HUMMS - Creative Non-Fiction
Module 6
First Edition, 2020

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La Union Schools Division
Region I

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**Target**

Once you get feedback from your classmates and your teacher, you need to start revising your output. Revision is the act of improving the original paper by applying changes based on comments and observations from the feedback. In revising, you also need to apply critical thinking and evaluation skills when considering the comments on your creative nonfiction output.

In your previous lesson, you are done with the different pointers on how to write a draft of a short piece (e.g. fiction, poetry, drama, etc.) using any of the literary conventions of genre as well as on how to evaluate other’s draft.

This module will provide you with essential guides and techniques on how to revise a draft of a short piece of creative nonfiction using any of the literary conventions of a genre (e.g. plot for narrative piece).

In making this lesson more meaningful, you are expected to:

1. recall the different literary conventions of a genre;
2. discuss the processes and techniques involved in revising; and
3. revise a short piece using any of the literary conventions of a genre
   
   **(HUMSS_CNF11/12-Ig-j-14)**

Before going on, check how much you know about this topic. Answer the pretest on the next page in a separate sheet of paper.
The secret of doing well in writing creative nonfiction is to know which conventions to incorporate in your output. Each creative nonfiction genre has its unique features and elements.

In your Module 5, you have learned how to evaluate other’s draft based on different criteria. In this module, you will learn more about the different literary conventions of genres such as fiction, drama and poetry and how to revise one’s draft using these conventions.

Jumpstart

Activity 1: Rousing Start

Directions: Recall the following genres of creative nonfiction and their conventions or features through the following figures below. Understand what you are reading.

Literary Genres refer to a category of literary composition determined by literary technique, tone, content, or even (as in the case of fiction) length. The distinctions among genres and categories are flexible and loosely defined, often with subgroups. The most general genres in literature are (in loose chronological order) epic, tragedy, comedy, and creative nonfiction. They can all be in the form of prose or poetry. Additionally, a genre such as satire, allegory or pastoral might appear in any of the above, not only as a sub-genre, but as mixture of genres. Finally, they are defined by the general cultural movement of the historical period in which they were composed.
**Literary Conventions** refer to the defining features of a particular genre such as a novel, a short story or a play. Also, conventions refer to the elements and techniques employed by the writer to make meaning in a story.

1. **Narrative Writing/Prose** is best described as an account of a sequence of fictional or nonfictional events, usually in chronological order. It is a story created in constructive format. Figure 1 shows the conventions of narrative writing or prose.

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**Figure 1. Conventions of Narrative Writing**
2. **Poetry** is one of the traditional genres of literature and has captivated the human attention because of its peculiarity in the way how human aspirations and emotions are expressed and communicated. It manifests external and internal beauty which may bring impacts to its readers.

**Conventions of Poetry**

**A. Structure**

**Stanzas**

These are series of lines grouped together and separated by an empty line from other stanzas.

**Form**

A poem may or may not have a specific number of lines, rhyme scheme and/or metrical pattern, but it can still be labeled according to its form or style.

**B. Sound Pattern**

**Rhyme**

It is the repetition of similar sounds. In poetry, the most common kind of rhyme is the end rhyme, which occurs at the end of two or more lines.

**Rhythm and Meter**

Rhythm is the pattern of stresses in a line of verse while meter is the basic rhythmic structure of a line within a poem (e.g. the number of syllables and the pattern of emphasis on those syllables).

**C. Meaning**

**Concreteness and Particularity**

In general, poetry deals with particular things in concrete language, since our emotions most readily respond to these things. In other words, a poem is most often concrete and particular; the “message”, if there is any, is general and abstract; it is implied by the images. Images suggest meanings.
**Denotation and connotation**

Word meanings are not only restricted to dictionary meanings (denotation). The full meaning of a word includes both the dictionary meaning and the special meanings and associations a word takes in a given expression (connotation).

3. **Drama** is a specific mode of creative nonfiction represented in performance: a play, opera, mime, ballet, etc. performed in a theater, or on a radio or television.

**Conventions of Drama**

a. **Setting**

The physical and psychological environment or the milieu where and when the characters transpire and are situated.

b. **Dramatic personae**

They are the individuals involved in the context of the story. They are revealed as the conflict of the story develops.

c. **Dialogue**

The lines and the discourse delivered and expressed by the characters that are also necessary to develop the whole story.

d. **Plot**

This pertains to the sequence of related scenes. There are also various techniques that playwrights may take into account to develop the frame of events such as flashbacks, flash-forward and foreshadowing.

e. **Theme**

This is the central message or insight that the play attempts to reveal and to communicate.
Directions: Choose your answer from the given choices. Use a separate sheet of paper for your answers.

