

Vol 5 Issue 08

**August 2025**

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### **This Issue May Contain**

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Elk Grove Writers Guild

*Writers Helping Writers*

## **Welcome!**



The Elk Grove Writers Guild is committed to helping writers grow and improve their craft. This newsletter is one way we achieve that goal.

Within these pages, you'll find a wealth of information on upcoming events, classes, and Guild news. We also offer writing tips and wisdom, poetry, memories, and updates on the latest happenings in the writing world.

We're always looking for new contributors and welcome your submissions. Whether you have news of your writing group's events, book launch announcements, writing tips, recent successes or publications, or reports of events you've attended, we want to hear from you.

**See the back page for submission information.**

## EGWG Information

### Guild Name

Elk Grove Writers Guild, Inc

### Street Address

7413 Netherbury Ct.

Elk Grove, CA 95757

### Phone

916-747-6898

### Email

[egwg2020@egweg.org](mailto:egwg2020@egweg.org)

### Website

<https://www.egweg.org>

### Newsletter & Submissions

Penny Clark - Editor

[turlockpenny@yahoo.com](mailto:turlockpenny@yahoo.com)

## What's Happening?

The new schedule for the 2025 biennial EGWG Conference is in the Flyer section. Watch this newsletter and the President's Column for more information on this great event as it becomes available. You won't want to miss it!

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**"I believe myself that a good writer doesn't really need to be told anything except to keep at it."**

*Chinua Achebe*

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**Elk Grove Writers Guild Meetings** are on the first Friday of each month from 12:30 to 2:30.

We gather as a Writer's Circle to speak the language of writers. We share what and how we're doing. Topics vary as questions and problems are discussed or as the latest information in the writing and publishing world is produced.

Guild members can post their work-in-progress (WIP) on Google Docs and share it with other members for critique. This is an excellent way to receive input and valuable insights into the work presented.

If you're interested in joining the Guild, go to [www.egweg.org](http://www.egweg.org), click Join, fill out the membership application, and send in your dues.

If you'd prefer to visit first, come to the first Friday meeting at Round Table Pizza, 10054 Bruceville Road, in Elk Grove. The following meetings are on August 1, and September 5, 2025.

**Contact** [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com) for answers to any meeting or Guild questions.

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## **LOCAL GROUPS & EVENTS**

**CWC's** Meetings are on the first Friday, 9-11 am, in the back room at Denny's, 8841 Greenback Ln. The third Saturday, 1-3 pm, isn't always at the Arcade Library. For information on current meetings or events, visit the [California Writers Club, Sacramento branch](#).

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**NCPA** monthly meetings are on the second Sunday from 4 pm to 6:30 pm. The meeting usually features a speaker on various writing subjects. Their new location is Flaming Grill Café, 2380 Watt Ave., inside Country Club Plaza. The link for current information is

<https://www.norcalpa.org>

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### **California Writers Club (CWC)** **(San Joaquin Valley Writers Branch)**

Monthly Speaker Meetings, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday with a Zoom program, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month with an in-person meeting at 12 noon - 2:00, at the Lodi Library, 201 W. Locust, Lodi, CA. Check the link below for other information.

<https://www.sjvalleywriters.org>

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**Capitol Crimes** Meetings are on the third Saturday of the month from 1-3 p.m. For info, go to

<https://capitolcrimes.org/events>

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### **The Gold Country Writers**

GCW has an active calendar. For information about their writers' events or directions, contact Margie Yee Webb at [mywebb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mywebb@sbcglobal.net) or <https://goldcounyrtrwriters.com>.

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### **Black Women Write** Black

Women Write meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. until noon. For information, contact [BlackWomenWriteSac@gmail.com](mailto:BlackWomenWriteSac@gmail.com)

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## **EGWG Bulletin Board**

### **SEEKING SPEAKERS and TEACHERS**

If you have a passion for sharing your expertise and want to be a featured speaker at an event, please get in touch with Loy Holder at [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com)

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** If you'd like to help make our events run smoother than ever, contact Loy at [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com)

### Rare or Seldom Used Words

**Onomastic.** Pertaining to proper names or terms used in specialized fields.

**Cozen.** To deceive by fraud.

**Whilom.** Formerly, or former.

**Kakistocracy.** Government by the worst citizens.

**Clinquant.** Tinselled; glittering with tinsel or gold.

**Apollonian.** Serene, rational, self-disciplined.



#### **What is a contronym?**

Single words that have two contradictory meanings (they are their own opposites) are known as contronyms, and they are quite rare. Here are ten of them:

1. **apology:** a statement of contrition for an action, or a defence of one
2. **bolt:** to secure, or to flee
3. **bound:** heading to a destination, or restrained from movement
4. **cleave:** to adhere, or to separate
5. **dust:** to add fine particles, or to remove them
6. **fast:** quick, or stuck or made stable
7. **left:** remained, or departed
8. **peer:** a person of the nobility, or an equal
9. **sanction:** to approve, or to boycott
10. **weather:** to withstand, or to wear away

**Editor: I copied this from Facebook as an example of how wonderful words are—or how weird the English language is.**

### San Joaquin Valley Writers

June Gillam invites everyone to the upcoming program at their August 23rd meeting.

