Advanced English: Non-Fiction Writing Workshop Theme-Based Language Course

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This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 and C2 levels. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

Course Objectives

This 12-week course aims to improve students’ English language writing skills through creative non-fiction techniques.

The three main objectives of this course are:
- To introduce students to basic writing tools that encourage creativity and stimulate the imagination.
- To learn to write with clarity, so that the message gets across.
- To explore different styles, and widen the student’s range of writing options.

Course Description

In the first weeks of class, students will focus on writing tools that strengthen vocabulary and creativity, including descriptive writing, memoir and dialogue exercises. Discussions and speaking activities will reinforce the exercises, clarifying the link between spoken and written language. For example, students might be asked to conduct interviews, describe a photo to a partner, or act out a dialogue.

As the class progresses, students will be asked to work on more complex challenges, like setting the scene and describing character, incorporating fiction techniques in non-fiction writing. We will also start looking at different styles of writing, and perhaps most importantly, different reading publics. Writing for a group of academics is not the same as writing for stakeholders in a small rural community. Students will learn how to avoid using jargon, and how to use their writing as a means of sending a powerful message to their readers.

In the last weeks of the class, students will choose topics and work on a final project incorporating the elements that we have worked on in class.

Organization

Though the main focus will be on writing, the class will cover all four language skills:
• Speaking.
• Writing.
• Listening.
• Reading.

Preparation for many of the writing exercises will include speaking activities, underlining the importance of clear thinking to create clear writing. Students will read articles and essays that represent different writing styles. Finally, students will watch and/or listen to videos and recordings of authors talking about how they write.