

: creative non-fiction :
talking points

- life is [] than fiction
- impressions: what is non-fiction? What do you think about non-fiction?
autobiographies, biographies, travel-logues, reviews, investigative reports, documentaries, interviews, profiles, memoirs/diaries/journals, editorials, news-reports, essays, lab reports
- bias??? absolutely
- purpose of non-fiction: to... entertain, persuade, educate, disturb, provoke, inform, critique, promote, expose, unearth, investigate, reveal
- hybrid non-fiction; creative non-fiction; Gonzo Journalism – bringing in the elements of fiction – figurative expressions, slang, informality/conversational – and adding it to non-fiction
- more widespread than fiction; niche marketed; targeted to specific demographic groups
- steady income ???
- thematic/ topic/ event driven

: collecting the garbage: a pre-snapshot activity

1. Read the non-fiction selections by Emily Haines and Hunter S. Thompson.
2. Read each selection closely, critically, and critically.
3. Imagine that these two writers are giving advice on how to approach a blank piece of paper and write some "truths about writing" for an audience of future writers. Think of five (5) tips that they might suggest to writers on the strategies that they use (i.e. bias, sentences, style, relationship to other non-fiction, word count, etc.).

1

2

3

4

5

4. Be prepared to discuss.
5. Deconstruct Non-Fiction. Read three (3) non-fiction texts from on of the following on-line magazines:

Walrus
The New Yorker
Rolling Stone
Atlantic Monthly

See activity sheet for further instructions.

6. Arrange the words/expressions/quotes that you have collected during your **word:words:word squared:word infinite** journal activity and the **Deconstruct Non-Fiction** activity on a blank piece of paper. Try to fill up the entire space and make sure the writing is legible (do not mirror/mimic your teacher's terribly terrific penpersonship). Write/word process in clear BLOCK LETTERS.
7. Post the lists around the class. Anonymity is an option.
8. See Snapshot Activity (coming to a class near you).

DECONSTRUCTING NON-FICTION

a. Read the non-fiction selection and fill in the chart.

title _____ author _____

source _____

type of non fiction memoir autobiography/biography interview
 report review editorial other _____

| | |
|--|--|
| purpose of the TYPE of non-fiction | |
| purpose of THIS specific non-fiction text | |
| AUDIENCE for this specific non-fiction text. Explain | |
| style: use of vivid adjectives/ verbs (make a list) | |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <p>style: use of figurative expressions (make a list)</p> | | | | |
| <p>style: length of paragraphs (i.e. really long or excessively short/brief)</p> | | | | |
| <p>style: length of sentences. Count the number of short, medium and long sentences used in the first 500 words</p> | less than 5 words | between 5 and 14 words | between 15 and 20 words | more than 21 words |
| <p>style: sentence variety. Count the number of simple, compound, balanced / anti-thesis, and parallel sentences used in the first 500 words of the text</p> | simple | compound | balanced/antithesis | parallel |
| <p>conclusions: think about "rules" that the author might have used when writing the text. Comment on your impressions of the author's style and strategies.</p> | | | | |

Compile a list of the most interesting words, phrases, and figurative expressions and POST them with word:words:word squared:word infinite journal lists

“SNAPSHOTS”

Have you ever seen the FUJI commercial touting the ideal that “art is everywhere” while they take “snapshots” of parking lots? Parking Lots. Art. An oddly appropriate juxtaposition. It is even more odd when you consider that a commercial vehicle has provided the world with such a poignant, philosophical insight. Think NIKE’s Just Do It! campaign and you can see that money can infrequently drive intellect.

With writing, often a “snapshot” of an entire text will expose the “art is everywhere” mantra promoted by the likes of FUJI (although the sentiment has probably been expressed “freely” since humans could comprehend and conceive art). While reading is often engrossing and provoking, it can also be boring and time-consuming. But looking for “the art” in even the most boring text can keep your mind entertained and active; looking for the “art” in your own writing will help you transform ‘boring’ writing into entertaining and provoking writing.

The following are a mix of “garbage” words, phrases and excerpts – snapshots - from a variety of non-fiction texts (that are not boring) that “I” have determined to be ‘arty and spicy’.