1. What is the category of an artistic composition like literature that is characterized by similarities of form, style, or subject matter?
   A. Convention  B. Element  C. Genre  D. Technique

2. Which convention of a narrative writing refers to vivid details that entice and activate the human senses?
   A. Character  B. Image  C. Plot  D. Theme

3. Which of the following is a defining feature or characteristic of a given genre?
   A. Convention  B. Element  C. Genre  D. Technique

4. What literary convention refers to the way in which the writer develops and arranges his or her ideas within a work?
   A. Character  B. Image  C. Plot  D. Theme

5. Which is TRUE about theme?
   A. It is the central setting of the story.
   B. It is the resolution of the story.
   C. It is the central message of the story.
   D. It is the music that goes with the story.

6. Which term refers to how a writer creates and develops characters?
   A. Characterization  C. Process
   B. Outlining  D. Sketching

7. What convention or feature of poetry describes the main building block of a poem?
   A. Form  B. Rhyme  C. Rhythm  D. Stanza

8. What are the two meanings found within a poem?
   A. Concreteness-Particularity  C. Form-Stanza
   B. Denotation-Connotation  D. Rhyme and Rhythm

9. What do you call a conversation between two characters in a play?
   A. Discussion  B. Dialogue  C. Monologue  D. Quotation

10. What convention of drama shows the time and location where actions take place?
    A. Act  B. Dialogue  C. Plot  D. Setting
Revising is indeed a complex and complicated process of writing. Thus, the familiarity of various approaches in facilitating such a skill guides a writer to be totally conscious on how to ensure quality and noteworthy writing products.

You revise your creative work after you have selected an idea to write about, completed necessary research, organized your information, decided on what to write about, and then written a first draft.

The purpose of the first draft is not to write something completely perfect—but to get your ideas on paper. Whether you write poetry, fiction, or personal essays, you should revise your work.

Revision can transform an ordinary piece of poetry, short fiction, personal essay or any form of writing into something memorable. It allows you to improve on an initial attempt. It gives you the opportunity to write the best possible poem, fiction, personal essay and so forth.

In addition, revision is often the most creative aspect of writing. Your first draft is just a blueprint. A first draft is never your best work. Your goal of revising your work is not to make your writing perfect, because you can always revise your work. Your goal then is to create something that is your best work. If you write little prose, you might have to add content. If you over write, you have to delete the excess. Both the sparse writer and verbose writer will have to trim, alter and rearrange their content.

This module will help you discuss how to revise your creative nonfiction using the different literary conventions of a genre.

A. Why revise?

1. Revision allows you the opportunity to improve.

This means that by revising your work after writing the initial draft, you can improve your writing. Revising your work also gives you the opportunity to improve the **structure, plot, characterization, point of view, conflict, climax, resolution, and theme** of your story.
Revising your work allows you to add, delete, rearrange, and expand the details of your poem, story, articles or essay.

2. **Revising enables you to see your writing from a new perspective.**

   If you take a break from writing gives you the chance to add simile, metaphor, fresh language, new details, to tap into your imagination.

3. **Revision is closely tied to critical reading.**

   To revise a piece conceptually, you must be able to reflect on whether your message matches your writing goal.

**B. How to revise?**

Many writers revise as they write. They will write a sentence or paragraph or section, then reread it then revise. The following points will surely help you refine your draft.

1. A better way to revise is to write the entire draft.
2. Read it aloud and make notes of things you don’t like.
3. Revise your creative writing several times before submitting.
4. Work on getting your poem, story or essay or article right-making it the best you can.

**C. What to revise?**

After writing the complete draft, take a break for a day or more. The break from writing will enable you to see your work from new perspective. When you revise consider the following. All types of creative nonfiction writing require the following considerations, whether you write a short story, novel, personal essay, literary journalistic article, or poetry. There are two ways on how to revise creative nonfictions.

**A. Macro Revision**

For a macro revision of a personal narrative essay or fictional story, these are some of the things you need to consider when revising creative nonfiction (e.g. narrative piece) using literary conventions.
Setting and Time

- Ensure that the **beginning** tells the reader what the story is all about and why they should read it. Ensure also that the beginning grabs the reader’s attention.
- Ensure that the story has a **setting**. It shows the time and pace of the story. It can be a backdrop, antagonist, or the mood of the story. Does the story, at the minimum, have taken place at a particular time and place? Is the setting realistic and believable?

Character/Characterization

- Revise to enhance the **central character**. Does the central character have a motive? Character flaws? Have you developed the character with dialogue, behavior, or appearance? Does the character have desire to reach some goals?

Plot/Plot Structure

- Revise to improve the **structure**. Is there a beginning, middle and ending? Is there an inciting incident? Problem? Setbacks? Or obstacles? Climax or turning point? Resolution to the story?
- Ensure that your story has an **ending**. Is the ending correct? Open? Or Closed?

Dialogue

- Revise for **dialogue**. Does the dialogue reveal character? Move the story forward? Sound like real people talking? Does each character speak differently? Is dialogue included in important events or scenes? Do you include quotation marks and dialogue tags dialogue?

