

07s:193 Teaching Literature to Adolescents

Assignment Two: Writing a Young Adult Narrative

For this assignment I'd like you to try your hand at writing a narrative for an audience of young adult readers. I use the word "narrative" because I want to leave open the question of whether you write fiction or non-fiction. I want the intended audience to be clear—imagine young readers, ages 11 to 16.

Use everything you've learned about the genres of young adult fiction and nonfiction from your reading so far, and use everything you know about adolescents from your own experience.

Here are two possibilities that I see for this assignment, but feel free to play with genre so long as your finished work is targeted at 11 to 16 year olds:

1. **Write the first chapter to a young adult narrative.** Remember that your job in this first chapter is to get a narrative moving, to introduce character, setting, plot, and probably voice—to get us inside a world. It will almost certainly be easier to write this chapter if you have some idea of what the narrative as a whole is going to be about (e.g., drugs, divorce, competition, death, parents, growing up more generally). In fact, it might be easier to write if you generate a very rough outline of a plot that your narrative might follow--again, if you were going to actually write it. You needn't include the outline, but you might want to have it in mind.
2. **Write a short story intended for young adults.** Think of the short stories that we've read in class, but also explore other such collections that you've encountered to get ideas. Be creative and feel free to play with the genre.

I'm thinking that these chapters will be somewhere between 5 and 7 pages long. Take more space if you need it, but not much more. And please, above all, have fun with this. Write a parody if you want to. Play with the conventions. **But use them--show your readers that you know what they are.**