#### Upcoming SJVW AUGUST Events

##### Craft Chat, in person

Saturday, August 23, 12:00-2:00 p.m. “Paint a picture.” What does a sunset look like? How about a dejected lover? A creepy boss? Bring 300 words maximum to share as we explore how to get the most out of a description by painting a picture rich with imagery. (Lodi Library, 201 W. Locust, Lodi/

For information, email June Gillam

[www.junegillam.com](http://www.junegillam.com)



### T-Shirt Truths

1. I should be home writing
2. Every day is a blank page—grab your pen.
3. Plot: It builds character.
4. Read banned books, drink coffee, and fight evil..
5. I’m studying creative writing—pray for me.
6. I’m a writer. That means I’m creative, cool, compassionate, and a little bit crazy.

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Elk Grove Writers Guild  
*Writers Helping Writers*

### EGWG President's Column

Hello, dear members.

Our July meeting was quiet. Thanks to those who came, we had our usual lively discussions on our work in progress and AI.

The marketing for our 4th Biennial Writers Conference begins as I write this. Are you ready? We have an extensive new media list. Help me use it.

I'll have segments of it to hand out. If enough of you volunteer, it will be easy. We have all the ingredients for a great conference. Let's make it Rock. Send your questions and comments to [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com).

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### Gold Country Writers Announces 2025

#### Nonfiction Short Story Contest

Gold Country Writers is hosting a nonfiction short story writing competition. It's open to writers over age 18 in Placer, Yuba, El Dorado, Nevada, Sutter, or Sacramento counties.

The opening date for submission is August 6, 2025, with only one entry per person.

The submission fee is \$15 to enter, with a discounted fee of \$10 for current GCW members.

For more information about the contest, see the flyer in the flyer section or visit the official GCW website at [www.goldcountrywriters.com](http://www.goldcountrywriters.com).

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### EVENT OF THE YEAR

#### A Once-in-a-Century Event

To celebrate 100 years of excellence in Sacramento, the CWC will present a fantastic line-up of esteemed Sacramento area presenters to appreciate the evolution of writing and publishing in the Sacramento area.

The event will take place on Saturday, October 18, 2025, from Noon to 3 pm at the North Ridge Country Club.

There will be a buffet and a no-host bar, and historical exhibits.

For more information and to buy tickets, go to <http://cwcsacramentowriters.org>





## SEWING DRESSES

By

Elaine Farber

I had a best friend in high school who I admired for her dark hair, beautiful eyes, and lovely dresses. She was a seamstress and made most of her own dresses. We shared a sewing class, and she taught me more than I learned from my teacher. My teacher pretty much summed up my sewing skills at Open House when she told my mother, “Elaine doesn’t do anything just once. She has to do it two or three times to get it right.”

When we were 16 years old, I was at my Best Friend’s house. I admired five or six beautiful, freshly ironed dresses hanging on her closet door. “I wish all my dresses looked like that,” I said.

Best Friend answered, “Well, you know how they got that way, don’t you?”

The dresses ‘got that way’ because she had spent the time and effort to ‘get them that way.’

I have never forgotten that comment over the years. It applies to more than ironed dresses. It applies to almost everything in life.

If you want a lovely garden, it only happens with much watering, weeding, and

fertilizing. You have to spray for bugs, plant the right flowers in the right climate, and prune and fertilize the plants appropriately.

If you want to be a successful parent, it only happens with a lot of love, plenty of patience, 24/7 self-sacrifice, and dedication, as you build your child’s character. Parenting doesn’t come in a package, labeled, “Add water and stir.”

I wanted to become a successful author and learned I had to commit to multiple hours studying the craft, unlimited commitment, and unwavering perseverance. I spent hours writing, editing, and polishing my manuscripts before publication. Then, I began promoting and selling my babies as I continued writing, meeting, and working with other successful authors. Perhaps a bit of natural talent helped!

Years later, I have a pretty nice garden without too many bugs, several ironed dresses, and multiple published novels. But it took a lot of time, study, and effort along the way. My sewing teacher was right. I had to ‘do it two or three times before I got it right.’

Sometimes new writers say, “You’re so lucky to have all those published books.”

I tell them, “It didn’t happen overnight. Let me tell you how it got that way.”

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Check Elaine’s website at [www.mindcandymysteries.com](http://www.mindcandymysteries.com). Her mystery books are available in paperback and e-book on Amazon.

**“The story must strike a nerve in me. My heart should start pounding when I hear the first line in my head. I start trembling at the risk.”**

*Susan Sontag*

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### EGWG WRITING CLASS # 7

#### Descriptive Writing

The purpose of descriptive writing is to inspire the imagination. How do you do that? Pay attention to detail? Refine your perceptions? Use interesting words, not bigger words, but words that precisely describe the details? Yes, all of that.

Descriptive writing isn't Purple Prose, Beige Prose, Laundry Lists, or Blue Language.

#### Purple Prose

The phrase "purple prose" comes from the Roman poet Horace in 19 BCE. In his poem, *Ars Poetica*, he warned his readers to stay away from "flashy purple patches" of writing. The idea of purple prose stuck, and his warning has continued for over two thousand years.

*You could describe how messy a character's apartment is in five paragraphs. Or you could call it a "rotting pig sty."*

*The problem with purple prose is that it gets in the way of what you're trying to say. It interrupts the flow of your story and says, "Look at me! See all the fancy words I can use?"* (Excerpt from Writersblueprint.com)

Purple prose is a description using exaggerated sentiments or flowery images. It is characterized by strings of multisyllabic words, run-on sentences, and large blocks of text that slow down the pace. Although it was commonly used in the past, today, it is frowned upon as boring.