Style

- Revise for **style**. Do you use a consistent voice? Tone? Diction? Sentence variety?

Voice

- Ensure that the story has a **correct and consistent point of view**. First person (I)? Second person (you)? Third person (He/She)?
- Ensure that you have included concrete and specific and significant **details and descriptions**.
- Ensure that you have used **imagery**, language that appeals to the reader’s sense of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch.
• Ensure that you have used **figurative language**, such as simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism.

• Ensure that you **show the reader what happened** with dialogue, action, setting, and imagery when writing about important events such as the inciting incident, crisis, climax, and resolution.

**Theme**

• Ensure that the story has a **theme**. What is the implicit meaning of your work? Do symbols help to develop the theme? Is the theme revealed in the conflict? Is the theme revealed in the consequences of the story?

If you are writing a piece of creative nonfiction, you will want also to ensure that you have written into a structure. For instance, if you are writing a theme-based personal essay, you will want to make sure that you have a variety of sections which support central idea.

If you are writing a **poem**, your macro revision will consider the following:

• **Form**- narrative, meditative, surreal, image, or prose
• **Line break**- for emphasis, enjambment ad rhyme
• **Stanza**
• **Diction**-word choice
• **Figurative or poetic language** such as simile or metaphor or imagery
• **Concrete and significant details**
• **Description**
• **Grammar**- syntax and punctuation
• **Right voice and style**
• **Sound** such as alliteration or assonance or rhyme
• **Rhythm and meter**
• **Point-of-view**- first, second, third person, or invented persona
• **Theme**-meaning of the poem

**B. Micro Revision**

After completing the macro revision, you will complete a micro revision. Whether you write poetry, fiction or narrative piece, you must complete a micro revision. It is a line-by-line edit of the following: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing style.
- Ensure that you are using **correct grammar** such as correct usage (e.g. subject-verb agreement).
- Ensure that you are using **correct spelling**.
- Ensure that you are using **correct punctuation**- period, comma, dash, exclamation point, question mark, quotations.
- **Scenes.** Ensure that you have shown and told your readers. You must write in scenes for all important events. Do you show readers what happened? For things that are less important, do you tell your readers?
- **Diction/word choice.** Ensure that you have chosen the best language. What is the connotation and denotation of each word?
- Ensure that you have used **sentence variety** such as long and short sentence, fragments and climactic sentences, simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- Ensure that your prose have **melody.** Have you used alliteration? Assonance? Rhyme? Repetition?
- Ensure that your prose have **rhythm.** It refers to the parallel structure of your prose.
- Lyricism. Ensure that your prose is lyrical. Have you used imagery? Metaphor? Simile?
- **Usage.** Ensure that you have used the active voice, concrete nouns, and action verbs. Ensure that you have adjectives and adverbs sparingly.

**Explore**

**Here are some enrichment activities for you to work on to master and strengthen the basic concepts you have learned from this lesson.**

**Enrichment Activity 1: Fill Me!**

There are a number of ways to revise your creative writing output such as your narrative piece. Revising is not to rewrite. Revising means to improve your story, refining your story, and correcting weaknesses in your story.
**What you need:**

- A graphic organizer (use colored paper if you have)
- Pen

**What you have to do:**

Using the template below, make a graphic organizer on the processes involved in revising creative nonfiction.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>Macro Revision</td>
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Assessment 1:

Directions: Use a separate sheet for your answers. Tell what type of revision the following conventions fall? Write the correct answers in your answer sheet.

1. **Beginning** of the story should catch the attention of its readers. (Macro revision, micro revision)

2. **Active voice, concrete nouns, and action verbs** are used when revising. (Macro revision, micro revision)

3. Use of **imagery** and language that appeals to the reader’s senses. (Macro revision, micro revision)

4. Ensure that you are using **correct spelling**. (Macro revision, micro revision)

5. Use of **consistent voice, tone and diction** is observed. (Macro revision, micro revision)
Enrichment No. 2: Blockbuster

Directions: Complete the crossword puzzle. Use the clues below to help you answer the crossword puzzle.

Across
1. The character who is opposed to (against) or competes with another.
5. People in the story.
8. The plan or main story of a play or novel.
10. The beginning of a story that exposes or introduces the background.
11. Details before the resolution, loose ends are tied up, usually very brief.
12. The point at which the intensity of the action rises to a high point.

Down
2. It is the section of the plot leading to the climax, in which the tension stemming from the story’s central conflict grows through successive plot development.
3. The central idea or message explored in the story
4. It is the section of the plot leading to the resolution of the story.
6. It where and when the story takes place.
7. The main character, usually the one the reader identifies with.
9. Literary elements that involves a struggle between two opposing forces.
Assessment 2: Revise the following draft. Use a separate sheet of paper for your output.

Text 1 (Dull Plot). A young man who survives a disaster at sea is hurtled into an epic journey of adventure and discovery. While cast away, he forms an unexpected connection with another survivor: a fearsome Bengal tiger.

