

## Mountain of Writing

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### Introduction

In WRS 101 Exploring Writing, students were asked to write a story about writing that included description, dialogue and reflection. Students had the option of writing from personal experience or creating an imaginary world with imaginary characters. Tieyang Zhang's paper shows a wonderful world of nature and writing and shows us, in a surprising way, the similarities the two share.

*Keywords:* coherence, fable, writing process



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Somewhere in Alberta, there was a huge mountain. A stone giant was its owner, but he was not proud of it. The reason was that the mountain was bare, made up of only plenty of boring stones. Even so, he really wanted to invite people to visit his mountain because he knew that people would see the spectacular view when they stood at its peak. There, his visitors would have a commanding view of the vast grasslands, the crystal-clear lakes, and the thick forests. But the truth was, since his mountain was too ordinary, people were not even willing to approach it or were not interested in climbing his mountain, which made him very distressed all the time.

One day, he could not endure the loneliness anymore, so he began to pour out his sorrows to God.

“Almighty God!” He fell on his knees, and the earth trembled.

“I wish that people could come to and climb my mountain, but they don’t even want to get close to it!” The giant wiped tears from his eyes with his right hand.

“Would you like to make my mountain a little more beautiful, a little more attractive?” he asked sincerely.

After a short time, a large parchment, almost as big as the whole campus of the University of Alberta, and a black quill slowly fell from the sky.

Seeing that the giant was somewhat confused, God said, “As long as you can complete the challenge I give you.”

God then pointed to that parchment and said, “You need to consider what makes good writing and write your insights down on that parchment. Naturally, your mountain will become attractive as well.”

“But what does writing have to do with my mountain?” The giant hesitated to pick up his quill, though he was still puzzled. But in order to attract visitors, he embarked on an adventure to find out how he could make both his writing and mountain attractive.

He first found a goose and asked her what makes good writing while inviting her to visit his mountain. The goose hovered over the mountain for a while, then flew towards the giant’s shoulder and said to him, “I really like the view from your mountain peak, just like you’ve already had an interesting topic for your writing. However, your mountain does not have a road that connects the foot of the mountain all the way to the peak; thus, visitors can easily get lost in the mountain without guidance, just like readers cannot find the ideas that

incoherent writing conveys.” The giant immediately understood what the goose meant and began to write his first insight on the parchment: To make good writing, I need to make sure my writing is coherent. Incoherent writing can often be confusing to readers because the contents in such writing are either illogical or have nothing to do with the topic. To avoid the above situations, you should make sure the contents of any part of a writing are related and logical to the contents before it and after it, and also contribute to the same topic. In this way, readers are able to easily grasp the ideas that the writing is trying to convey and gain more details about the same topic as they continue to read.

After the giant finished writing his first insight, the mountain behind him made a loud noise. He noticed that a road gradually appeared on the mountain, which stretched from the foot of the mountain to the top.

After that, the giant found a squirrel and similarly asked him what makes good writing and invited him to visit his mountain. The squirrel walked along the road that had just appeared at the peak. He finally reached the giant’s feet and said to him, “During the whole climb, I could only see roads and stones. People climbing a mountain without shrubs, flowers, and trees to enjoy may soon get bored and thus lose interest in the peak.” After thinking for a while, the giant wrote down the second insight on the parchment: To make good writing, I need to use literary techniques such as imagery, metaphors, and foreshadowing. People would gradually lose interest and patience when reading a writing without a text that doesn’t use any literary devices and eventually give up reading before the end. Literary techniques play a key role in encouraging readers to keep their enthusiasm for reading. For instance, imagery can bring words to life, providing the readers with the sensations of sight, touch, and sound, allowing readers to fall into the environment shaped by the writing. Coherence is undoubtedly important, but we still need to put effort into the above techniques to attract readers to read our writing to the end. Because just expressing ideas is not the ultimate purpose of writing, only when our thoughts are seen by other people will our writing become meaningful. Otherwise, those thoughts will be trapped in writing forever.

Putting down his quill, the giant noticed that a lot of shrubs, flowers, and trees had grown on his mountain. Their appearance made the mountain full of life, and its colour changed from a monotonous gray to a more colourful look.

“It feels like there’s still something significant missing.” The giant crossed his arms over his chest and then embarked on his final writing journey.

Eventually, he found a lake sturgeon whose wisdom he believed would help him find the final answer. Just by observing from afar, the sturgeon almost immediately provided the giant with his final advice: “Your mountain is more gorgeous than ever, but there must be

other mountains in Canada that are better than yours in terms of appearance. Thus, to make your writing and mountain be remembered by readers and visitors, you need to give them something valuable and worth remembering.” It dawned on the giant, so he eagerly wrote down the last insight on the parchment: To make good writing, I can offer readers some lessons and experiences I learned or came up with. Coherence can be effortlessly maintained, and flowery language can be easily imitated and surpassed. The reason why some writings are remembered forever is that they provide readers with what they have been looking for but couldn’t find, and that includes experiences and lessons about something. When readers read my experiences, if they also relate to me, they would integrate those ideas into their own thoughts. Thereafter, whenever they are dealing with something related, they will think of the lessons they learned from me and then share my writing with people around them. As a result, my writing is remembered by more people.

Suddenly, a stone monument appeared on the top of the mountain, and it seemed to be permanently fixed there. What was on that stone were his insights about what makes good writing and the story that shaped the mountain. Since then, everyone who has climbed the peak can learn that it is coherence, literary techniques, and valuable lessons that make good writing. Therefore, people have given this peak a memorable name, which is the Mountain of Writing.