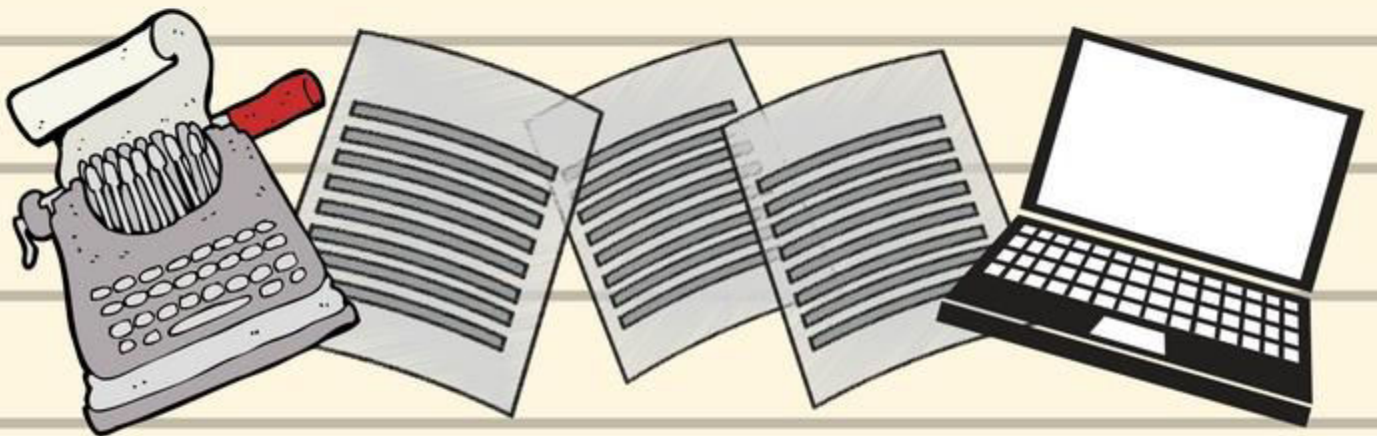


63 Fiction Writing Prompts for All Occasions



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63 Fun Creative Writing Prompts

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Welcome to the creative writing prompts booklet! This is going to be so much fun, and all while you improve your story writing skills. You can find all kinds of creative writing exercises here, in almost every genre. Most of the prompts are complete scenes and even mini-stories.

If you base a story on these prompts, you can do whatever you want with it. You own all the rights.

To become a really good story writer, there is only one thing you need to do: Write! And these creative writing prompts should inspire you to write.

Have fun!

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List of Writing Prompts

Romance Writing Prompts

Prompt 1:

On the night before his marriage, Robert gets a visit. It’s Rachel, the girl that grew up next door and has been his best friend ever since. They had always pushed back any feelings for each other, “we are just friends.” (Yeah, right...!).

Now Rachel bursts into his home in a last, unexpected try to convince Robert he is marrying the wrong woman and she and he are meant for each other. But a ceremony for 150 guests is already arranged. After a lot of passionate talk and tears, Rachel gets him to agree to a game: “Can you guess what I would do...?” They both jot down 10 questions plus their hidden answers. Whoever can guess more of the other’s answers right, wins.

Will Rachel win and they will spend the night on a bus, escaping the wedding? Or will Robert win and watch devastated Rachel walk off into the night, frustration in his heart and tears in his eyes? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Make the scene captivating by showing the reader *why* these two are meant for each other: Let them remember what they appreciate so much in each

other (show, don't tell), the special moments they shared, show the missed romantic opportunities, and how they complement each other perfectly.

Your reader will hope and fear with them and be hooked to your scene like it was her own love story.

Prompt 2:

Gwen and Christopher have been married for 20 years. One night Gwen finds bright red lipstick on the collar of his jacket. Infuriated, she grabs one of his golf clubs, and swings at his car till it looks worse than a bicycle under a freight train.

When she is exhausted and breaks down crying, Christopher can finally explain what happened: Christopher had been with his Chinese language student group. They all had been on their way to a Chinese restaurant for a change, and it had been raining. He lent his jacket to one of his Chinese language students to protect her from the rain. That's when the lipstick got on the shirt.

