



Title: Writers in the Schools (WITS) Writer-in-Residence
Reports to: Arts Education Program Manager
Job Type: Independent Contractor

Mission:

Seattle Arts & Lectures (SAL) cultivates transformative experiences through story and language with readers and writers of all generations.

We invite you to join us in fulfilling the mission of SAL as one of our Writers in the Schools (WITS) Writers-in-Residence. SAL offers thoughtfully curated experiences through programs that are intergenerational in nature, bolstering both emerging and established literary artists, and inviting change and new perspectives in our audience. We believe these activities are essential to continuously and courageously revitalize equity, justice, and belonging. Our work both internally and externally is guided by our core values: joy, equity, curiosity, community, and accessibility.

SAL Program Overview:

Since launching our first season in 1988, we have brought leading writers and thinkers to Seattle while investing deeply in the region’s literary community. Through our Literary Programs and Arts Education Programs, we connect readers, writers, youth, families, and educators with the power of storytelling. Each year, over 33,000 audience members and 6,000 students participate in programs designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and connection. SAL brings people together around the power of words and ideas.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access:

All staff actively participate in SAL’s ongoing efforts to become an anti-racist organization and embody an organizational culture that supports and reinforces our inclusion, diversity, equity & access goals. SAL’s Equity Accountability Reports are available on the SAL website under “About.” This commitment and understanding should be demonstrated throughout the performance of the WITS Writer-in-Residence responsibilities and staff activities.

Position Overview:

Writers in the Schools (WITS), SAL’s flagship literary arts education program, places professional local writers in K-12 public schools for extended creative writing residencies. Since its inception in 1994, WITS has served over 150,000 students throughout the Puget Sound region. Last year we worked with 40 school partners to serve over 6,000 students.

In collaboration with classroom teachers, WITS Writers cultivate spaces where young people can find their own cadence, speak their own truths, and act with creative agency and urgency – all in their own classroom. Through WITS, we support students as they discover and develop their authentic writing and performance voices—and then give them the stage to make their voices Seattle’s own. Through WITS, students become the authors of their own lives.

For the coming 2026-27 school year, we are hiring 1-3 WITS Writers— practicing writers in the community—to join our cohort of literary teaching artists and work within our partner schools’ classrooms. We welcome applications from writers of diverse mediums, including but not limited to cartoonists/graphic novelists, playwrights, poets, prose writers, and memoirists. We especially encourage Black writers, Indigenous writers, writers of color, writers from the LGBTQ+ community, bilingual writers, and writers from interdisciplinary backgrounds to apply. WITS Writers must show a demonstrated commitment to anti-racist pedagogy and practice.

Our Arts Education Program Managers will work with WITS Writers to place them in a compatible elementary, middle, or high school. We do the majority of our hiring and placements during the late summer but anticipate that some residencies will still need to be determined as the year progresses. School placements vary and may be either extended weekly residencies or take place over a shorter window of time, as a multi-day per-week intensive.

WITS is driven by our primary goals to:

- Support students in building a practice of self-expression, increasing reading and writing skills, and growing self-confidence.
- Energize teachers by offering new, enriching learning experiences.
- Provide writers with opportunities to develop pedagogical skills—and teach their craft to the next generation of writers.
- Integrate the arts into schools’ academic curriculums.
- Bring a race and equity lens to the teaching of creative writing with the goal of cultivating a sense of belonging for all, while centering students most impacted by structural racism.
- Bolster a positive learning community that amplifies and celebrates youth voices.

Responsibilities:

- Work in the classroom (40%)
 - Guide students through exciting and innovative creative writing lessons.
 - Collaborate with classroom teachers, instructional assistants, and paraprofessionals to provide an accessible creative writing experience for all students.
 - Be observed by SAL staff 1-2x throughout the year and participate in one-on-one debrief sessions.
 - Maintain confidentiality about all student work.
 - Select and work to prepare a small number of students to read their work at the annual WITS Year End Reading and to publish their work in the annual WITS anthology.
- Curriculum development and associated out-of-classroom work (40%)
 - Select relevant mentor texts that allow students an entry way into finding their own voices, demonstrate a dedication to anti-racist pedagogy, and celebrate language.
 - Design cohesive, sequential, age-appropriate, creative writing curricula.
 - Create scaffolded, accessible lessons that allow students the opportunity to stretch themselves creatively and exercise critical thinking skills.
 - Provide written feedback to your students at least once per residency.
 - Coordinate end-of-residency culminating events for your classes.

- Meetings and communication (20%)
 - Attend a pre-residency planning meeting with SAL staff and partner teachers.
 - Attend a mid-residency check-in meeting with partner teachers partway through each residency.
 - Prepare and, two weeks prior to residency start date, circulate to teachers and SAL staff a working syllabus that takes into account your classroom teachers' curriculum and goals (knowing things might change!).
 - Collect student permissions and excellent student work throughout the year and submit to SAL staff on deadline for online and print publications.
 - Respond to communication from partner teacher(s) and SAL staff within 48 hours.
 - Complete an annual self-evaluation and participate in a 1:1 review with SAL staff at the end of each year.
 - Actively participate in WITS Writer Collective events; have a vested interest in building community among WITS Writers.
 - Attend the following, paid (\$30/hour), mandatory meetings:
 - New Writer Meeting on **September 8 (in-person, from 1-2:30pm)**.
 - Fall Writers Orientation on **September 15 (in-person, from 9:30am-1pm)**.
 - WITS Writer Collective Meetings tentatively scheduled for **November 17, January 19, March 16, May 18 (all online, from 4-5:30pm)**.