*"In purple prose, skin is always creamy, eyelashes always glistening, heroes always brooding, and sunrises*

*are magical. Purple prose also features an abundance of metaphors and figurative language, long sentences, and abstractions."* (Excerpt from The Thought Co.)

Just as an artist can ruin a painting by layering on too much paint, so can an author ruin a scene by description that goes on and on. When describing something, let's say your character is setting down a cup; it's **how** it is set down, not the description of the cup.

*"A sentence should have no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all sentences short or avoid all detail and treat subjects only in outline, but that every word tell."* – Elements of Style.

#### Beige Prose

Beige prose is description so brief it's non-visual. It is simple, blunt, and to the point. It lacks descriptors and doesn't offer the reader a way into the story. Much of Ernest Hemingway's writing is now considered beige.

While beige prose is clear and effective, it's important to note that it can inhibit the flow of the story. Because of its brief nature, beige prose rarely allows any clauses, similes, or metaphors. Adding figures of speech to a sentence can enhance the work's readability and maintain the reader's flow and interest. As with purple prose, it's important to remember that moderation is key.

Short sentences and simple, direct prose speed up the pace and work great for action and fast-moving scenes. But not all scenes are full of

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action. That's where descriptive writing is needed. That's why alternating sentence length is advised.

### Laundry Lists

Laundry lists include highly detailed descriptions. An example would be a living room in a vacation cabin, where every piece of furniture, including the pillows, rugs, fireplace, lamps, and every other item in the room, is described. Instead, say the interior was cozy and just as rustic as the exterior. Save the details for when they're needed.

To combat laundry lists, use characterizations. A type of style will describe something or someone. A room could be an early American or a Japanese-modern style. Instead of detailing the clothes a secondary character might wear, say she bought her clothes at the local vintage store, or in a scene, she looked like a 1920s flapper. The dress shimmered with dangling beads, and the feather flower in her hair was the perfect touch. Another method is to choose the most essential feature and describe it. Shorter descriptions give readers the visual cues they need without requiring a lengthy list.

Sketched-in descriptions tend to stir the reader's imagination. Paragraphs full of detail damp it down. Why? Readers are good at using their imaginations to build a picture while reading. If there is a laundry list of one detail after another, the reader loses interest. Let description come slowly and weave the pieces into the character's actions.

### Blue Language

Blue language is cursing, obscenity, and profanity. Cursing is usually used in dialogue, and you need to be careful not to overdo it.

If you have a hard case in your story, they might curse more than usual. The thing to consider is that vulgar language draws attention to itself. That means the reader loses their focus on the story. Characters must be believable and not spend their time cursing a blue streak just because you like to shock people. Plus, characters who drop an F-bomb in every section of their dialogue are usually unlikely.

The point is, don't let the overuse of cursing steal the reader's focus away from the story. If you have a character down on his luck or angry at someone, make the reader sympathize with the character instead of focusing on a foul-mouthed tirade at an empty refrigerator or at someone he's angry at.

If you use foul language because the character's character calls for it, don't overdo it. And if you have several characters swearing, make sure they use different words. More than two men all using identical curse phrases isn't realistic.

### Descriptive Imagery

Humans are visual creatures. That is why we enjoy theater, movies, and television. Visualization in children's books often features colorful pictures to aid in understanding the words. When writing prose or poetry, a writer creates a mental picture using **sensory** details. That allows the reader to step out of reality and into the character's shoes to experience the scene. You want them to be gripped by the same emotions as the POV character.



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Don't be fooled; writing great descriptions is hard. It shouldn't be showy with spangles and glittery bling, but it can't be plain vanilla or somber. (Unless that's the mood you're trying to write.) Take care because it is often hard to decide when enough description is enough and not too much.

Have you ever read a story where you catch yourself holding your breath in a tense moment? That's fantastic descriptive imagery. That should be your goal.

### Writing Imagery: The Basics

Verbal imagery involves the senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, taste, and that sixth sense where the character becomes uneasy, has a premonition of danger, or senses someone is watching them.

Don't use all the senses in the same scene. You can, but you're apt to end up with a laundry list, and that's just tedious to read. Instead, picture the scene in your head and choose the most important aspect(s) to describe. That is visual writing. You can heighten the scene by inserting memorable details.

If your scene is a barn or house burning, what is the character experiencing with his senses? Your character will hear the sizzle of the moisture in the wood cooking off and the pitch snapping and popping. Is he seeing the wood catch fire and flames licking up the walls like cats lapping spilled milk off the floor? When the character gets too close to the fire, he'll feel the heat, and his skin will begin stinging like the worst sunburn he's ever had. Smoke will clog his nose and inhibit his breathing. There might

be chemicals burning, and they'll taste acrid on his tongue and scorch the inside of his nose.

Take care not to overuse the senses. I used all five senses in the above paragraph on purpose. That would have been too much to write in a scene unless it was spread out.

Use quality over quantity. A few words in a sentence can do as much to involve a reader as a paragraph. Although there will be times when a longer paragraph is called for, seek the balance between enough and too much and don't go overboard. Does the reader need a detailed description of a building, or what another character is wearing in minute detail? Pick one or two things that will give you the best sensory image for each scene and use the one that's the most important.

