



Start the creative adventure of your life

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## CREATIVE WRITING COURSE

Cape Town \* Johannesburg \* Online

### ALLABOUTWRITING ONLINE CREATIVE WRITING COURSE

Do you have an idea for a book, a screenplay, a short story you would love to be writing, or a project you are struggling with? Or do you simply have a powerful urge to re-engage with your creative self?

Here's an online course designed to provide you with the skills and encouragement every writer needs to tell your own story. It allows you to work at your own pace and in the comfort of your own home – but with plenty of personal interaction and attention. It provides the best of both worlds.

We take a non-formulaic approach distinguished by the feedback and encouragement we give each participant in every module. It stimulates creativity and allows each writer to find their own individual voice. The course provides a range of skills to translate your vision into a publishable manuscript.

#### **How does it work?**

- The course which is run through our online network is designed to be completed within ten weeks.
- We'll release a new module every week. However, we are happy for participants to work at a rate which suits their lifestyle.
- It should take between two to four hours to complete each week's work.
- Each module ends in an assignment, which we recommend you give no more than thirty minutes to.
- You will receive personal feedback from Richard or Jo-Anne on every assignment.

#### **Who will benefit?**

- Anyone wanting to start (or finish) a novel, a screenplay, or a work of creative non-fiction.
- Those with no specific project in mind, but who long to unlock their creative selves.

## Course content:

Each of the modules tackles a key skill and challenges participants with carefully crafted writing exercises, to which we'll give immediate feedback. The skills focused on are:

- Finding your Voice
- Ideas: where to find and develop them
- Building characters
- Building the narrative
- Writing scenes
- Point of view
- Writing dialogue
- Beginnings, middles and ends
- Creating suspense
- Showing, not telling

## The Benefits of our course:

- Learn the skills to write both fiction and non-fiction.
- Writing practice in every module.
- Full feedback on assignments in every module.
- We promise to be honest, but kind.
- Enjoy on-going support in our online writers' group.
- A number of our former participants have been published.

**COST: ZAR 5500 / GBP 325 / US\$ 400 / EUR 365 / CAD 525 / AUD 525**

## FACILITATORS

Allaboutwriting is a creative partnership of internationally published novelist Jo-Anne Richards and award-winning scriptwriter Richard Beynon. In this, its tenth anniversary year, Jo-Anne and Richard use their unique combination of skills to offer a range of courses, workshops and retreats, all aimed at creating confident writers, sharing practical skills and providing a creative outlet for everyone – from beginners to more experienced writers. They operate from Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa, the canals and rivers of the United Kingdom, and they offer an exotic annual retreat in Venice.



**Jo-Anne Richards** is an internationally published novelist with a PHD in Creative Writing. Her first novel, [The Innocence of Roast Chicken](#), was originally published by Headline Review in the UK, but has recently been rereleased as one of the prestigious Picador Africa Classics collection. When it first appeared, it topped the South African bestseller list in its first week and remained there for fifteen weeks. Her novels include [Touching the Lighthouse](#), [Sad at the Edges](#), [My Brother's Book](#) and [The Imagined Child](#). Until recently, she spent 15 years as head of the Honours

Programme in Journalism & Media Studies at Wits University.



**Richard Beynon** is an award-winning film and television scriptwriter with a long and accomplished career in the industry. A former journalist, he has conceived, shaped and written scores of documentaries. He has written for – or headed the writing teams of – many of South Africa's most popular soaps from Isidingo to Scandal and S'gudi S'naysi. He is currently part of the writing team on the daily drama, Isibaya. He has lectured on writing for film and television at Wits. He has won numerous awards for his work

specifically in comedy, soap and children's drama.

## COURSE OUTLINE

**1. Finding your voice** – We give you the techniques to fight self-consciousness. Use skills such as free-writing and personal myth-making to develop a unique style and voice. Learn the skills to avoid self-judgment and to write with flair.

How journaling can help your writing. How to use personal writing to develop a writer's consciousness. How to view the world like a writer, developing the quality of active observation.

**2. Ideas** – Where does that first idea come from and how do you develop it from a fragment into a fully fledged outline. We give you some of the tools you'll need, from brain-storming to story-boarding.

**3. Building characters (real or fictional)** – Characters are the most important part of any narrative. If they don't hold us, if we don't find them compelling, we won't be drawn into their story.

Characters drive plot. The story should flow out of who they are and how they react. As readers, we should believe the story exists because of the people – the way they act, and how they react to events around them. How they react to what is said and done around them should make psychological sense.

We encourage you to look at what makes them tick. Then we transfer that knowledge to the development of characters that stand out from the page. We show you how to build compelling, psychologically believable people.

**4. What is the story?** – No matter how plot- or character-driven, every narrative will contain certain elements that we expect of a story. If an element is fudged or, in experimental writing, implied or left out altogether, it needs to be done artfully and for literary effect.

This is equally true for fiction and non-fiction. The successful creative non-fiction writer should be equally concerned with the elements of narrative, constructing a plot through careful selection of the material available to him.

