



THE TELLING ROOM – Greater Portland's Community Writing Center

FIELD TRIPS TO THE TELLING ROOM

General Information:

Typically, we hold Field Trips on Thursday mornings from 9:30 am to 12 pm, but we are always willing to be flexible with time. The Telling Room's Writing Center has a maximum capacity of 24 students, and 4 teacher/chaperones. Students and teachers should bring their own snacks or lunches and beverages. It's a great help to us if you also bring napkins/cups. We do have tap water available, and we can eat right here in the Writing Center. You do not need to bring anything else—we provide paper, pencils, pens, computers, cameras, etc.

Rates:

The rate for a single class (max. 24 students) to come to The Telling Room for a Field Trip is \$250, not including transportation. The rate for multiple classes to come from one school is negotiable, and we may not be able to accommodate all classes, or all classes over consecutive Thursdays, due to the popularity of this program.

Also, if you work at a Title 1 school, you may be eligible for funds through the **Donald H. Graves Fund**. Please mention your eligibility when making a reservation.

Reservations:

To make a reservation for a Field Trip, please email our program director, Molly.McGrath at molly@tellingroom.org.

Transportation:

For help with transportation costs, please see the "Ticket to Ride" program at http://mainearts.maine.gov/grant_t2r.aspx sponsored by the Maine Arts Commission.

Directions:

We are located at 225 Commercial St., Suite 201, above the store, Vervacious.

Before making a reservation with us, please choose from **Four Field Trip Curriculum Models**, or work with us to develop your own:

Build-a-Book

The Telling Room's Build-a-Book Field Trips are literary excursions in which young writers spend a half-day at the Telling Room's writing center imagining, writing, and publishing their very own storybooks. In a rousing couple of hours, the staff and a group

of professional writers and artists lead the class in a book-building workshop. They start off in a collaborative effort interrupted by some trademark Telling Room hijinx and tomfoolery, and then each individual has a chance to write and illustrate the book that comes together as if by magic.

The books contain a story set in a local Maine town, developed by the entire class during a spirited group brainstorm. The Telling Room's lead teacher and assisting volunteers use group writing exercises designed to help students map the places they live and mine their own personal geographies for great story characters and plots. Children finish their time with us by writing their own endings to their own unique version of the book, and by creating author biographies and drawing illustrations for the book jackets. We believe that it's especially important for kids to leave with an actual book they authored, so we print and bind the books on site.

The Build-a-Book model is perfect for our newest and youngest writers: Grades K-3 and beginning to intermediate ELL students.

Writing & Photography

In our Writing & Photography Field Trip, The Telling Room's digital cameras help us focus on the most intriguing details of our Old Port surroundings. Using the photographer's tools of observation and capture, we help students learn to frame stories and note that it is the crispness and quality of even the tiniest details that bring color to our stories' settings and characters.

In the course of our morning together, we first view a series of artistic images at our studio space, and discover that photographers shoot with intention, composing their subjects deliberately. After this look at art photography, we head out with our lenses into the neighborhood, to its wharves, cobblestones, and byways, to see what images catch our attention. Back at The Telling Room, we set to work unraveling the stories that we captured, marrying image to words in poetic or narrative form. Students leave this field trip with a piece of writing in progress and lasting images of their walk along the working waterfront.

Writing & Photography Field Trips are best for older, more experienced writers: Grades 6-12, and advanced ELL students.

Sensory Writing

Our Senses Field Trip prompts students to write their world according to the sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes they encounter every day. In this workshop, we encourage students to write on impulse, because too much thinking can run our writing aground or stop us even before we even start.

Using sensory prompts—smelling spices and noting their suddenly strange textures, feeling mysterious objects in black bags, and observing the color in detail-rich

photographs—we warm up our pens and allow our natural storytelling instincts to take over. Students then choose a fragment of their writing to expand on, ‘finding the heat’ in descriptive language, and receive the studio space they need to focus or confer one-on-one with a member of our staff as they develop ideas into story and verse. This field trip model culminates with a work in progress and a whole group reading.

Our Senses Field Trip is great for all writers, or classes with students of mixed abilities. It’s equally wonderful for reluctant writers and writers who can’t put down their pens or pencils, because of its pacing and progression from listing to full-blown story or poem.

The Word Walk

A favorite! On this imaginative field trip, students pound the pavement, bricks, wharves, and cobblestones around the Old Port, their pockets crammed with curious, mischievous, and sometimes brilliant words and phrases on brightly colored slips of paper. As they tour Portland’s downtown on foot, in small groups led by Telling Room staff and volunteers, they leave the papers behind them, figuring out which words belong in which new homes: for example, a trashcan bears the phrase, “take it or leave it,” and a park bench brandishes “get up and dance!” like a new tattoo.

After their Word Walk, students of this Field Trip return to The Telling Room to write about their experience, and develop a story or poem from the scene they’ve helped to create. Telling Room writers and artists circulate the writing studio to help students find and develop their voices, and at the end of the day encourage everyone to read a favorite line or a whole piece of writing.

The Word Walk is best for slightly more mature writers: Grades 4-12 seems about right most of the time.