### The Five Senses

The sensory details should be vivid, concrete, and rich in sensory experience. Vague or commonly used words won't put the reader into the scene.

Vary your sentence structure. Try to avoid the same subject-verb pattern in all sentences. An example would be: *The hall was empty. She ran toward the classroom. She entered right after the bell rang.* Varying the structure breaks the monotonous tone. *Racing down the hall, she skidded into the classroom, breathless, just as the bell clanged above her.*

Please, close your eyes and envision each scene before you write it. What is the most critical detail(s) for the reader to know? Remember, keep your words vivid. Show the reader how the character sees things from their point of view.

## Visual imagery – Sight

When you see something, you see all of it, the interesting and the ho-hum. It's up to you to decide what the mood or atmosphere of the scene is. What does the reader need to know? Don't waste words trying to make a description interesting. We each have a vast array of images in our brains, and we're used to similes and metaphors like "She gave him a Mona Lisa smile." However, keep similes and metaphors unique and avoid clichés. "She gave him a smile that left him guessing."

As an exercise, take a moment to observe what you see throughout the day. Notice the structure, colors, variations, sizes, and shapes of what pricks your interest. Pick out the relevant details. Think about how you'd write a vivid description of them.

## Auditory imagery – Hearing

Hearing conveys ideas, objects, and actions through the perception of sounds. Additionally, humans have an exceptional ability to imagine sounds when specific words are used.

For example: in *The Raven*, Edgar Allan Poe wrote ... While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, as of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

Tapping and rapping are auditory imagery words. This type of imagery is common in poetry and should be just as common in descriptive imagery.

Use words that target the sense of hearing. These words will evoke a sensory experience, helping readers perceive the sounds of a scene.

## Onomatopoeia

(o-na-mata-pea-a) is the term for words that sound like the action they describe: Crash! Bang! Boom! Marvel comics are full of them. Words like these can be used without sounding like Batman if you use them with care. *John was hopeless at golf, but he loved the good **thwack** of the driver sending the ball on its misguided way.* Another, *Daisy loved the sound of her son's pony **clip-clopping** down the lane.*

## Alliteration

The repetition of similar sounds, like the "s" sounds in this sentence. It's used primarily in poetry, but used sparingly and in the right places, it can enhance prose just as much. Notice the "b" sounds in this. *So, we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.* (Excerpt from *The Great Gatsby*.)

## Tactile Imagery – Touch

How something feels against a character's skin, tongue, feet, or other parts of their body is essential. The softness of a kitten's fur, the cold of holding an ice cube, or a winter wind against one's face—all these sensations are crucial and have many variables. Just imagine hopping barefoot across the hot asphalt on a summer day, or the grit of sand in places it shouldn't be. Warm, cold, soft, hard, wet, or dry relate to touch, and they can be vital in creating the mood of a scene.

For example, *Desert dust filled the air around her, tasting dry and gritty. A terrible, crushing weight on her hips and legs pinned her to the ground.*

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### Olfactory imagery – Smell

Is it a sweet aroma or a nose-curling stink? Is it the yeasty smell of fresh-baked bread, or reeking garbage from a dumpster, a woman wearing enticing perfume, or a drunk oozing alcohol from his pores? It might be the smell of a pine forest, a fresh mown lawn, or fresh, pollution-free air. Use whatever will help you set the mood of the scene or the story.

*Old John sat on his porch and watched the boy mow the lawn. The sweet aroma of new-mown grass transported him to his teenage years when he'd been the one mowing old man McGregor's lawn.*

*Judy fled down the alley. The stink of rotting garbage, urine, and God only knew what else made her want to vomit.*

### Gustatory Imagery – Taste

Use taste to paint vivid and unusual pictures for the reader. Taste is not only the food that hits the tongue, but also includes aftertaste. In the morning, after a night of drinking, a character's mouth might taste like something died in it. There is the dry, cotton-mouth sensation when panic, fear, or shyness sets in, or the taste of chemicals when in the hospital or under medication. The possibilities are endless, but don't overdo it.

### Descriptive Writing and Figures of Speech

The best-known figures of speech are similes and metaphors. What's the difference between them?

**Similes** compare one thing to another. A simile says, X is **like** Y, or X is **as** something **as** Y.

1. Her eyes were **as** blue **as** neon.
2. His unshaven jaw felt **like** a bristle brush.
3. His words were **as** welcome **as** ice on a hot day.

**Metaphors** are transformative, and X becomes Y.

1. The man was a beast.
2. She was a panther stalking her prey across the room.
3. His entire life had been a roller coaster ride, and he couldn't get off.

Similes and metaphors enable writers to describe complex concepts concisely. A simile is not as strong as a metaphor, but both figures of speech have their place in descriptive writing.

### Four Rules for Using Similes and Metaphors

1. **Less is more.** Used well, they beautify a passage in a novel. Used too often, they look gaudy. When in doubt, strike them out.
2. **Avoid clichés.** The first time "He drank like a fish" was used, it was fresh and clever. Now, it's just sad and ho-hum. Using original figures of speech will capture your reader's attention and encourage them to keep reading.
3. **Don't use two similes together.** Using too many similes is not recommended, but using one right after another is a definite no-no. It just doesn't work because one usually contradicts the other and makes no sense.