-Anonymous

Enrichment No. 3: Thinking Out Loud

Directions: Reflect on and answer the following questions. Use another sheet of paper for your answers.

1. Using a Venn diagram, state the similarities and differences of editing and revising.
2. What are the important roles that revising as a skill play?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

3. Why do you think revising and proofreading are important to writing?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Deepen

Writing Project

Directions: With the different literary conventions and concepts on revising a draft presented in this module, do the following task. Use another sheet of paper for this task. The scoring rubric on the next page will be used in assessing your output.

1. Read the story “Sapay Koma” by Jhoanna Lynn Cruz.

2. Revise a specific scene from the perspective of another character.
3. Revise the story with a different ending. Since this story is very dramatic, anything could happen. Revise the plot of the story specifically its ending following the given suggestions:

- The narrator ends up with her husband.
- The narrator stays with her husband.
- You can have your own way to end the story.

4. Discuss how your revisions have changed the story. Is it better or worse? How does the reader relate to the characters and the narrative action with the newly revised scene?

5. Revise a scene from your own paper from either a different perspective or to completely change the plot of the story.

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Sapay Koma

*Nonfiction by Jhoanna Lynn Cruz | September 14, 2008*

(This won 3rd prize, Essay in English, Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature 2008)

“I looked at Maria and she was lovely. She was tall…and in the darkened hall the fragrance of her was like a morning when papayas are in bloom.”

–Manuel Arguilla

On our first Valentine as a couple, he gave me a bowl of white nondescript flowers. They had a distinctly sweet but faint scent. I had never been a fan of Valentine’s Day nor of love like a red, red rose; but that day, I became a believer. He told me they were papaya blossoms from his mother’s garden. At that moment, I knew I would one day marry him. We had started dating only three months ago, but I knew I would be Maria to his Leon. Why, he even had a younger brother the same age as Baldo! And even though they didn’t live in Nagrebcan nor owned a carabao, the town of Itogon, Benguet was remote enough for me. I have always enjoyed teaching the Arguilla story for its subversive take on the role that one’s family plays in a marriage; but having been born and raised in Pasay City, I had no idea what papaya blossoms smelled like. I imagined that my new boyfriend had read the story in his Philippine literature class and meant for me to recognize his gift as an allusion. In fact, I imagined we would defy societal norms and prove that love conquers all. Instead of a “theme song,” our relationship had a story to live up to. It was a disaster waiting to happen.

In the story, Leon brings his city-girl wife, Maria, home to meet his parents for the first time. His surly father orchestrates several tests of
Maria’s suitability through Leon’s younger brother Baldo, who is quickly won over by her papaya blossom scent.

The first time I met his parents was on the wedding day of his eldest brother. By then, we had been seeing each other discreetly for seven months, somehow knowing that no one would approve of our relationship. In the midst of the beating of gongs and best wishes, his Kankanaey father only wanted to know two things about me: where I was from and what language I spoke. I gave the wrong answer on both points. I was a Manileña and I couldn’t speak Ilocano yet, having only recently moved to Baguio City to rebuild my life after becoming disillusioned with the institution that had once nurtured my desire to excel. But no love lost, I was only their son’s “gayyem” (friend), after all. It didn’t help that I was wearing a leopard print spaghetti-strapped dress, which exposed the tattoo on my back. I reasoned that the Cordillera culture has a long tradition of body art; so they should appreciate the significance of mine. None of us knew at that time that I was already carrying a half-Igorot child in my womb (which, I imagined, somehow made me an acceptable quarter-Igorot for the nonce).

Against better judgment, we decided to get married. We were under the influence of hormones, of pregnancy, of the Catholic church, of Manuel Arguilla. We would have gotten a quickie secret wedding if he were old enough, or I, wais enough; but by law we needed his parents’ consent. Which they refused to give. For perfectly good reasons.

They could have said, “You shouldn’t marry because he is too young” (and you are ten years older). Or “You shouldn’t marry because he is still studying” (and you were even his teacher). Or “You shouldn’t marry because he has a calling” (and you are snatching him from God).

But instead his mother said, “We can’t give you permission because his brother had just gotten married. In the theology of the Cordilleras, if siblings marry within the same year, one of the marriages will fail. The community will blame us if we allow you to marry.”

So I called my mother, who promptly came to my rescue, writing them a demand letter based on a fallacy: “If your child were the woman in this situation, you would rush to marry them!” I’m sure she was so eager to get me married off because she knew it was a fluke.

What was most ridiculous (though I refused to see it at that time), was that I was a self-proclaimed lesbian feminist. Despite all the tragic relationships I had had with women, I still believed that it was worth fighting for the right of a woman to love another woman. What business did I have getting married to a very young man? And for all the wrong reasons.
Must have been oxytocin overdose sponsored by the baby in my womb. Or a planetary alignment exerting mysterious forces on my consciousness. Or, gasp—Love!

