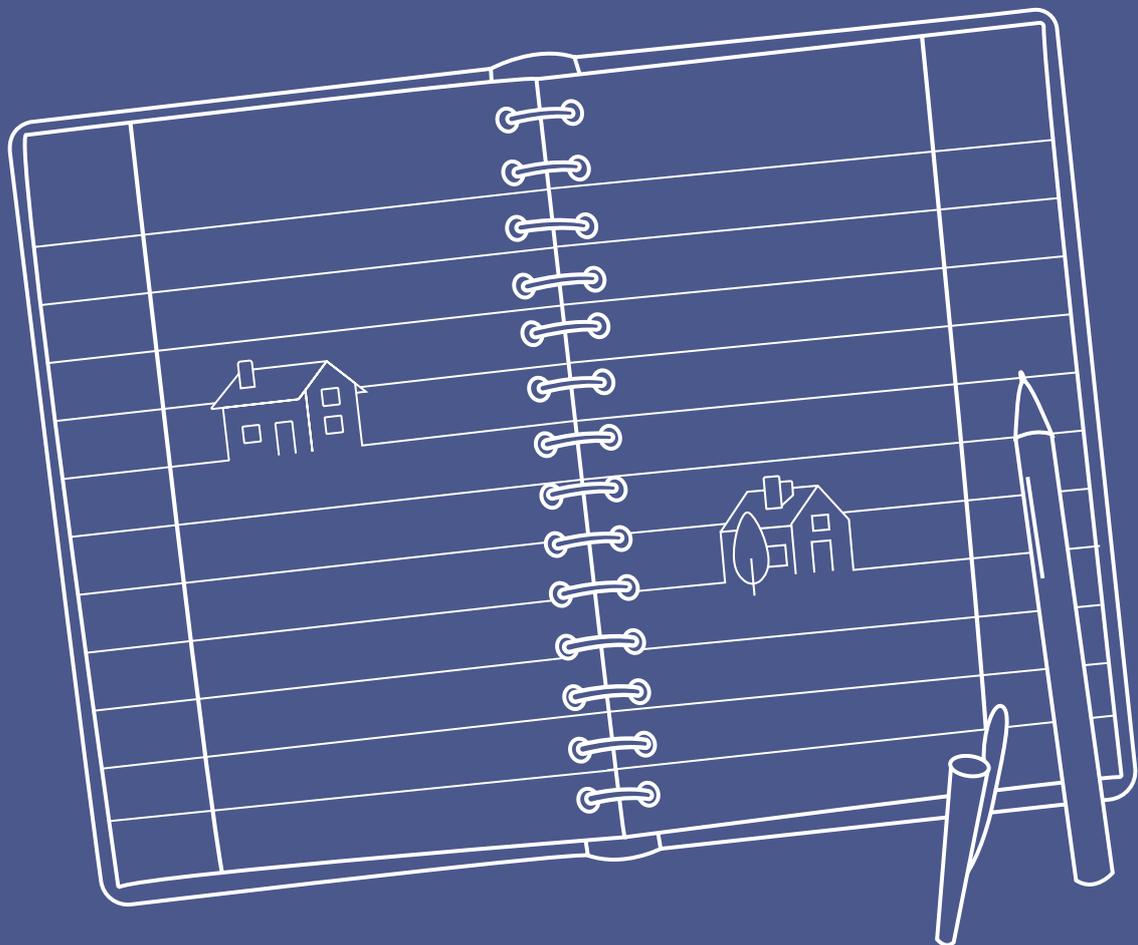




# The Writer's Cycle

## Executive Summary

Bambo Soyinka and Lucy Sweetman,  
with Greg Bond, Lily Green, Joanna Nissel,  
and Isabelle Thompson.



The Writer's Cycle is a toolkit, a series of maps, that can be adapted to resonate with writers from different backgrounds and with different motivations. It is not a prescriptive device but instead a descriptive one which hopes to enable 'writing for all' by revealing pathways which individual writers can follow, adapt and add to. It is a celebration of writing, and of the writing life in its myriad manifestations.