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4. **Don't mix metaphors.** This is the same as above. Although mixing metaphors is subtler, the message remains unclear. Once you've introduced a metaphor, follow through. You can't say *his mind was a machine* and continue with *He could waltz through a crossword puzzle in minutes*. That just sounds wrong. A machine waltzing? Huh?

Three other figures of speech are **Personification**, **Hyperbole**, and **Allusion**.

**Personification** is where an inanimate object is made animate or given human qualities. A few examples: *Fred loved his car, but his car didn't love Fred*.

*Donna was sure her computer was alive and plotting against her*.

*On stormy nights, the jagged rocks tore up many a fishing boat and spat them out in splinters*.

**Hyperbole** is a deliberate exaggeration and is often used for comic effects.

An example from F.H. Burnett. *He's been spoiled 'til salt won't save him*.

Another from Susan Caine. *It would take an ice age to cool this man off*.

**Allusion** is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing, etc., of historical or cultural significance. It's generally used as a passing comment. A literary allusion might be, *"I don't approve of your quixotic ideas."*

Allusions are common in people's daily speech. *She opened Pandora's box. He's acting like he's Romeo and you're his Juliet. This ain't no Garden of Eden*.

Anything most people would know can be used as an allusion, even Star Trek. Using allusions enables a writer to convey a complex idea or emotion with just a few words.

## Describing Characters

To repeat, the most important thing to remember is that a little goes a long way. It's not necessary to describe a character from head to toe when first introducing them. The reader needs to know the character's name and what they are doing. Make what they're doing interesting.

A few well-placed clues throughout the story will be enough to let the reader form a picture in their minds. It may not be the same picture that is in your mind, but that's okay.

Every character has essential features, physical quirks, scars, tattoos, or something that is individual to them. Don't compare the character to someone famous. Don't use metaphors, or if you do, keep them to a few. Don't use words like hot, gorgeous, or sexy. Those are vague and personal preferences. They are also telling.

## Ten Tips for Physical Descriptions

1. Don't rely on or list physical attributes. It might sound like an all-points bulletin.
2. Be careful not to become mundane (dull). Her eyes were brown. vs Her eyes were the color of well-aged bourbon.
3. Be careful using adjectives. They can lead to clichés. Use concrete words. A coat becomes a raincoat or a leaf falling drifts or swoops.

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4. Make physical descriptions specific. He wore his hair in a military buzz-cut, prickly to the touch. Or he was an aging hippy with his hair pulled back in a graying ponytail.
5. Choose the details that create a specific impression. Too much or a lack of height, a certain mannerism, or other distinguishing characteristics.
6. Use the surroundings for sensory details. Is the character somewhere he shouldn't be, or traveling, or working on a hobby?
7. Let the characters reveal themselves throughout the story. What are their likes and dislikes? What kind of car do they drive? Who are their friends? What's in their pockets?
8. Description doesn't have to be direct to be effective. What's his or her favorite pizza? Does he play poker with his friends or play video games? Does she stop at garage sales, looking for the next great bargain? What about hobbies? Is she renovating her house? Is he taking cooking classes?
9. Use motives and actions. Is he a morning person? Does he run to be running? Is he a golfer, aiming for that hole-in-one – a gardener, wanting to grow a prize-winning pumpkin – a writer, working on the next best seller?
10. Be sure to sprinkle character descriptions throughout the story. Just as you don't know someone when you first meet them, the character needs time to reveal himself to the reader.

### Body Language

Body language: Micro-expressions, hand gestures, facial expressions, vocal tone and volume, and posture. Even when people don't

say what they think, they constantly throw off clues that others understand intuitively. It's up to the writer to put those gestures and actions on paper. The problem is how to do it.

Body language is 55% of communication and should be included in describing characters' actions. What emotions are they feeling? What sensory detail can you include? Use them in action beats in dialogue. Characters talk, think, walk, stand still, and otherwise do something all the time; those actions are body language.

The most famous or infamous saying in writing is show, don't tell. Sometimes that is hard to do, but describing (showing) the character's actions, emotions, and movements will help.

If you're creating your character sheets, include how your characters move and talk. This is essential information for your protagonist, antagonist, secondary characters, confidants, and love interests.

Does the protagonist hurry everywhere, as if they're going to be late, while their friend or lover strolls as if they have all day?

Is the antagonist's tone of voice loud, aggressive, or deadly low and purposeful?

Does a character stutter when they get nervous, or start babbling?

Of course, a character can combine emotions in a single moment. They might be shocked and angry, amazed and happy, crying happy tears, or they're so mad they cry.

Body language includes all body parts, including eyes, hair, eyebrows, stomach, and feet. Hair falls in the eye. Eyebrows lift or raise. Lips purse, pout, become a thin line. A



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stomach growls, aches, or cramps. Feet shuffle, tap, ache, smell, stamp.

### Five Tips for Using Body Language

1. Use body language to add depth to dialogue.
2. Use it because it is a significant part of communication.
3. Use it to show how your character's emotions affect their actions.
4. Use it to help show and not tell.
5. Use it when needed. If overused, it can slow down your story.

There are many books on Amazon that explain body language and how to interpret it. We won't delve into that.