Whatever it was, it came to pass. My mother didn’t have to bring my grandfather’s rifle. But I had to do it all on my own: filing the license, finding the Judge, buying the rings, reserving a restaurant, paying for everything. It was a good thing his parents didn’t allow us to tell anybody about the marriage – that way I didn’t have to invite anyone — which lessened my expenses. I had to understand that they had spent all their savings for his brother’s recent wedding, where they had butchered eight pigs for a traditional Igorot wedding feast. And after all, lest we forget, we were getting married against their will. But hey, there they were, on hand to sign the marriage certificate in the sala of the Honorable Judge Fernando Cabato of La Trinidad, Benguet.

The ceremony itself was quick – but peppered with omens. First, when the court clerk asked for my mother-in-law’s name, I told her “Constancia” – because I figured that was where her nickname “Connie” came from. When I asked my nervous groom, he agreed. When the Judge confirmed the information, “Constancia” objected because her name is actually “Conchita.” Judge Cabato made the correction and lectured us about how important it is not to make errors in a legal document. Then, when it came to my father-in-law’s name, the Judge refused to believe that “Johnny” was his real name.

When he asked for the rings, my groom gave him the little box, but when the Judge opened it, it was empty. The elderly honorable Judge sat down and asked, “Is this a prank?” It turned out that the rings had slipped out of the box and were floating in my groom’s pants’ pocket.

When it was time for the wedding kiss, the Judge “got even” with us. He pronounced us husband and wife and then said, “No more kissing, it’s obvious there’s a deposit in there!” Then he laughed hearty congratulations. I wonder now how many times he has regaled a party crowd with our story.

At the reception in a Chinese restaurant, we occupied only one round table, with only ten guests. The pancit canton was very good. We didn’t get any gifts, except for a framed copy of 1 Corinthians 13: “Love is patient, love is kind... love does not keep a record of wrongs...” It wasn’t the wedding of my dreams, but the whole event cost me only Php 2,500. It was as do-it-yourself as DIY could get. That didn’t include the cost of the wedding rings, for which I had to sacrifice some of my old gold jewelry. The irony of it escaped me at the time; but for a modern woman on a budget, there was no room for finesse.
Thus we began our married life: full of contention, confusion, and concealment.

We couldn’t live together immediately; nor was I allowed to be seen in their little neighborhood, where everyone knew everyone. A very pregnant stranger ambling up and down the steep Upper Mangga Road would have been a conspicuous mystery. I continued to live alone in my apartment, with my husband staying weekends, and I pretended in school that my husband is from Manila. I’m not sure anyone actually believed the drama, but I was bathing in first-baby-love, so I couldn’t care less.

My other Igorot friends assured me that when the baby is born, my in-laws would finally accept me as the mother of their grandchild. But as I said, I couldn’t care less. I was a Manila girl – I truly believed that our marriage would succeed even without his parents’ approval of me. I was used to flouting norms and not needing anyone. And for his part, my husband argued existentially that we should live by the integrity of our own little family. You see, he was a Philosophy major under the tutelage of two young Jesuit-educated instructors, who had come to the mountains from Manila to indulge their fantasies about love and teaching (in that order). We, the migrant teachers, smiled at each other in the College of Human Sciences silently acknowledging each other’s foolishness; ignoring the fact that most of the other “native” faculty members looked askance at the three of us.

When our daughter was born, we decided it was time to move into the family home. In the innocent presence of the new half-Igorot baby, all would be forgiven. It seemed the most practical thing to do. But I soon realized how naïve we were. We didn’t take into account all the new wrongs that could be committed while sharing one household.

Before I got married, I had a dog – a black mongrel I had named “Sapay Koma,” which is Ilocano for “sana.” It is both a wish and a prayer – difficult to translate into English, unless in context. Koma was my companion throughout the two years I had lived in my dank, quirky apartment – the mute witness to the drama and dilemma preceding my decision to marry. We took him along with us in our move, of course. But the five other dogs in the new household didn’t like him all that much and they all raised such a nonstop racket, none of the humans could sleep, particularly the newborn baby.

The neighbors offered to buy him for Php 500. Igorots like black dogs because the meat is tastier. I was aghast. He was my dog, my loyal friend. If anyone was going to eat him, it should be family. So my husband invited his friends over to put Koma out of his misery.
I locked myself in our little bedroom with the baby, while they did it. But despite the closed windows, I could still smell the burning hair and later, the meat cooking. The putrid scent seemed to stick to my nose for days after, accusing me of betrayal. I wept for Koma and for all that was dying in the fire – all the wishes that had no place in my new life. I decided that this was the price for what Filipinos like to call “paglagay sa tahimik.”