Will Gwen believe him and end up sobbing and relieved in his arms? Or will she not believe one word and soon continue with Chris' Chinese porcelain collection? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Leave the reader in the dark about why the lipstick really is on the jacket as long as possible, keep the suspense vibrant. Describe Gwen's pain and the destruction of Chris' beloved car in energetic detail, so the reader will live with them as if it was their own (heart and car).

Prompt 3:

King Kong, the giant, roaring ape, falls in sweet love with his female counterpart, Queen Kong. While he was terrorizing New York, she was keeping Chicago on its toes. They meet for a date somewhere in the middle, in a dreamy forest (burning trees instead of candlelight, etc...).

They share a romantic dinner (living cattle, farmers...) and discover their common interests: They both love tearing down skyscrapers, putting police

cars on top of billboard ads and eating humongous bananas. And oh, don't even get me started on the sex...

Will these lonely apes form a bond that helps their love survive against all odds/outer resistance? Or will the egomaniacs in them gain the upper hand and tear their love apart? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

How do you express your love when you are a hairy monster the size of a skyscraper? What would be different, what would be absurd? Emphasize the strange contrast between tender feelings and a gigantic physique. Your reader will find their obstacles very different, but equally painful to his own, and love you for it.

Prompt 4:

Lucas has fallen in love with his dentist. His teeth are very healthy, but he is coming into Jasmin's practice for the third time within three months, in the hope he will be capable of asking her out in a quiet moment, when nobody is listening.

Unfortunately, the doctor has three assistants and one secretary, and even the door to the waiting room doesn't look too soundproof... Lucas feels like he is on stage in a Shakespearian comedy. Jasmin, on the other hand, lightly makes fun of him, calling him a hypochondriac.

Will Lucas finally have the balls to follow through with his plan? Or will he have to come for a fourth time? Will Jasmin sense what's up, and will she be attracted or just annoyed? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Emphasize the contrast between the nonchalant everyday business of the doctor and her assistants, and Lucas' timid desire to ask her out. Whatever angle he takes, he is running out of time and of Jasmin's professional attention. How does he feel? Describe his troubled inner life, and your reader will identify strongly and feel for him.

Additional Romance Prompt:

Also see the Science Fiction bonus prompt in the Science Fiction section. There is some serious romance involved in it.

Mystery Writing Prompts/Suspense Writing Prompts

Prompt 5:

Animal-loving Naomi is at her parents' holiday home. She is observing a small hut at the forest edge. A van shows up there on three nights back to back. Each time, it seems to pick up something. Naomi sees dark silhouettes sneaking around with flashlights.

One night she decides to sneak closer, and through a gap in the curtains sees a stack of antlers and fur: She has discovered the sinister doings of poachers. Will Naomi alert the police, or will she be so furious she decides to act on her own? Will she stay undiscovered once the van's headlights show up on the hill? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Make the readers wonder "What the heck is going on...?" as often as possible, it will make for a suspenseful story. Show how kind, smart and brave Naomi is, so readers fear for her life. Then make the bad guys come.

Prompt 6:

Paris, 19th century: Detective Beaumont follows his suspect Forestier, who is wearing a long trench coat. He believes Forestier to be the long hunted for "rose murderer." That murderer always leaves the rare rose variety "Farewell" on his victims' bodies. The rose can only be bought in one shop in Paris, and if Forestier walks to that shop today, it is almost certain he is the murderer.

Indeed Forestier's ways lead him to the flower shop in question. When he exits, the detective follows him into a narrow street to arrest him. He lays his hands on his shoulders, but once he turns him, he sees that it's not Forestier – he has been played! The real Forestier must have left the flower shop through a back door, and is now up to who-knows-what...

Will that second person have another trap in store for Detective Beaumont? Will the detective get to Forestier before bad things happen? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Get into the detective's head! Show his enthusiasm about finding the long sought-after murderer, his doubts, his shock at the discovery! Show the looming danger he is in. It will make for a terrifyingly good scene...

Prompt 7:

Jeremy has a neighbor whose wife has been missing for months. Jeremy is sitting in his living room, watching a documentary about the most beautiful graveyards of the world. It says that the human body and bones are excellent fertilizers and make plants grow like crazy.

He looks out the window and that huge, blooming rose bush in his neighbor's garden catches his eye. It's elevated on a small hill of loose soil, and it's even more striking, as the rest of his garden is barren ground. Suddenly, Jeremy remembers that the name of his neighbor's wife is Rose...