### Here are a few types of body language or silent signals.

1. **Licking lips** can signal sexual attraction, or when talking about a romantic partner. It can also indicate anxiety or stress.
2. **Handshakes.** A firm grip can imply a person is outgoing or confident. A limp handshake signals that a person is unsure. If the hand is dropped, the person may appear shy. If the hand is held longer than it should be, it might show sexual attraction.
3. **Nodding** while others speak can make the person seem agreeable and interested. Nods are contagious. If one person nods, soon others will begin nodding. Some of those nods might not be actual agreement.
4. A slump originates from slouched shoulders, a physical manifestation of holding onto stress or sadness. Standing straight is positive, confident, and focused.

5. **Face.** Touching the face, twirling the hair, brushing hair away from the face, or hands on the face or mouth can be flirty or make one seem to want attention.
6. **Locking Eyes.** Locking eyes with someone may make you seem trustworthy. Maintaining eye contact for an extended period can be perceived as threatening. Everyone has a threshold beyond which things transition from acceptable to awkward to frightening.
7. **Smiling** gives a feeling of connection to another who generally smiles back. People smile for a reason, show it.
8. **Stance.** Standing with uncrossed arms or legs gives an open and available vibe. Staring at the ground with arms across the chest signals that the person is closed off and out of reach. There is also the option of standing at attention or at ease, which conveys a military sense of power.
9. **Hand Gestures.** When talking with your hands, it's more likely your words will be remembered. But larger movements make you seem out of control and excitable.
10. **Dilated Pupils.** When aroused by someone or something, the pupils dilate. It's a bodily function and can't be controlled. Large pupils tend to make one more attractive, because they resemble dilated or aroused pupils.
11. **Tense Lips.** Liars are more likely to have tense lips. Being tight-lipped tends to make one seem untrustworthy. Tense or narrowed lips are also associated with negative thoughts, fears, or anger.
12. **Personal Space.** Leaning away from someone, fidgeting, or crossing your arms are signs that will have others

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questioning your motives. Leaning forward suggests reliability or interest. Personal space varies, and the closeness one person finds acceptable will be too close for another.

13. **Micro Expressions.** An instant of feelings on a face, a facial twitch, a grimace, or a fleeting frown leaves a hard impression. What is internal often emerges as a micro or fleeting expression, leaving the observer with a gut feeling that makes them uneasy.
14. **Mirroring** involves copying how someone stands, sits, or their facial expressions to build trust between you. However, holding a position of power over the other person can make them uncomfortable.

This is a brief description of body language. If you want more, go to Amazon and browse the products available.

## To Summarize

Remember, writing aims to get the reader to imagine what you see in as brief a space as possible. This involves several methods, which can be used singly or in combination.

1. Incorporate sensory details. The senses craft vivid verbal images of people, places, things, events, the mood of the scene, and ideas.
2. Emphasize the overlooked item. An example would be a beach scene where a piece of amber sea glass gleams in the incoming tide.
3. Use figures of speech where they'll do the most good. Don't overuse figures of speech to the exclusion of other verbal imagery.
4. Don't use clichés. If you've written something that flows naturally off your

pen, you might want to consider—is it a cliché?

5. Describe the way a character moves, how they carry themselves. Do they walk like an old man, bent over and shaky? Do they have a spring in their step like a young athlete?
6. Try to avoid boring, single-word descriptions. For example, instead of saying, "The man was tall." Say something like, "The man ducked as he came through the doorway." But beware of being too wordy and adding too much information for that moment.
7. Use vivid words. Here are a few examples of boring phrases transformed into imagery: "We ate breakfast" becomes "We sat down to pancakes with blackberry syrup and spicy sausage." "The woman smiled" becomes "She had a Julia Roberts smile, all teeth, and bright eyes."
8. Cut down on adjectives and adverbs. Modifiers don't enrich verbs or other words as much as people think they do. When you edit, find a stronger verb so you don't need an adverb. "She strolled into the room" is better than "she walked casually into the room." Ensure the actions maximize their descriptive potential by eliminating unnecessary or repetitive words. Don't stack adjectives; use two if you must but be careful not to pile on too many.
9. Get to the point. Avoid pointless rambling and overwriting. Stay focused on the scene and keep it moving.
10. If you want to draw attention to something, put it at the end of a sentence/paragraph, or as close to the end as possible. Placing it at the beginning is a second choice. Never bury important information in the middle.
11. Watch for redundancies such as blue sky, green grass, or a small child.

## When Editing

While you're drafting the story, description isn't as crucial as getting your words on paper. When you begin the editing process, look for places that need something to improve them. Watch for areas where the settings, moods, objects, and emotions that are important to the story are described.

Are the images you've created strong and specific to the story? If yes, that's great. But can you tweak them? Often, it only takes an added word or two. If the answer is no, then use your imagination to picture the scene. Think about how you can change what you've written, what you can add or subtract to improve your imagery?

Just as you don't want to overdo description, too little description leaves the reader with only a vague idea of what's happening. They need to track where the characters are and what they're doing. Aim for balance. The last thing you want is to lose the reader.

If you're a writer, you'll write better if you read in the genre you're writing in. Take notice of how other writers deal with description. Some will be tight yet still let the picture come across. Others will go to great lengths to describe something until the reader skips the page. Some will be just right, or balanced, with enough to put you into the scene and make the story real. Pay attention to what you read.

