



Sample Talks

Kathryn Craft is the owner of Writing-partner.com, a manuscript evaluation and editing service, and is now shopping around her second novel, *Dance of the Fallen Sparrow*. She has been active in the leadership of the Greater Lehigh Valley Writers Group since 2001, serving twice as president and twice as conference chair, and serves on the board of the Philadelphia Writers' Conference. She loves any event that brings writers together, so has attended writing conferences from Philadelphia to Maui, studying with Diane Johnson and Alice McDermott at the Sewanee Writers Conference in 2001, and she hosts writing retreats for women at her summer home in northern New York state. Over the course of two decades, she contributed hundreds of articles to *The Morning Call* and *Inside the Arts* (the newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Arts Council), on dance and other arts. She has bachelor and master's degrees in education from Miami University, Ohio. She is on the editorial board at The Blood-Red Pencil (bloodredpencil.blogspot.com), where she blogs about self-editing and other writing tips, and writes her own blog, *Healing Through Writing*, at www.kathryncraft.com.

Sample one-hour lectures:

PLAY JENGA WITH YOUR PROSE: HOW TO MAKE ROOM FOR YOUR READER

"Show, don't tell": it's a great place to start. But indiscriminate "showing" can create walls of words that build a barrier between the author and reader. Through examples from some of today's bestsellers, we let true literary artists show us how to write in such a way that we allow the reader's thoughts and memories to come to bear on the experience of reading.

TALK IS CHEAP! GOOD DIALOGUE? PRICELESS

Go ahead: open your characters' mouths and let the words fall out—on the first draft. Letting them talk is a wonderful way to get to know

them. But well-crafted dialogue carries greater potential. From a quick overview of mechanics we'll move into the fun stuff: analyzing masterful dialogue with an eye toward the ways in which it contributes to character development, pacing, setting, atmosphere and more.

DEADLINE, DEAD END, OR JUST PLAIN DEAD: WHEN IS YOUR WRITING COMPLETE?

A look at that end-stage dilemma of when—and how—to stop writing. A philosophical look at what other artists have to say on the matter adds perspective to a practical checklist that will help you answer the question: Have I completed my best work?

THOSE CRITICAL FIRST PAGES

Literary agents have a pile of reading each night that would put most people's lengthy to-do lists to shame. The only way agents stay sane is to quickly discard unworthy manuscripts. So how much of your book—this three-year-old child of your creativity—will an agent really look at? Perhaps only a few paragraphs—about all you would give a book when browsing in the bookstore. We'll take a look at what publishing industry pros—and your readers—expect from your opening pages.

13 SELF-EDITING TIPS & TRICKS

Most of us learned to write in school (and if you're lucky, you've since recovered from that parochial education through a whole lot of trial and error to discover what really works). But did you ever learn to self-edit? Here are 13 tips and tricks that will immediately apply a spit shine to your work.

THE LAST WORD ON ENDINGS

Books are sold at the bookstore by the strength of their opening pages—but sold word-of-mouth by their endings. We'll take a look at what contributes to a satisfying ending and provide a set of guidelines by which you can judge your own.

GET THAT STORY MOVING!

Let's face it: your reader's time is limited. If that reader is a literary agent or editor, she is dealing with an unprecedented number of submissions for a market pressuring her to be choosier than ever. At the first indication you can't keep the story moving, that novel you spent the last three years writing will be discarded for the next. In this session we take a look at the 12 most common story stalling mistakes I see in my work as a developmental editor, and talk about how to

reap the psychological tension and story movement that keeps readers hooked.

GET WRITING, GET PUBLISHED!

Writing is a lone venture—only the writer can get the words out of his or her head and onto the page. But the road to publication has been well-paved by those who've traveled it before, and there is no need for each new writer to draw his own map. This talk, which is flexible to the specific needs of the participants, will provide information and resources to the writer who is seeking publication.

GOOD FROM PAGE ONE (90 minutes)

A great talk for a library setting, this is a hands-on introduction to the procedures and subjectivity of the world of publishing as participants scope out books in their genre, decide what grabs them, then take a turn in the "hot seat" to defend their choice to the "panel of editors" created by the others in the group. We'll examine all the ways a book can seduce readers, but will they *buy* it? Wait and see!

COULD YOU BE A WRITER? (School presentation)

Take this (100% unscientific) quiz to see if you possess the characteristics of a successful writer—and learn what the life of a writer is like in the process.

Sample Hands-on Workshops (two hours each):

WRITING TO HEAL THE HEART

It has been said that change is the only constant in life. That doesn't mean it's easy. Even when it is something hoped for, like a new house or career, change can be jarring. Re-establishing a sense of self in the new circumstances can seem formidable—but writing is a great way to do so. This workshop will explore the ways in which writing can open the path to self-healing. Who knows? What was once a journal entry may become a poem that touches another, a newspaper essay that rallies a community, a magazine article that raises awareness, or a memoir that establishes a legacy. Even if you keep what you write private, writing will help you to find order amongst chaos, make complex feelings easier to manage, restore optimism, and feed your spirit. Many of us are too good at stuffing away our feelings. Let them out by putting them on the page—this workshop will get you started.

WORD DANCING

A word movement workshop! In this self-editing workshop for writers of fiction and nonfiction, we'll look at rhythm and word order and

paragraphing and the ways they contribute movement and tension to the page. We'll contemplate the effective use of silence. We'll look at when to trash the rules, grab your paragraphs by the scruff of the neck and force them to do your bidding. We'll play with ways to thrust your tour-de-force passages into the spotlight. Capturing your readers' attention is an admirable goal, but why stop there? With a little more effort, you can leave them breathless.

SAY THAT AND MORE: WRITING EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE

In this workshop, you will participate a series of exercises that will challenge you to improve your own dialogue writing. Prepare to leave with a whole new respect for this multi-tasking tool—and perhaps the germ of a new story idea, as well.

FIRST PAGE REBOOT

Powering up a story is so challenging that most of our writing mistakes are apparent on a story's first page—you know, that page the agent or editor or book buyer will look at to see if they're interested. What needs to be there, and how do you include it all seamlessly? In this advance submission workshop, Kathryn will assess participants' first pages against a brief synopsis of the larger story to see what works and what could use revision.