1. forge a brand new identity
2. harbingers of dangerous cultural dilution
3. infused
4. mixed couples may be in vogue
5. deconstruct your face
6. surgically effeminized
7. morphing
8. who respond to an “echo” of their face
9. narcissism
10. echoism
11. frothy
12. gritty
13. eclectic
14. we watch open-air vendors in faded newsboy caps peddle fruit and vegetables like characters in a Dicken’s novel
15. impromptu
16. jolts to life
17. even being unique has become commodified
18. finical figure
19. delicate blend of invigoration and trauma
20. sartorial situation
21. serendipitous
22. tantalized
23. brutal rat trap
24. sketchiness
25. ruefully
26. wrought
27. like an optical riptide
28. absurdity
29. nuanced
30. murky
31. luscious yet unbearably murderous
32. the girl you lost to heroin
33. diabolical nor divine

34. spastic stupor
35. saccharine (not the sweetener for coffee)
36. insatiable ego
37. darkly laughing
38. ennui
39. plasticized
40. hidden quirks
41. randomness is addictive
42. elastocitizens
43. kinky buttons
44. irreverent deconstructionist
45. cartoonishly insidious
46. rendezvous with madness
47. marginality is sexy again

1. Post the list you have created (word:words:word squared:word infinite journal activity and the Deconstruct Non-Fiction word and figurative expression lists).
2. Consult the “garbage” that your co-writers have posted. Write down a minimum of 10 spicy word/expressions/quotes from a variety of lists. Use a minimum of 11 (including one from my garbage) of the “snapshots” to write a short non-fictionalized piece. You can write an Opinion (on a media product, a current event/issue), a Personality-Sketch/Profile (of a real/interesting person), a Travelogue, an Event Summary or any other creative non-fictionalized idea. Basically anything that is ‘true’. Add your own art to the ‘garbage’ art. Spice it up. Play with sentence lengths and types to make your writing more art than data.
3. Edit and revise. Use the “rules” that you have unearthed during your deconstructing activities (i.e. incorporate sentence length percentages, paragraph lengths).
4. Bring your FIRST DRAFT into class. Workshop it (let other writers read and critique your work). If you prefer to remain anonymous during this process, write a pseudonym that you only know.
5. Edit and revise. Use the “rules” that you have unearthed during your deconstructing activities (i.e. incorporate sentence length percentages, paragraph lengths) and the critiques from the workshop sessions to improve your FINAL DRAFT.
6. Add an image to add a professional bent to your piece. Hand in a hardcopy of the piece. Bold or italicize the snapshots you have used.
7. Hand-in your Deconstruction of Non-Fiction worksheets. Make sure that the conclusion is clearly articulated.

SNAPSHOTS RUBRIC

name

| FOCUS | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 4 + | mark |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|-----------------|
| snapshots | Use of snapshots are weak | Use of snapshots are adequate (some inaccuracies) | Use of snapshot are effective | Use of snapshots are sophisticated | Use of snapshots are sophisticated and powerful | /5 |
| non-fiction form | Use of non-fiction form is weak | Use of non-fiction form is adequate | Use of non-fiction form is consistent | Use of non-fiction form is consistent and engaging | Use of non-fiction form is consistent, sophisticated and engaging | /5 |
| humour (if applicable) | Use of humour is weak | Use of humour is adequate | Use of humour is cerebral | Use of humour is smart and cerebral | Use of humour is smart and cerebral; highly original | /10 |
| figurative expressions | Limited use of figurative expressions | Some use of figurative expressions | Uses figurative expressions well | Uses figurative expressions creatively | Uses figurative expressions poignantly and creatively | |
| sentences | Limited variety in sentence lengths and types | Some variety in sentence lengths and types | Uses a range of sentence lengths and types | Uses a range of sentence lengths and types to improve quality of writing | Uses a range of sentence lengths and types to heighten quality of writing | /10 |
| paragraphing | uses limited/minimal paragraphing strategies (i.e. paragraphs too long; unfocused) | uses some paragraphing strategies | uses paragraphing strategies | uses paragraphing strategies to improve the quality of the writing | uses paragraphing strategies to heighten the quality of the writing | /5 |
| editing / workshopping | Need to use editing and workshop strategies | Need to use editing and workshop strategies more effectively | Uses editing and workshop strategies effectively | Uses editing and workshop session strategies to improve writing; | Uses editing and workshop strategies to greatly improve writing | /10 |
| deconstructing | conclusions indicate minimal understanding of the writing process | conclusions need to be more critical to provide evidence of understanding of writing process | conclusions indicate some understanding of writing process | conclusions indicate understanding of writing process | conclusions indicate insightful understanding of writing process | /5 |
| comments | | | | | | /50 = /20 |

POSTED word:words:word squared:word infinite journal activity and the Deconstruct Non-Fiction word and figurative expression lists /10