It took two hours for the meat to be tender enough to eat and when we all sat down to dinner, I was glad they didn’t expect me to partake of the canine feast. Yet I did. I took one mouthful, which I swallowed quickly without chewing, so I wouldn’t have to relish the flavors. I may have had the stomach for it, but I didn’t have the heart. I only wanted to show them that I respected their culture, even though in fact, I would never belong. Also, I was hoping that this way, Koma would forgive me for having failed him, for offering him as a sacrifice at the altar of my marriage. This way, we could be truly together.

For weeks after, every time I overheard my husband reply “Aw, aw” to his father, I would shiver at the prospect that we would have dog for dinner again. They had five other dogs, after all. Luckily, it turned out that “aw” only means “yes” in their language, Kankanaey. Besides, they only butcher dogs on very special occasions. Ordinarily, there was always the savory chicken soup dish, Pinikpikan, which features a similar charred skin aroma and taste. I was quite relieved to learn that his father did not require beating the chicken to death with a stick before cooking, as is customary in the Igorot culture.

To this day, I have not been able to care for another dog. I do, however, have another child. By the same man. Accidentally. It happened on Father’s Day, when we thought having sex was a nice distraction from the confusion that arose from our growing discontent with the marriage. When we found out about the pregnancy, we agreed, albeit reluctantly, that it was Divine Intervention – a sign that we should keep trying to save the marriage.

It was not just the food that was strange. I couldn’t understand why everyday, some relatives would come over and expect to be fed. I had not been raised in an extended family, and even within our nuclear family, we pretty much kept to ourselves. In my mother’s house, we were trained to share through “one for you, one for me, then stay out of my bag of goodies.” You can imagine how I felt the day they served my Gardenia whole wheat bread to the “relatives,” who promptly wiped it out, because my peanut butter was delicious.

Not that I was being selfish. Aside from the fact that I didn’t have any bread for breakfast the next day and the house being a ten-minute hike
uphill plus ten kilometers to downtown Baguio City, I fumed about not even being introduced to these relatives as the wife of their son. They would introduce my daughter and her yaya, but I remained a “phantom of delight” flitting about the house.

When I confronted my husband about the bread, he explained that in the Igorot culture, everything belongs to the community. So I took a permanent marker and wrote my name on my next loaf of bread. It was a Saussurean signifier of sorts – and it was unforgivable.

My father-in-law was a man of few words. In fact, my daughter was already two years old when he decided it was time to acknowledge my existence and say something to me. In the past, he would use an intermediary (usually my husband) if he wanted to get information from me. It wasn’t too difficult because by this time we had already moved to Manila and were living in my mother’s house – which was another disaster and another story. It was Christmas Eve and we were spending the holidays in Baguio City. He was watching a replay of a boxing match and I was playing with my daughter in the living room. He asked, in Ilocano, “Do you have a VCD player at home?” I was so shocked I couldn’t reply immediately. He repeated the question in Tagalog. It turned out he was giving us the VCD player he had won in a barangay raffle. That night, as the entire family sang their traditional “Merry Christmas To You” to the happy birthday tune, I felt I was finally getting a fair chance to prove that I was worthy of being in their cozy family.

In our six years together, I can think of more instances in which our separate worlds collided and caused aftershocks in my marriage. But none of it rivaled what I thought was the worst affront to me. My mother-in-law is Cancerian, like me, so her house is a pictorial gallery of her children and their achievements. She had a wall with enlarged and framed wedding photos of her children. Through the years, her exhibit grew, and expectedly, I and my husband didn’t have a photo on this wall. I figured it was because we had not had a church wedding. In fact, when we told them I was pregnant with our second child, they requested that we hold a church wedding already. They even offered to share the expense. But I preferred to save my money for the birth of the baby. However, given my theater background, I once tried to convince my husband to just rent a gown and tuxedo and then have our “wedding” photo taken so we’d finally get on “The Wedding Wall.” But he has always been the more sensible half of our couple.

One day, though, a new picture was added to the wall. It was a studio photo of his eldest sister, her American husband, and their baby boy. It wasn’t “The Wedding Wall” anymore; it was now the “Our Children and their
Acceptable Spouses” wall. It was their version of the Saussurean signifier. The message was loud and clear – to me and to other people who came to visit.

I wonder now why it so mattered to me to be on that wall. I guess I felt that after all those years, we had been punished enough for defying the culture. Maybe I actually believed in 1 Corinthians 13. Or perhaps I also needed to be reassured that I was indeed happily married.

I confronted my husband about it and demanded that he finally stand up for me and our family. And he did – he wrote his parents a letter that made his mother cry and beat her breast. We each tried to explain our sides, finally coming to terms with the bitter past. They told me that they are simple folk and didn’t mean to ostracize me; that when they agreed to the marriage, they accepted me as part of the family, no matter what. I believed them. I told them I was never going to be the woman they had probably wanted for their son; but that I am a perfectly good woman, most of the time. We tried to make amends. Our family picture was up on the wall within three days. Our kids were quite pleased.

