

WRITING PROMPTS

1. Start a story with this line: “Everyone was behaving like dogs.”
2. Work this cliché into the opening of a story: “Old as dirt.”
3. If Will Ferrell somehow took over CNN what news crawls would he send out?
4. Donald Trump has just become the host of Masterpiece Theater. Write the introduction speech he gives for a new retelling of Jane Eyre.
5. Write a scene of from a sequel to the Da Vinci Code in which Bugs Bunny is the lead character.
6. Your hamster, Fred, has suddenly developed super powers. Write about his first adventure.
7. You are positive that Twitter possesses a consciousness. What messages do you post to try and reach it?
8. Write a short story entirely in text message format.
9. Finish this page: “It was a great day until the flowers arrived.”
10. You’ve recorded your baby’s nonsense babbling and run it through a universal translator. What has the little tyke been saying?
11. You answer the phone and the caller is George Carlin. (Yes, the dead George Carlin). Write the transcript of that conversation.
12. Two people have a conversation entirely made up of song titles.
13. Start with: “There’s no better way to start a Sunday afternoon than...”
14. Write the last page of a romance short story between two soldiers in Iraq.
15. Describe a perfect moment.
16. What is that dog thinking when he looks at you that way?
17. Write the opening and closing paragraphs of a short story about a parent looking for their child in the wreckage of an airplane.
18. Write a story in which Murphy’s Law has been passed by Congress.

19. What happened when the lights went out?
20. Start with: “They sat in the ruins and played chess.”
21. Start with: “The wind blew steadily from the west and every daffodil in the field bent that way except one.”
22. Start with: “There were three bullets left in the gun. I needed four.”
23. Describe the feeling of waking up after a long illness.
24. Today is the day *he* comes home. Write about that.
25. Begin a comedy story in which your character is sent back to the tenth grade.
26. Begin a story that starts with the line: “Living well is my best revenge, you can be sure.”
27. Use a metaphor of nature to describe an intense emotion.
28. Write the first page of an insect western.
29. Write the last page of a story about a soldier coming home from Iraq.
30. Write a story about an old man in a mountainside village as the volcano is about to explode.
31. You woke up and realized that you have godlike powers. Write that day’s diary entry.
32. You are pretty sure the person sitting next to you isn’t real? What do you do?
33. Write a story that picks up from the point where you catch your cat (or dog) using texting a message.
34. Your favorite show is interrupted by the Emergency Broadcast Network. What message follows that?
35. The President gets a very odd question from a reporter. What’s the question and answer?
36. Describe the encounter when you come into the kitchen and all of your appliances are huddled in one corner.
37. Write a conversation where one person is trying to cheer someone else who has just had a severe emotional blow.

- 38. From the point of view of a teenager on a bicycle, describe a hobo walking along a country road. Vary the description based on each of the target emotions:**
- The kid likes the hobo**
 - The kid feels deeply threatened by the hobo**
 - The kid admires the hobo**
 - There is something very, very weird about the hobo**
- 39. Prompt: “She sat at her desk and tried to ignore that dreadful sound from upstairs...”**
- 40. Describe the following people in 3 sentences or less:**
- Tall immigrant**
 - Stocky accountant**
 - Old receptionist**
 - The delivery man and his assistant**
 - The stranger on the elevator**
 - The same waitress**
- 41. Start a story with: “I turned and saw the....”**
- 42. In one or two paragraphs describe the personality of a red morning**
- 43. When you opened your aunt’s safety deposit box you found a key.**
- 44. Write a poem that describes the sounds of:**
- A beach in winter**
 - The forest in spring**
 - Frost on the floor**
- 45. You’re on an airplane, you are...**
- Annoyed**
 - Secretly delighted**
 - Openly obnoxious**
 - Afraid of something no one else knows**
- 46. Go someplace unexpected:**
- “Wearing sunglasses and a blond wig, I hunched down in my car, never taking my eyes off the house across the street.”**
 - “When I woke up I realized the left handcuff was unlocked.”**
 - “No one else in crowd seemed to notice that he had a zipper on the back of his head.”**
- 47. The following paragraph sets up an introduction of two characters. Using the elements suggested in the paragraph write the rest of the first page of this story.**

You can take it in any direction you want except that the story relates to two 15-year olds.

- a. Zeke and Tish Tyler were twins. Supposedly. Though fraternal twins general don't look that much alike you can usually tell they're related; but with Zeke and Tish it was hard to believe they came from the same planet, let alone the same parents.**
- 48. In 200 words write about your first toy. Tap into emotions surrounding that memory.**
 - 49. Write a letter to the 10 year old child you had been.**
 - a. Write it as a cheerful greeting**
 - b. Write it as a warning**
 - c. Write it as advice for living a good life**
 - 50. Choose a classic poem you like. Take the last line and use it as the first line of a new poem.**
 - 51. Imagine your life as a book. Now write the back-cover text for the hardback edition.**
 - 52. Start a short story with: "She touched the little box in her pocket and smiled."**
 - 53. Write a pure dialogue story.**
 - 54. Write the rest of this paragraph: "Some things you never tell."**
 - 55. Write the rest of this paragraph: "Some things you should never tell."**
 - 56. Write from the point of view of a freshly waxed car.**
 - 57. Write about a thing that should never have been invented.**
 - 58. Write a story based on this personification: "The wind *needs*."**
 - 59. Write a story based on this personification: "Hope shouts."**
 - 60. Write from the point of view of a clean sock that mistakenly got put in the hamper.**
 - 61. Finish this character sketch: "Julia was 17, a bit nerdy, and listened to too much old music."**
 - 62. Write a poem beginning with: "Even the flowers feared him."**
 - 63. You are a hero from classic mythology. Write your resignation letter.**

64. Write a news story that contains this line: "It was the second giraffe seen in Doylestown in three weeks."
65. Start a short story beginning with these lines: "Some stories should never be told. My life story is one of them. But I have to tell someone..."
66. Write an exchange of dialogue between a liberal activist young woman (age 20-ish) who has been forced to move in with her politically conservative parents.
67. Why would a flower seller run all the lights on Fifth Avenue?
68. Start with: "The third reason he said he wouldn't marry her was..."
69. Write a 350 word short from the point of view of a catnip mouse.
70. Begin an action story in which a government agent is protecting the First Lady.
71. Finish this paragraph: "Of all the people I could have met at the wedding it had to be..."
72. Write a story opening in which each of these objects plays a significant role: a trout, car keys, and a pack of Twinkies.
73. Start a short story inspired by this line of poetry from Leonard Cohen: "Let your mercy shine on these burning hearts in hell."
74. Write the first couple of pages of a children's picture book (including descriptions of the accompanying art) the title of which is: "The Pokey Little Puppy's Revenge."
75. Write the dialogue exchange in a movie between a drunken cowboy and his horse.
76. Write a scene in which one person tries to talk a friend out of committing suicide.
77. Rewrite the same scene but twist it so that the person doing the talking had once tried to commit suicide themselves.
78. You realize that every cent you own has been stolen and your credit cards maxed out. Who did this, and why?
79. When you look in the cup the barista at Starbucks just handed you it's filled with _____ instead of coffee. Write the scene that follows.

- 80. You're writing a terrifying suspense story inspired by 'Where's Waldo'. Give us a scene.**
- 81. What exactly is in that blue box under the bed?**
- 82. Write the first page of a story about a deranged florist.**
- 83. Write a scene in which two people communicate through actions and attitude only but NO dialogue.**
- 84. Write two pages of a comic book script in which your favorite super-hero saves the day.**
- 85. Write a scene in a literary style in which a man on a bicycle rides through the wine country.**