How you can make this scene shine:

In this scene, a lot is happening on a mental level, and little on a physical level. Dive into Jeremy's somber thoughts and his shocking suspicion. But at the same time, remain some outside stimulus going: E.g. Describe images of the documentary, the landscape of the garden, a clock striking ten, etc... It makes for a well-balanced scene.

Fantasy Writing Prompts

Prompt 8:

The four goblins Hukput, Paddycest, Nixxle and Klozzik are on their way to the cave of the Redwing dragon Isidur. They carry a delicious moore rabbit steak with minty potatoes. They plan to present it to him as humble offering of submission, but in reality the dish is soaked with a sleeping potion so they can rob his enormous pile of golden cups, chains and ducats. Will Isidur smell the bait? Or will his loud snoring fill the cave while the goblins hastily get away with as much gold as they can carry? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Describe how the deceitful goblins try to get suspicious Isidur to devour their dish. Which tactics do they employ? They are so small, and the dragon is so powerful, but will they nevertheless outsmart him? Describe the wide, majestic nature of the landscape and the cave. Tricky and powerful creatures as well as moody sceneries make for a great fantasy story.

Prompt 9:

Magician Axius is potent, old and absent-minded. He wants to put a spell on his best cooking spoon so it should cook his favorite meal, chicken with sweet pepper. But he gets a detail in the spell wrong. The spoon starts to brutally attack all of the chickens in the patio.

Which unlikely places does the spoon go to while Axius is after it? How does Axius make his way through the terrified flock of chickens? And which spells does he use when trying to calm down his good spoon? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Time to try some “cute,” homespun fantasy! Lay out the small worries of a big magician. Even he needs to take care of overexcited pets and unruly household goods some time. It’s just that he has more powerful ways to deal with them...

Prompt 10:

Two bored dwarfs, Onyx and Hafax, guard a castle’s entrance. They get into an argument who can throw stones further. While they prove their skills to each other, unfortunately a stone hits a giant who is sleeping in the castle ditch. She comes after them furiously. Will she smash their surprised faces to porridge, or can the resilient dwarfs talk her out of it? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Show the simple, but competitive nature of the dwarfs. They feel strong and then suddenly very weak... Describe the frightening power of the giant. Show your readers a world of many wonders that only exist in fantasy.

Prompt 11:

The ogre Grawczak is invited to a talk show about strange creatures. Believing in the best intentions of TV and eager to help make races understand each other better, he accepts. The vicious questions on air take him by surprise: “Why do ogres smell so bad; don’t they care other people are disgusted?” and “What does human flesh taste like?”

Will Grawczak just freeze in face of the bright studio lights and endure the process? Will he let them provoke him and look really bad? Or will he just eat the moderator with some spices? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Describe how helpless the big ogre feels in face of the media. Contrast it with the sensational malice of the moderator. If you can paint the ogre as a likeable being, your readers will root for him strongly. If only we understood ogres better, the world would be a more peaceful place!

Science Fiction Writing Prompts

Prompt 12:

It’s an intergalactic poker tournament. Different races from different galaxies have come together. On one of the tables, the only players left are Froggosaurus, The Big Dust, Rhonda Seventeen-Tentacle and the Red Snailman.

Snailman is doing really well, too well for Rhonda. She suddenly reaches out behind his ear and pulls out a mindreader chip! Will the angry players grill Snailman, or will he be able to flee? Maybe an angry/apologetic dialogue ensues that ends with a bargain? You decide!

Prompt 13:

In 2230, humans have conquered Mars. Automated skytrains run through its red desserts. One of these is stopped by a technical glitch at rush hour. The doors are stuck. When the passengers hear the voice of the control system robot through the loudspeakers, they realize the full extent of the disaster...

The system has come to the conclusion that it’s now superior to its creators, and it is planning to take over. It will open the hydraulic doors for the

passengers and allow them to leave, under one condition: They have to chain three programmers in the group to a grabpole in the train and leave them behind. It becomes obvious that the system wants to eliminate the last persons that could still endanger its rule: The most talented programmers...

Will the passengers yield to the insane robot's demand in order to save their lives? Will they try a trick and risk it all? You decide!