Elbert Hubbard said that life was just one damned thing after another. This is not what we want in a story (nor, in fact, is it the ideal way of looking at life). Every story must have an arc that draws us through it.

**5. Writing in Scenes** - This module deals with the greatly under-rated, hugely important building block of any narrative: the scene.

This is an important skill for writers of fiction and non-fiction. When people talk of creative non-fiction having borrowed from the skills of fiction, this is the most important of them.

What do we mean by "writing in scenes", and how do we do it? The scene is the most basic element of "showing" rather than "telling". It eliminates the distance between your reader and the action. It drops readers into the middle of the action – to experience and interpret it for themselves.

If your story is a castle, its scenes are the bricks you will use to construct it.

**6. Point of view** – Literary point of view is far more complex than was ever suggested by the grammatical treatment of POV we were taught in school.

The decision you make on point of view is a crucial one. Change point of view and you will fundamentally alter the nature of your work. This module deals with the ways in which different literary POVs can be used, with many examples.

All points of view have advantages and drawbacks. But even some of those drawbacks can be used to your advantage. We look at these advantages and disadvantages in all their complexity.

We show how POV can assist you in fiction and creative non-fiction. We deal with successful POV switching, unreliable narrators, and some more experimental uses of POV.

**7. Dialogue** - A story can succeed or fail on its dialogue. Badly done, it is actively off-putting. Well done, it can take a mediocre story to another level.

We look at the uses of dialogue and how to deploy it most effectively. Dialogue is not speech as it is used in real-life. It is the appearance of real speech. How do you achieve this?

**8. Beginnings and Middles** - Once you have developed your characters and worked out the elements of your story, you are ready to begin. But where should that be?

This module looks at the importance of the first line, the first page and the first chapter (or equivalent). What are the jobs they should do? How best can they draw readers in and feed them just enough to keep them reading.

Then we look at the book's basic structure. How can it most successfully be structured? We take a look at some of the basics of keeping a story moving. How to avoid the dreaded sag, how to vary your pacing and avoid exposition.

**9. Suspense** - The word "suspense" tends to make us think of plot-driven thrillers. But our definition is wide. We like to see it as anything that draws the reader forward. This is as relevant for non-fiction writers as for novelists.

We look at the ways in which you can create an appetite for events yet to be described - a tension between the present moment, and the anticipated moment.

There is no story without some form of conflict. It's the essential ingredient that keeps us reading. Something's at stake, and the equilibrium is disturbed. In life, we long for equilibrium (unless we're a war correspondent). But in stories, when equilibrium's achieved, the story ends.

**10. Showing not telling** - We present a central truth about good writing: it is almost always better to show your story and your characters, than to tell us about them.

When you tell your readers something, you're explaining it to them. When you show your readers, you allow them to see, hear, taste or smell it for themselves. From this, your engaged and active readers make their own deductions about the people and events you've shown them.

We analyse exactly what we mean by "showing". And we look at the different ways in which we can achieve it, with extensive examples.

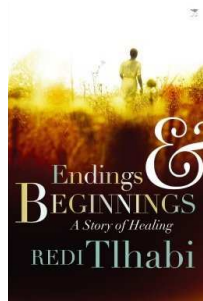
We look at detail ... in detail. Every detail has a job to do, whether it exists for textural reasons, or to show us more about characters or situations.

## TESTIMONIALS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PUBLISHED BOOKS BY PARTICIPANTS

This course has changed lives. There are few things in life that can lay claim to this honour. Allaboutwriting has (almost ... they can't write the whole book for you!) all the answers in their wonderful, warm, nurturing and "growing" writing courses. *Ingrid van den Berg*

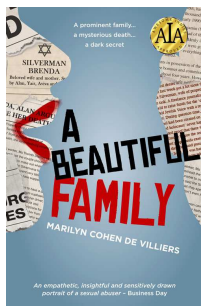
Discovering the Creative Writing Course has been one of the most satisfying landmarks in my life and certainly in my writing journey... [They] offer I believe an unequalled forum for prospective writers of all skill levels in this country. I am hooked. *Clive Goodchild-Brown*

I found Allaboutwriting's writing course expansive in style, educative in content and entertaining in delivery. Jo-Anne and Richard present a full gamut of learning and insight on creative writing seemingly effortlessly, with the welcome addition of real verve and wit. It was pure pleasure to participate. *Tim Cohen*, author of [A Piece of the Pie: The Battle Over Nationalisation](#)



Allaboutwriting really did help me. A great deal. I'm very proud of my association with them. *Redi Tlhabi*, author of [Endings and Beginnings](#) and winner of the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award