# What is the Writer's Cycle?

## Purpose

The Writer's Cycle is rooted in evidence gathered from research across the country. The intention is to support the growth of a nationwide ecology of creative writing and the development of a common language to describe it.

The writers who have contributed to this work know that writing, creativity and imagination offer doorways to adults and young people. Writers understand that writing and reading can provide a sense of place and belonging, creating social bonds and feelings of community.

## Application

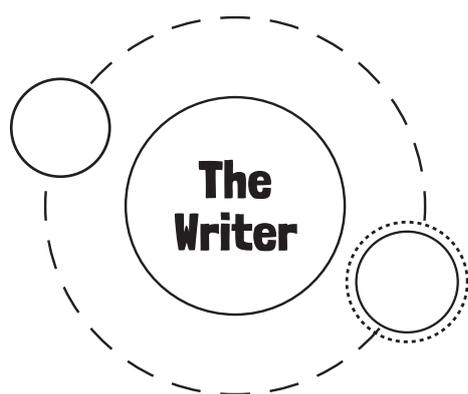
The Writer's Cycle is for anyone interested in supporting creative writing. It can be used to develop creative writing programmes, classes, workshops and events for writers at any age or stage.

The Writer's Cycle is not designed as a curriculum but as a guide from which any new or experienced writing developer can establish a creative writing programme, opportunity or support package. The Writer's Cycle can be used more formally too, as a benchmark for developing a creative writing programme in a school or college.

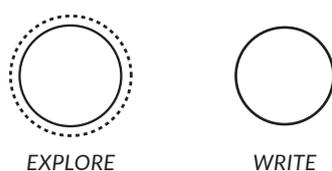
The Writer's Cycle can be used alongside existing accreditation routes that support creative writing, such as the Arts Award and the AFA in writing. Finally, The Writer's Cycle can also provide those who deliver and commission programmes with a set of evaluative criteria which stem from creative values.

# The Writer's Cycle Explained

The Writer's Cycle takes a cyclical form, like a solar system. At the centre of the solar system is the writer.



Circulating around the writer are the core **habits** of writing practice, *Write* and *Explore*:



