



## The Learning Centre

### **Creative Writing**

#### **Planning a Reading**

**Creative writing readings** can take on many forms. On the one hand, a reading could consist of a group of four or five students reciting original poems around an Okanagan College cafeteria table. On the other hand, another reading could consist of one-hundred or so audience members mingling the space of a large auditorium, listening as a line-up of writers recites personal essays over the room's sound system. Your creative writing reading could consist of anything in between, or equal to, these examples. Most importantly, you must use your own judgment to decide on the venue and budget of your reading. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to get started:

#### **Venue**

- What “vibe” do you want your venue to give off?
- How many people do you anticipate will come to this event?
- How big does your venue need to be to hold this many people?
- Will your audience pay an entry fee (or equivalent)?

#### **Budget**

- What resources will you need?
- How much are you able/willing to spend on these resources?
- Will you need to do any fund-raising (ex. a bake sale, a used book sale, etc.)?
- Are there any organizations that are willing to donate money to you?
- Are there any organizations that are willing to donate resources to you (ex. posters, a venue)?
- Are you able to apply for any arts grants to help fund your reading?
- Are there any resources/costs you can cut to create a more affordable reading?
- Are you able to recruit volunteers to help with the reading?
- Are you working with a group to plan the reading, or are you planning the reading on your own?
- If you are working with a group, do any of the group members have any skills/resources that they can use to cut costs?

#### Example Reading Plan:

**Venue:** I want to create an artsy vibe with dimmed lights and jazz playing in the background. The venue needs to fit 30-50 people, as there are 10 performers and 20-40 anticipated audience members, including the performers' invited guests and possible community members. The space must be large enough to fit everyone, but small enough to maintain intimacy.

**Budget:** \$100 fund-raised, \$100 contributed by me

<b>Required Resource</b>	<b>Method of Acquiring Resource</b>	<b>Out-of-Pocket Expenses</b>
Venue	Team up with a fairly large coffee shop and have the coffee shop stay open 3 hours past closing – this way, the coffee shop provides us with a venue and we provide the coffee shop with service (audience members’ entry into reading will be purchase of a \$5 drink, or anything of equal or greater value)	\$0
Drinks & Food	Audience members purchase their own drinks/food from the coffee shop	\$0
Flyers and Posters (Artwork/Creation)	One of my fellow OC students does basic graphic art; he digitally creates the posters on a volunteer-basis	\$0
Flyers (Printing - 30)	Staples	\$30
Colour Letter-Sized Posters (Printing - 50)	Staples	\$30
Planners/Performers	Voluntary participation of Okanagan College creative writing students	\$0
Technology (Microphone and Speakers)	Kelowna Sound Rentals – “Public Address” package	\$130
Technology (iPod or Laptop for Music)	I own both of these	\$0

Some comments on revision...

If all of my methods for acquiring resources work out properly, my reading will end up costing \$190 (even less than my budget!). It is important to note, however, that the plan has been carefully revised to fit within my budget. Originally, I considered holding the reading at a local hall; however, after looking at the rental rates, I realized that paying hundreds of dollars for a venue wasn’t in my price range. I had to find a different way of paying for the venue, so, instead of charging for entry into the reading and keeping the profits, I decided that I would let the profits flow straight into the coffee shop with the one drink/one snack purchase entry fee. Furthermore, to print large posters, it would have costed me \$10/poster at Staples, meaning that I would only be able to print four posters to stay within my budget. Therefore, I decided that letter-sized posters printed in colour would have to work. Overall, if your budget is small, you can often rely on cheaper options, volunteers, and community-partner trading to keep the cost of the event low.