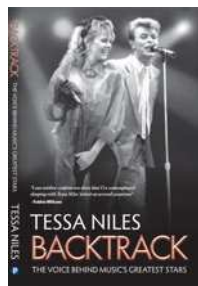
Having sent three of my best-selling authors, Redi Tlhabi, Bonnie Henna and Gia Nicolaidis, to Allaboutwriting and having been a student myself, I would recommend the course to anyone, from an aspiring writer to an already established writer looking to refresh and hone their skills. Jo-Anne is a nurturing teacher and an absolute joy to learn from. *Thabiso Mahlape*, Jacana Media



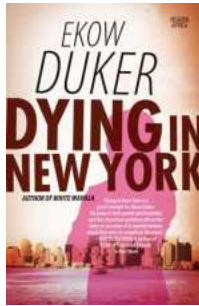
I joined the course because I wanted tips on how to go about writing a novel. I got what I signed up for. However, I achieved a lot more. I honestly think – hope? – that I am a better writer than I was ten or so weeks ago. Thank you. *Marilyn Cohen de Villiers*, author of [A Beautiful Family](#) and *When Time Fails*.

Big cheers to both of you for being the best mentors I've ever had. *Merle Grace* author of the short story, *Disappeared*, chosen for inclusion in the *The Incredible Journey* the [2015 Short Sharp Collection](#).

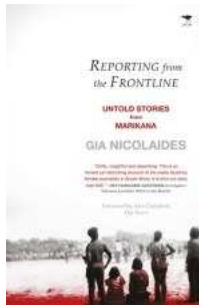
Here are just some of the other books published by participants in the past couple of years:



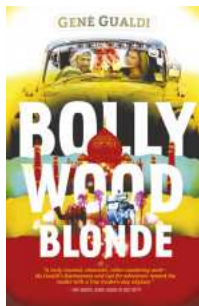
[Backtrack: The Voice Behind Music's Greatest Stars](#) by Tessa Niles is the story of her thirty years as a backing singer to some of the planet's most famous acts. She came to Allaboutwriting to kick-start her memoir. We are absolutely delighted to see it in print. (It's also available on Amazon.) Follow Tessa as she records with superstars, appears on the world's biggest stages, rubs shoulders with royalty and reveals the triumphs and heartbreak of life on the road. *Backtrack* is a story of driving ambition, first--hand experience and the accomplishment of a dedicated and talented musician.



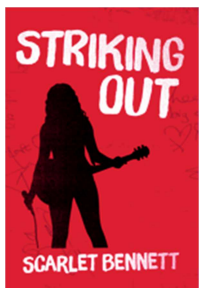
[Dying in New York](#) by Ekow Duker. *Dying in New York* is a story of hope and deep longing, made all the more poignant by Lerato's startling candour from the first page until the book's surprising conclusion. 'A long time ago, before I had breasts, sense or a husband, I knew one day I would die in New York. I must have been no more than twelve and the jacaranda trees were about to burst into their lilac-coloured song. I'd never been to New York. Actually I'd never been out of our northern Johannesburg suburb, except for my monthly visits to Doctor Sydney Malema.'



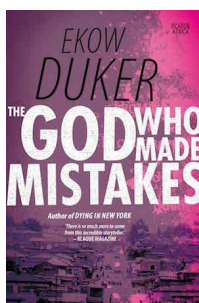
[Reporting from the Frontline](#), by Gia Nikolaidis. So much has been said about Marikana since the tragedy of 16 August 2012 where 34 miners were gunned down and police were killed. The news and the images of the massacre made headlines around the globe, for weeks. What the world didn't take into account was who and what it took to bring that news from the small town of Rustenburg to the world. Gia's story and account will take you to the heart of Marikana where journalists fought, often their own emotions, in order to deliver the bulletins.



[Bollywood Blonde](#) by Gené Gualdi. Bubbly fine arts graduate Gené is desperate to get into the film industry. Gené starts moonlighting on film sets and finds herself on an Indian paint commercial where a big Bollywood producer offers her a six-month stint in his company in Mumbai. Unable to resist the lure and glamour of working in film and travelling the world business class, she leaps at the opportunity and soon finds herself on a plane headed for India. But there is no free curry in Mumbai. On arrival she realises she is expected to sleep with the producer, and slips into an uneasy, culturally challenging role as his new *firangi* girlfriend.



[Striking Out](#) by Scarlet Bennett was written while on our [mentoring programme](#). The book is about an ambitious singer songwriter from regional Western Australia, who moves to the city to become a star, encountering a series of colourful characters along the way – including Todd, the sexy, brooding muso with the dragon tattoo, and sleazy Des, the agent



[The God Who Made Mistakes](#) by Ekow Duker. Behind the closed doors of their suburban Johannesburg home, Themba and Ayanda Hlatshwayo, both legal professionals, are beset by deep tensions that claw with relentless intensity at the polished facade of their lives. Ayanda seeks solace in dance classes, while Themba is increasingly drawn to the male companionship he finds at a book club. With wit and sympathy, *The God Who Made Mistakes* explores the origins of Themba's unease and confused sense of identity. *The God Who Made Mistakes* is a powerful, poignant story of unexpressed longings which, when finally uttered, can no longer be contained.