But it was too late. By then, my husband and I had been grappling with our own issues for the past five years. He had gotten tired of my transgressions and sought solace with his friends. After coming home late from another “Happy Hour” with them, I screamed at him, “What happy hour? Nobody is allowed to be happy in this house!” It was then we both finally realized that we had to face the truth about our marriage. By the time his parents were willing to start over in our journey as a family, we had given up on ours.

Most couples find breaking up hard to do. It was particularly hard for us because we had to convince his parents that it was not their fault. On the other hand, I had to deal with the fact that maybe my marriage did fail because of the “curse” of the superstition “sukob sa taon” – that maybe we were wrong to insist on our choice. Yet on good days, I am pretty sure it was a perfectly “no fault divorce,” if there ever was one.

“Ka pag minamalas ka sa isang lugar, itawid mo ng dagat” goes the Filipino proverb. Perhaps the salt in the sea would prevent the bad luck from following you. So today I live with my two Igorot children in Davao City – fondly called “the promised land.” Everyone is astounded when they learn that I had moved even though I knew only one person here – who didn’t even promise me anything. I just wanted a chance to start over. When we moved into this house, it had a small nipa hut in the backyard. The kids enjoyed staying there during the sweltering hot Davao afternoons, especially when their Daddy called them on the phone. But it was nearly falling apart and
was host to a colony of termites that had actually begun to invade the house as well.

My generous landlady soon decided it was time to tear down the structure. When I got home one day, it was gone. All that was left was a dry and empty space in the yard; yet everything looked brighter too. We missed the “payag;” but soon the grass crept into the emptiness and we began to enjoy playing Frisbee in the space that opened up. It was a Derridean denouement of sorts.

Last year, we spent our first Christmas without any family obligations. It was liberating not to have to buy any gifts for nephews, cousins, in-laws. All the shopping I did was for my children. I was determined to establish my own Christmas tradition with them. I wanted to show them we were happy. I wanted them to grow up never having to sing “Merry Christmas To You” ever again. I decided to cook paella for noche buena as if my life depended on it. I thought it was simply a matter of dumping all the ingredients in the pan and letting it cook – like the aftermath of a failed marriage. The recipe was so difficult I ended up crying hysterically, asking myself over and over, “what have I done?” My kids embraced me and said, “Nanay, stop crying na.” But I couldn’t. It seemed as if it was the first time I had let myself cry over what I had lost. I noticed though, that the kids did not cry. Embarrassed with myself, I picked myself up from the river of snot that was my bed and finished what I had set out to do – as I always have. It even looked and tasted like paella, despite the burnt bottom. But next year we'll just order take-out from Sr. Pedro (Lechon Manok).

That night, my mother-in-law sent me a text message saying they are always praying for us to get back together, especially for the children’s sake. I do not know how to comfort her, except to keep saying that we had all done the best we could at the time; that we are always trying to do the right thing; that despite what happened, or perhaps because of it, we will always be a family. Of a kind. We are, after all, inextricably linked by a timeless story and “sapay koma.”

Each of us in this story nurtures a secret wish to have done things differently – to have been kinder, more understanding of each other’s quirks and shortcomings. But it takes less energy to wish it forward. Sapay koma naimbag ti biag yo dita — to hope that your life there is good. (End)
## Scoring Rubric on Plot Revision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 Excellent</th>
<th>3 Good</th>
<th>2 Fair</th>
<th>1 Poor</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Plot is neat, organized and easy to follow.</td>
<td>Plot is organized, can be followed</td>
<td>Plot is unorganized and can be followed with difficulty</td>
<td>Plot is not legible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Events are displayed in logical order</td>
<td>One event is not in logical order</td>
<td>Two or more events are not in logical order</td>
<td>Events are not given in logical order to the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts of Plot</td>
<td>Successfully labeled and identified all parts of plot</td>
<td>Labeled and identified parts of plot with one error</td>
<td>Labeled and identified parts of plot with 2 or more errors</td>
<td>Did not label parts of plot on timeline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Successfully gave enough details to enhance plot</td>
<td>Gave details to enhance plot</td>
<td>Barely gave any details to enhance plot</td>
<td>Did not give details to enhance plot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A. **Directions:** Read and analyze the items below. Use a separate sheet for your answers. Write only the letter of the best answer for each test item.

