

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Young Writers Workshop. We look forward to reading your writing and receiving your application as together we see if this program – imaginative & exploratory – would be a good fit.

The Young Writers Workshop

Our program offers an exciting opportunity to explore various genres and styles of writing, including poetry, fiction, playwriting and creative non-fiction. We focus upon the vibrant connections between language, thinking, and creativity as we write, think, and read together in an imaginative and supportive environment. We spend a good part of each day in various kinds of informal, playful writing activities (the prompts may range from creative and exploratory responses to various readings, to observations of nature and works of art, to innovative kinds of fiction and poetry play). Our aim is to engage your imagination, encourage you to take some risks with words and ideas, and expand your awareness of the writer's creative process.

The workshop is an opportunity for you to work on yourself as a writer, in serious play, and in concert with other young writers. We are a community writing and exploring together (each workshop has about twelve students and the instructor writes alongside the participants). We believe this approach will be of more use to you in the long run than simply learning how to write a technically correct and polished piece of prose or poetry.

From the daily informal writing activities we do, you will develop more polished pieces, such as poems, stories and personal essays, creative nonfiction and more experimental pieces. By the end of the three weeks, you will have written a lot, probably more than you imagined you would, and will have created a rich and highly varied portfolio of works in progress.

You will also have explored your writing within a community of fellow writers, who are just as excited as you about the imaginative possibilities that writing together can offer. This is a rare opportunity in this world.

Outside of the Workshop

There is ample down time, outside of the workshop, to relax, unplug, have fun, get to know other writers well and to participate in various activities organized by our

Campus Life staff. Great Barrington is a vibrant area for artistic activity and we take many trips. The college offers a large gym and pool for you to use. The nature around this area is stunning and we are close to a lovely clean lake.

Bard College at Simon's Rock

Bard College at Simon's Rock is the home of our program. This is a college where students can enter after tenth or eleventh grade to begin either an A.A. or B.A. degree. It also has a residential high school program. Our workshop was born out of the three-week writing workshop required of all entering students at Bard College, our affiliated institution. We have served as a model for summer writing workshops (The National Writing and Thinking Network) at other colleges around the country.

Application Details

If this sounds like a good fit, we welcome your application. Once your application is complete, including your teacher's recommendation, we will inform you of our decision to admit you to the program within one to two weeks. Early application is recommended. We start reviewing applications in January and stop when the program is filled, usually in early May.

Please fill out the application forms yourself rather than leave them to your parents (except for parental information or signatures). This may seem like a curious request, but it reflects our interest in enrolling students who are personally and genuinely interested in participating in the workshop. While we are always happy to speak with families about the program, we want applicants to communicate with us directly with questions and concerns, and when submitting application materials.

Please type both the application materials and the personal narrative described on page two of the application. When giving the digital recommendation form to your teacher, be sure to emphasize the importance of forwarding it to us fairly quickly (it never hurts to gently remind your recommender). Provide a frequently used e-mail address and make sure to include the program's e-mail address in your e-mail contacts, to prevent messages from going to spam.

If you are applying for financial assistance generally or the Dorothy West Scholarship for students of color particularly (see the website for further information), the deadline for completed applications is March 15th.

All applications are reviewed once they become complete.

Please don't hesitate to e-mail us if you have any questions about the workshop or about how to apply.

Sincerely,

Anna Dolan & Emily Miller Mlčák

Co-Directors, Young Writers Workshop

Bard College at Simon's Rock

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P.S. If you would like to speak with former students about their experience in the workshop, please ask and we can provide you with contact information.