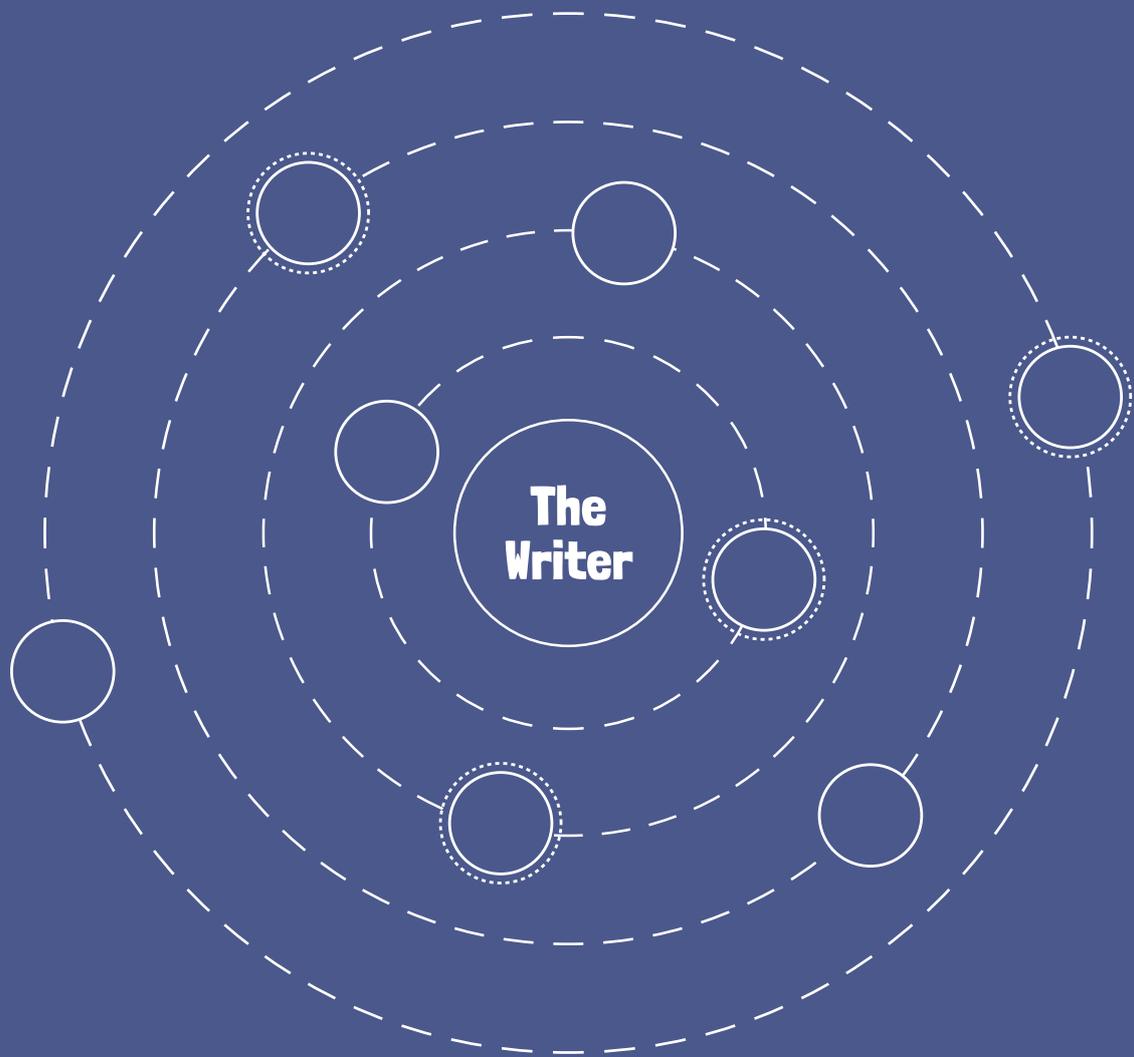
In The Writer's Cycle, writers write and explore in a variety of different contexts, or themes. These are *Discovery*, *Connection*, *Craft* and *Transformation*. Importantly, writing is not presented as a linear process, or as stages of attainment. Every writer's experience of writing is different, depending on their own circumstances, inclinations and interests.

People engage with writing from different **perspectives**, which may change over time. The perspectives we address in The Writer's Cycle are those of an *emerging writer*, a *continuing writer* and a *writer-facilitator*.



The **Cycle is one of learning in constant motion**. The writer can revisit habits over time with increasing complexity and depth. Although we use overarching labels in The Writer's Cycle, these labels are not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive. The Writer's Cycle is designed to be adaptable to a writer's changing identities and needs.

A writer may feel that they fit more than one of the suggested labels, or none; their feelings on this may fluctuate over time. If the approaches described by any theme of the Cycle seem to belong under another name, then they could be renamed accordingly. Similarly, the three perspectives which describe different types of writer are by no means exhaustive.



# Key

## The Habits

### Discovery



Discover Writing

Explore Notebooks

### Connection



Keep Writing

Explore Worlds

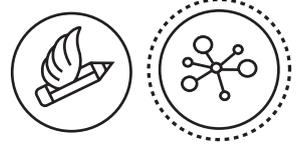
### Craft



Craft Writing

Explore Interests

### Transformation



Transform Writing

Explore Insights

## The Themes



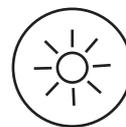
### The Emerging Writer

This perspective is of a young person or adult who is starting off on the journey of writing creatively. The *emerging writer* will start the practice of writing with a notepad, or another tool for collecting ideas and notes. The process may be self-directed and/or guided by others. For *emerging writers*, success may be about finding fulfilment through a sustained writing practice, experiencing increased confidence or improved wellbeing.