1. This element makes creative nonfiction literally.
   - A. theme and content  
   - B. form and structure  
   - C. language and style  
   - D. coherence and unity

2. It is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper, reconsidering your arguments, reviewing your evidence, refining your purpose and reorganizing your presentation.
   - A. drafting  
   - B. editing  
   - C. planning  
   - D. revising

3. It is called as a story within a story.
   - A. flashback  
   - B. frame story  
   - C. parallel structure  
   - D. histories

4. This refers to big-picture edits in which making sure the conventions of creative nonfiction make sense and organized.
   - A. macro revision  
   - B. proof-reading  
   - C. micro revision  
   - D. post-writing

5. This refers to the patterns the events of a story form.
   - A. characterization  
   - B. plot Structure  
   - C. setting  
   - D. theme

6. This type of revision is also known as line-edit in which spelling, grammar and punctuations in a work are revised or edited.
   - A. macro revision  
   - B. proof-reading  
   - C. micro revision  
   - D. post-writing

7. “Who is recounting or narrating the story?” This question is answered by__________.
   - A. characters  
   - B. setting  
   - C. point-of-view  
   - D. symbol
8. Examples of this are the crucifix that may represent suffering and death as its negative interpretations, but it can also suggest salvation, sacrifice and even victory. This convention of prose is called _____________.
   A. characters       B. setting
   B. point-of-view    D. symbol

9. This is a literary convention in which an author gives readers hints about what will happen later in the story.
   A. flashback       C. flash-forward
   B. foreshadowing    D. en medias res

10. What is the central message or theme of the essay “Sapay Koma”?
    A. happiness is a choice       C. nothing is impossible with love
    B. love is about sacrificing    D. living your life in a good way

B. Directions: Write a draft of your own piece (narrative piece preferably based on your experience). Then, revise it using the presented prompts of revision in this module. Be guided by the scoring rubric below on how your output will be rated.

**Scoring Rubric on Revising your Narrative Piece**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 Excellent</th>
<th>3 Good</th>
<th>2 Fair</th>
<th>1 Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Overly simplistic. No clear controlling idea and/or theme</td>
<td>Story elements may or may not reveal a controlling idea/theme</td>
<td>Combines story elements around a controlling idea to reveal a thought-provoking theme</td>
<td>Skillfully combines all story elements around a controlling idea to reveal a thought-provoking theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot and Situation</td>
<td>Lacks a developed plot line</td>
<td>Provides a minimally developed plot line</td>
<td>Develops a standard plot line with complex major and minor characters and a definite</td>
<td>Skillfully develops plot line with complex major and minor characters and a definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>Devices/Story Details</td>
<td>setting</td>
<td>setting</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fails to use details, anecdotes, dialogue, suspense, and/or action</td>
<td>Attempts to use details and/or anecdotes, suspense, dialogue, and action, but with minimal effectiveness</td>
<td>Anecdotes, sensory details and examples create a sense of the characters’ thoughts, actions and appearances. A range of devices such as suspense, dialogue and action (gestures, expressions) advances the plot, gives insight into characters, and keeps the reader informed/entertained</td>
<td>Anecdotes, sensory details and examples create a clear sense of the main characters’ thoughts, actions and appearances. A range of devices such as suspense, dialogue and action (gestures, expressions) skillfully advances the plot, gives insight into characters, and keeps the reader continually informed/entertained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little to no structure: Exposition, conflict and/or resolution/denouement may not exist</td>
<td>Weak structure: Exposition, sequencing of ideas in body and/or resolution/denouement need some revision. May be isolated events with weak</td>
<td>Effective structure: Engaging exposition Logical sequencing of ideas based on purpose and linked to theme Resolution and denouement reinforce theme</td>
<td>Skillful structure: Strong, engaging exposition. Logical and effective sequencing of ideas based on purpose and skillfully linked to theme. Resolution and denouement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Voice</strong></th>
<th>Unclear or no sense of voice, purpose and/or audience</th>
<th>Sense of purpose and/or audience not clear</th>
<th>Writer’s voice is confident, authentic and entertaining. Reveals the significance of the writer’s attitude about the subject/memorable incident. Clear sense of audience and purpose. Consistent point of view.</th>
<th>Writer’s voice is authentic, clever and entertaining. • Skillfully reveals the significance of the writer’s attitude about the subject/memorable incident. • Clear sense of purpose and audience. • Consistent point of view.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word and Language Choice</strong></td>
<td>Limited vocabulary; words may be used inappropriately or unnecessarily repeated</td>
<td>More precise and accurate words are needed to convey a clear message.</td>
<td>Precise, detailed words or phrases get message across and reveal characters’ looks, actions, feelings, reactions, and conversation. • Uses academic language to enhance story.</td>
<td>Words or phrases powerfully convey the intended message and skillfully reveal characters’ looks, actions, feelings, reactions, and conversation. • Academic language, imbedded throughout the text, enhances story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

Printed Materials:

Department of Education. (2014). K to 12 Senior High School Humanities and Social Sciences Strand, Curriculum Guide in Creative Nonfiction. Pasig City, Philippines
Vasquez, Louyzza Maria Victoria H., et. al. (2018). Creative Writing. Quezon City, Philippines: Rex Bookstore, Inc.

Website:

**Key Answers**

**Jumpstart:**
1. C
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. C
6. A
7. D
8. B
9. B
10. D

**Gauge:**
1. A
2. D
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. D
9. C
10. B

**Explore:**

Assessment 1

1. Macro revision
2. Micro revision
3. Macro revision
4. Micro revision
5. Micro revision

Enrichment 2