**Editor Note:** I hope you've found the previous classes valuable. Check out the entire series on the EGWG website under Resources.

## Ways to Describe Laughter

1. **Smirk:** Slight, often fleeting upturning of the corners of the mouth, entirely voluntary and controllable.
2. **Smile:** Silent, voluntary, and controllable, more perceptible than a smirk; it begins to release endorphins.
3. **Grin:** Silent, controllable, but uses more facial muscles.
4. **Snicker:** First emergence of sound with facial muscles, but still controllable.
5. **Giggle:** Has a 50 percent chance of reversal to avoid full laughter. The sound of giggling is amusing, and efforts to suppress it tend to increase its strength.
6. **Chuckle:** Involves chest muscles with a deeper pitch.
7. **Chortle:** It originates even deeper in the chest and involves the muscles of the torso. It usually invokes laughter in others.
8. **Laugh:** This involves facial and thoracic muscles as well as the abdomen and extremities; it is the sound of barking or snorting.
9. **Cackle:** In the first involuntary stage, the pitch is higher, and the body begins to rock. The spine extends and flexes, with an upturning of the head.
10. **Guffaw:** This is a full-body response: feet stomp, arms wave, thighs slap, and torso rocks. The sound is deep and loud and may result in free-flowing tears, increased heart rate, and breathlessness.
11. **Howl:** Volume and pitch rise higher and becomes more animated.
12. **Shriek:** Greater intensity than a howl, with a sense of helplessness.
13. **Roar:** Lose individuality, i.e., the audience roared.

## EGWG Newsletter – Back page

### Something to Consider

**“The greatest part of a writer’s time is spent in reading. In order to write, a man will turn over half a library to make one book.”**

*Samuel Johnson*



### NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

#### POETRY

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

COMING EVENTS

SHORT STORIES

FLYERS

WRITING CLASSES

Please send your submission by the 15th of the month for the next issue or contact Penny Clark for later submissions.

**Take advantage of the free advertising!**

**Send your Submissions to [turlockpenny@yahoo.com](mailto:turlockpenny@yahoo.com).**

The Submission Format is Garamond-14. If possible, send a Word document(docx). **Thanks!**

## AUGUST 2025

- Aug. 3- Friendship Day
- Aug 19- National Aviation Day
- Aug. 21- Senior Citizens Day
- Aug. 26- Women’s Equality Day

### More Writing Prompts

- Write about any trending style you wish would disappear.
- Write a description of the first childhood home you remember.
- Which attracts you more, the ocean, mountains, or deserts? Explain why.
- Write a short story about an unforgettable family vacation.

### Finding shade



See you next month

The Calendar and Flyers Section is  
Next

2 Jul 2025		August 2025					Sep 2025 ?
August 2025	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
				<b>1 EGWG 12:30-2:30</b> <b>Members Mtg., Round Table, 10054 Bruceville, Elk Grove</b> <b>Sac. CWC 9-11 YouTube</b> <b>Author Interviews @ Denny's, 8841 Greenback, Orangevale</b> <b>No Orangevale this month</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 GCW Nonfiction contest begins</b> (1500 words). 10-12 – Business Mtg. @ City Hall Rose Room, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9 SJWV 12-2 via Zoom:</b> "Writing About Family Secrets" with Lisa Montanaro	<b>10 NCPA 4-6:30 p.m. Meeting</b> at The Flaming Grill, 2380 Watt #150 (inside Country Club Plaza, Sacramento)	
<b>11 Sac Sub 6:15-7 p.m.</b> Advanced Writing Techniques in person, and 7-9 p.m. Meeting in person & on Zoom.. Both at 5501 Dewey Dr., Fair Oaks	<b>12</b>	<b>13 GCW 10-12 Drop-In Critique. @ City Hall Rose Room, Auburn</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15 Sac CWC Mtg Sat. 1-3</b> Unitarian Church, → 2425 Sierra Blvd. \$12	<b>16 Cap. Cr. 1-3 "Crafting History with Mystery"</b> by Cheryl Head, Naomi Hirahara & Shelley Blanton-Stroud at The Bookhouse <b>No BWV this month</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20 GCW 10-12 Special event</b> in the Rose Room, Auburn City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23 SJWV 12-2 Novel Craft Chat:</b> "Painting a Picture with Words" at Lodi Library, 201 W. Locust, Lodi	<b>24</b>	
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27 GCW 10-12 Drop-In Critique. @ City Hall Rose Room, Auburn</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29 EGWG 1:30 – Board Meeting, on Zoom</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

## ABOUT THE FLYER SECTION

If you have flyers for your own event or your writing group's event that you'd like to see in the flyer section, please ensure they are in Word doc format. I don't have an app for dealing with PDF.

Send your flyer directly to Penny Clark at [turlockpenny@yahoo.com](mailto:turlockpenny@yahoo.com)

Thanks

## Flyers Beginning Next Page

1. Gold Country Nonfiction Short Story Contest
2. EGWG Conference Flyer #2
3. EGWG Conference Program



## **Gold Country Writers Announces 2025 Nonfiction Short Story Contest**

Gold Country Writers is hosting a short story writing competition open to writers in Placer, Yuba, El Dorado, Nevada, Sutter, or Sacramento counties.