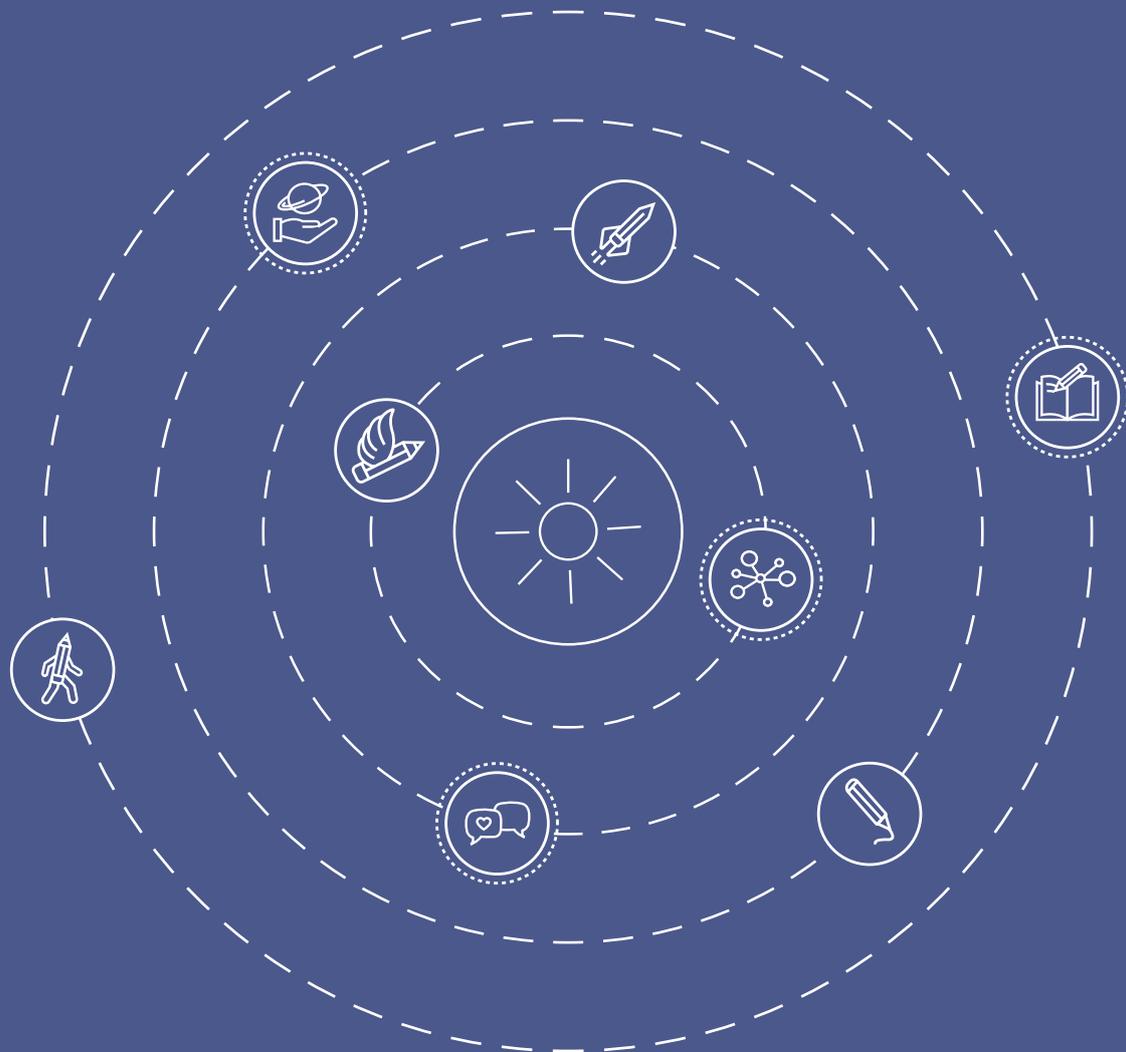
### The Continuing Writer

This perspective addresses someone who has been writing consistently for a sustained period (more than a year, if not longer). With time, *continuing writers* will establish their own writing routines, and they will engage more decisively with the wider communities around them or the traditions of literature within which their own writing sits. The markers of success for *continuing writers* may be overcoming challenges they have set for themselves and developing a deepening sense of satisfaction in their ability to shape their work.