Diverse Workforce Statement:

SAL values a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture in all areas of our work and culture. SAL is an equal opportunity employer. We recognize that opportunities in the arts have historically excluded and continue to disproportionately exclude Black and Indigenous people, people of color, people from working class backgrounds, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ people. We strongly encourage individuals with these identities to apply. Strong candidates will bring a diverse set of skills, characteristics, and experiences, both professional and lived. SAL focuses on a holistic view of potential candidates and understanding that no single candidate will offer every desired skill and characteristic. The following offers an aspirational view of the ideal candidate profile, and we encourage applications from candidates with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds.

Minimum Qualifications:

- A demonstrated commitment to anti-racist pedagogy, disability justice and access, social-emotional learning, and a vested interest in making classrooms a space for joy and belonging for all students; WITS Writers should have a student-centered approach.
- At least 1-2 years of teaching or mentoring experience with elementary, middle, or high school students.
- Desire, ability, and flexibility to collaborate with public school teachers.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and a willingness to grow, learn, and adapt.
- A sense of humor, flexibility, and responsiveness to differing student needs within a public school's classroom setting.
- Positive attitude; friendly and respectful manner when working with students, WITS Writers, staff, teachers, and other school partners.
- Outstanding organizational skills, meticulous attention to detail, and a high degree of reliability.

- Established record of community engagement (e.g. through record of publications, performances, or other community events). WITS Writers actively work on their own writing and are eager participants in the Seattle literary community.
- Availability to complete every session of a scheduled residency—either throughout the academic year or in an intensive, 1-2 weeks multi-day session (October – June). All placements to be determined in coordination with SAL Staff.

Desired Qualifications:

- Bilingual (especially Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Vietnamese, Mandarin)
- Experience with Multilingual Learners or Special Education students

Additional Considerations:

- Teaching artists in the WITS Collective are contract workers who participate in a number of extended writing residences throughout the school year; the number of residencies that a teaching artist leads depend on the need of the program and the availability of the teaching artist. The average WITS writer works 125 hours/year.
- Writing residencies are an on-location at K-12 public schools in the greater Seattle area.
- We are, unfortunately, not able to provide relocation assistance for this position.

Benefits and Compensation Overview:

- Compensation for in-class teaching time begins at \$110 per contracted teaching hour. This rate assumes outside-of-class time spent on preparation and feedback. Compensation for administrative meetings is \$30/hour.
- WITS Writers are paid in monthly installments. Partial or greater residencies are scaled accordingly.
- Free in-person (as available) and online tickets to all SAL events in the [2026-27 Season](#).
- The invitation to join in a 3-night, collective writers' residency at Rockland Woods (Belfair, WA) from September 15-18, 2026.
- The opportunity to apply for a 10-day individual writers' residency at the Mineral School from February 14-22, 2027.
- A \$150 professional development stipend that can be put towards observing other WITS writers in the classroom, or other mutually determined opportunities.
- We recognize that, as independent contractors, having to schedule a make-up workday might result in missing other paid work opportunities. With this in mind, if you miss a day of WITS work due to illness, we can offer a limited amount of Missed Gig compensation. All WITS Writers, regardless of your pay rate, receive \$50/hour for Missed Gig compensation as long as funds last.

Application Instructions:

- Send the following documents. Please save all application materials as one PDF and label it `Firstname.Lastname_WITS_2026-27`
 - A cover letter including why you are interested in being a WITS Writer, what learning outcomes ground your teaching pedagogy, and how your previous experience has prepared you to be successful in the classroom.

- A resume.
- An idea for a pairing of a mentor text (a poem, one-page work of prose, or comic by a writer you admire) and a suggested writing prompt inspired by that piece.
- Your general availability/schedule for the upcoming school year, and/or any school placement preferences you might have (grade level, geography, etc.).
- Names, phone numbers, and email addresses for three professional references, at least one of whom should be familiar with your teaching.
- A 1-page creative writing sample of your own writing.
- Submit applications electronically in one PDF document to salhr@lectures.org. The email subject line should be **“WITS Writer-in-Residence.”**
- Open until filled. For best consideration, please submit no later than **July 6, 2026**.
- **Please Note: Resumes submitted without a cover letter will not be considered.**

Hiring Process and Timeline:

- We will hold interviews the weeks of July 13 and July 20. Selected applicants will be asked to lead a 10-minute creative writing lesson.
- We will issue invitations to join the WITS Writer Collective by the end of July.
- New WITS Writers must be able to attend the New Writer Meeting on September 8, 2026 (in person, 1-2:30pm) and the Fall Writers Orientation on September 15 (in-person, from 9:30am-1pm).
- Contact Information for inquiries related to this position (email preferred):
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