Only original and unpublished nonfiction stories are accepted for the contest, with a maximum word count of 1500. Writers have the freedom to use any theme or genre. The opening date for submission is August 6, 2025, with only one entry per person.

This is a great chance for writers to showcase their work and win cash prizes. The competition aims to provide recognition and help local writers build their credentials. There is a submission fee of \$15 to enter, and a discounted fee of \$10 for GCW members. Writers retain full ownership of their work. However, by entering, writers agree to allow GCW to use their stories in their publications and to showcase winning entries. Gold Country Media will also publish the winning stories online and in local newspapers.

The GCW 2025 Nonfiction Short Story Contest is open to all writers over age 18 and offers a great opportunity for new writers to be recognized. To participate in the contest, stories must be submitted in standard manuscript format. This includes double-spacing, using Times New Roman 12-point font, and submitting the story as a Microsoft Word or PDF document. The stories will be judged anonymously based on specific criteria.

The GCW Nonfiction Short Story Contest winners will be revealed at a special celebration on October 4 in the Auburn City Hall Council Chambers and the Rose Room. The top three winners will receive cash prizes of \$100, \$75, and \$50. For more information about the contest and to submit your entry, visit the official GCW website at [www.goldcountrywriters.com](http://www.goldcountrywriters.com)

Gold Country Writers is a 501(c) (3) non-profit community organization that aims to foster and support writers in the Gold Country area of Northern California.

This event is partly sponsored by the Arts Council of Placer County, the Auburn Arts Council, ACTV, and Gold Country Media.



# 4TH BIENNIAL ELK GROVE WRITERS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 25, 2025

## Featuring:



Chris Hennessy  
Keynote Speaker



Jordan Rosenfeld  
The Sound of Story



Karen Trinkaus  
A Demonstration on  
How to Use the AI  
Tools



Kesia Lupo  
Literary Agent



Shawn Langwell  
The Art of Presence:  
Pro Marketing & Self  
Promotion Tips for Writers  
& Entrepreneurs



Dr. Lally Pia  
Memoir: Writing to  
Inspire



Joan Griffin  
Explore Narrative  
Nonfiction & Jazz Up  
Your Writing



Gini Grossenbacher  
Critical Tasks for  
Foolproof Editing

Registration Opens 4/20/2025

Registration fee is \$60

Register at [egweg.org/conference2025/](http://egweg.org/conference2025/)

Check in at 7:00AM with complimentary  
breakfast and all-day coffee service

Bring your lunch and purchase drinks in  
the lobby

Program begins at 8:00AM

Lunch from 12:20 to 1:20PM

Program Ends 4:40PM

Location: Holiday Inn, 9175 West  
Stockton Blvd., Elk Grove, CA 95758



Elk Grove Writers Guild  
*Writers Helping Writers*

Invitation to apply for an appointment  
with Gini/Editor or Kesia/Agent will go out  
in September, 2025 to paid registrants of  
the conference. Stay tuned for the  
invitation in September.

For more information:

Contact Loy Holder at [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com)

## Program for the October 25<sup>th</sup> Conference

### Conference Schedule

<u>Time</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Speaker Name</u>	<u>Presentation Title</u>
<u>6:30 AM</u>	<u>EGWG in bldg</u>		
<u>7:00 AM</u>	<u>Check-In</u>		
<u>7:45 AM</u>	<u>Welcome Address</u>	<u>Loy &amp; Introduce Keynote Speaker</u>	
<u>8:00 AM</u>	<u>Keynote Speaker</u>	<u>Chris Hennessey</u>	<u>How to Captivate Literary Agents and Publishers</u>
<u>8:45 AM</u>	<u>Break</u>		
<u>9:00 AM</u>	<u>First Speaker</u>	<u>Jordan Rosenfeld</u>	<u>The Sound of Story</u>
<u>10:00 AM</u>	<u>Break</u>		

<u>10:15</u> <u>AM</u>	<u>Second</u> <u>Speaker</u>	<u>Shawn Langwell</u>	<u>The Art of Presence:</u> <u>Pro Marketing and Self</u> <u>Promotion Tips for</u> <u>Writers and</u> <u>Entrepreneurs</u>
<u>11:15</u> <u>AM</u>	<u>Break</u>		
	-		
<u>11:20</u> <u>AM</u>	<u>Third</u> <u>Speaker</u>	<u>Karen Trinkaus</u>	<u>A Demonstration on</u> <u>How to Use the AI</u> <u>Tools</u>
<u>12:20</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Lunch</u>		
<u>1:20</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Fourth</u> <u>Speaker</u>	<u>Ginni</u> <u>Grossenbacher</u>	<u>Critical Tasks for</u> <u>Foolproof Editing</u>
<u>2:20</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Break</u>		
<u>2:30</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Fifth</u> <u>Speaker</u>	<u>Joan Griffin</u>	<u>Explore Narrative</u> <u>Nonfiction and Jass Up</u> <u>Your Writing</u>
<u>3:30</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Break</u>		



<u>3:40</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Sixth</u> <u>Speaker</u>	<u>Dr. Lally Pia</u>	<u>Memoir: Writing to</u> <u>Inspire</u>
<u>4:40</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>7th class</u> <u>over and</u> <u>collect</u> <u>evaluation</u> <u>sheets</u>		
<u>5:30</u> <u>PM</u>	<u>Out of bldg</u>		