

3. The audacity of writing from the margins

<https://www.intomore.com/culture/the-audacity-of-writing-from-the-margins/>

4. A laborer called a writer:

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2022/06/30/a-laborer-called-a-writer-on-leonard-cohen/>

5. Chimamanda on Storytelling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfzgtOuA-co>

6. Midnight in Paris (Film)

7. Dead Poets Society (Film)

WHAT SHAPES YOUR IDENTITY AS A WRITER?

1. Your distinct voice is the secret to being comfortable. Your distinct voice is more pertinent than expertise. Education can only shape what is already there. Say what you want to say the way you would say it. Experiment until you feel comfortable. Be a student, before you attain mastery, even then you are still a student.

2. What kind of writer do you want to be?

For pay or for you? No shame in either, you just need to decide and be true to it.

Who is a serious writer ? Oscar Wilde says not to take ourselves too seriously as writers.

3. Pseudonyms, sometimes we use pseudonyms to speak not because we are afraid but because we want to tell the truth slant. Some popular pseudonyms, ephelia, stevie smith etc

4. CRITICISM, COLLEAGUES & A COMMUNITY

Ernest Hemmingway once said that writers are a jealous bunch so remember that not always, but sometimes critique will be filled with spite. We see this in sex education. We must remember not to sacrifice our works on the alter of opinion or at the expense of adoration. It is important to belong to a community and have colleagues you can feel safe enough to share your work with. The pencilmarks fellowship offers community and collegial relationships yearly.

5. Research and Read

There is no secret to it, a writer must be a reader. They must be willing to listen and see what other people are saying. My reading list currently boasts more than 50 pieces and will be released in December. Research to properly flesh out your

imager. Write mostly about what you know, there is so much to explore right where you are even in fiction and speculative or science fiction. Tailor your reality.

6. Recomb the familiar

Return to your old work when you want to write something new. No one will prompt you like you. Let your work breathe and return to it, you will see new things.

Bonus point: Copyright

As a writer, copyright is inherent in your work from the moment it is codified.

Copyright gives you moral and economic rights. In cases of adaptation, licensing and related actions, you must secure both rights. Copyright in Nigeria is regulated by the copyright act 2022 which you can download here:

(<https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Copyright-Act-2022.pdf>)

For further info, read this article and there will be another class next year.

([https://oer.biu.edu.ng/wp-](https://oer.biu.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LEGAL_FRAMEWORK_FOR_COPYRIGHT_PROTECTION_IN_NIGERI.pdf)

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