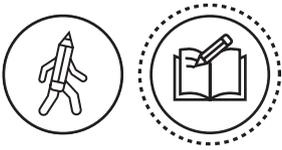


### The Writer-Facilitator

This perspective is aimed at experienced or published writers, who may be looking for guidance in the practice of supporting other writers. It may also be used by experienced educators who want to use creative approaches to writing in their teaching practice. For a *writer-facilitator*, The Writer's Cycle can be used to reinvigorate their own writing practice or to define a writing programme and package of support for their group.



## The Themes



### Discovery

The emphasis here is on writing without restriction, pressure or prescription. The writer is encouraged to experiment with their writing, and to develop routines which suit their way of life. Writers are encouraged to write for themselves and to read widely to support their writing.

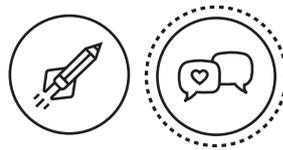
The Discovery theme encourages a writing habit and a writing identity. The focus is on writing habits that lay the foundation for a lifelong practice.



### Connection

A writer has a relationship not only to their writing but to the wider world around them. The writer's community can provide inspiration and support. For some writers, being an audience member or joining a group can be critical to the development of identity. However, some writers prefer a solitary writing habit, and this is equally valid. Some writers find their community in the subjects and topics that they write about, rather than amongst other writers.

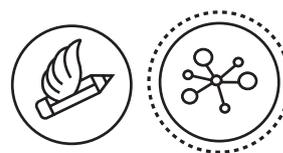
Some of the recommendations within this and in other themes require access to resources. It is important that writer-facilitators consider how to enable writers where resources are not readily at hand, and consider the importance of inclusive practice in workshop delivery.



### Craft

As writers become more invested in honing their craft, they explore writing techniques, styles, voices and genres, and experiment with them in their own writing. In the early stages this may mean exploring the world of language, reading widely, and playful imitation. Eventually, the writer gains trust in their own ability to express their view of the world through text.

The artistic process can involve focusing on a single piece of work from initial to final draft. Space and time to write is important. This theme may involve working with a mentor or an editor. However, many successful writers hold back for years before showing their writing to an external editor. This theme explores how writers learn to critique, analyse and make creative choices about their work.



### Transformation

This theme refers to the transformations involved in writing. This includes the making and remaking of a written piece of work across different media and platforms, and the transformation of the author through the process of writing. Transformation can also refer to the transformations which writing can bring about in cultures more widely.

Transformation explores the choices available to the writer who wishes to share a piece of finished writing, for example through publication. It also recognises that some writers are not interested in pursuing this avenue, and places value on allowing individuals to set their own success criteria.

# Further Information

This document provides a brief introduction to The Writer's Cycle. For those who want to dig deeper, we have prepared detailed descriptions, case studies and training that is personalised to each theme and perspective. We have also created adapted versions of these prompts to ensure that they are accessible to writers of a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Additionally, we have created a series of actionable prompts sheets for writer-facilitators to use directly with the writers they support. Please sign up to our mailing list and/or get in touch if you would like to access any of these resources.

**Please contact [b.soyinka@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:b.soyinka@bathspa.ac.uk). To ensure a quick response, please put 'Writer's Cycle' in the heading.**



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# Appendix 6:

# Bibliography and Credits

## Bibliography

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Bath Spa University

## Lead Organisation:

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and Enterprise Office, Bath Spa University.

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**Discover more at:** [www.papernations.org/resources/the-writers-cycle](http://www.papernations.org/resources/the-writers-cycle)