Prompt 14:

Zwooshers look like fluffy, pink, door-high pet giraffes – you just want to cuddle them. But their looks are deceiving! They are actually plundering, reckless space pirates.

In the meeting hall, their captain Haab (eye patch, ruffled plush fur, wooden foot, spacemaid tattoo...) holds an inflammatory speech to hype up his crew. They are about to take the freight space ship that showed up on their radar. The ship must carry at least 65 tons of wood shavings, and Haab wants to take them all!

The crew is all hyped up and ready to go, when Haab trips over his wooden leg and falls off the stage. It looks pretty pathetic for a heroic leader. Will the crew just take this as a sign that chaos and plundering can now ensue, and storm forward? Or will this end the captain's authority and make the horde want to feed him to the Spacephins? You decide!

Prompt 15:

In 2075, the company Cryptofreeze™ offers the simplest, most effective method to time-travel into the future: They freeze your complete organism and defrost you after the desired period of time. Raul Morales was president of Payadua for 12 years. The laws state that he can't run for office again for the following 4 terms (24 years). His solution is to get frosted for that period.

He is unfrozen in a big televised show that is transmitted directly into the communication chips of the population's brains. The show features his frozen body in a transparent casket, lasers, dancers, etc... It should be one huge campaign appearance for the upcoming election.

His rivals do their best to make him look bad though: They smuggle in their own audience to boo and ask the wrong questions, they sabotage the lightning, etc... Will they succeed in derailing his campaign, or will Morales' reputation shine brighter than ever before? You decide!

[Bonus Prompt 16: Romance/Science Fiction Writing Prompt](#)

But Cryptofreeze™ also attracts clients with a completely different set of problems: Henry loves Leila and is sure she is the girl he wants to be with. The problem is that she is 19 and he is 58.

Write two scenes:

- A. Henry wants to talk to Leila and finds her on the running track (where the inner track travels less distance than the outer track, but they are still running side by side...). They jog next to each other, which painfully exposes their age difference. He confesses his love to her, she tells him she can't live with the age difference, and he tells her he has booked his spot with Cryptofreeze™ and that she should make sure she will be free in 30 years. They say farewell in tears.
- B. Henry is unfrozen, but something has gone horribly wrong: Because of a technical failure he has been frozen double time, for 60 years. Leila is now 79, while he is still 58. Roles are reversed, but it's not as fun as it was supposed to be... Devastated, Henry visits Leila in her nursery home. She is kept in a large metal box, taken care of by robots who drive her out into the garden once per day.

Will they rediscover their love for each other, or will the circumstances have changed them too much? Will the thought of having missed out on all that precious time just kill them? Or will they make the best of it and find happiness? You decide!

Horror Writing Prompts

Prompt 17:

Joanna has won a vacation weekend in an old castle. Not many guests are there. Wandering the wide halls, she learns about Count Brookhart, the 16th century owner of the castle. He stole another nobleman's wife, started a war, and was beheaded. He is rumored to be roaming these halls as a ghost. The castle's ancient chronicles state that he will only be redeemed if a living woman kisses him on her knees. Sounds pretty strange, doesn't it...?

At night, Joanna gets up to look for the bathroom. She only hears wind; a book falls from a shelf out of nowhere. And these heads on the old portraits all seem to turn after her...

She looks into a mirror – and freezes. Behind her is the Count, his eyes beseeching her for a kiss. And she would have to kneel to kiss him, because he is carrying his head under his arm, blood-dripping... Does Joanna feel like redeeming the count? What will happen if she does/doesn't? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Describe the setting, the emptiness and the uneasy details. Let Joanna wonder what is going on and show her fear. In the end, go for the terrible shock effect!

Prompt 18:

Gina's beloved cat Tiger has been feverish and dizzy lately. At a fair, Gina sees a tent with a sign "Voodoo Healings \$5." Inside, she finds an old, hunched woman. She sits down in a strange chair with split rods, and her hair gets caught. The hag speaks a spell and gestures with her hands, then motions Gina to leave.

Outside at the fruit stands, Gina suddenly feels very sick, and it occurs to her what her hair could have been used for... Will she return to demand every single one of her strands back? Or will she already feel too sick and go for a more extreme solution? Will the old woman be gone or deny everything? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Don't describe Gina's fear, but instead describe *what* makes her scared: Show details of the witch's looks and how the witch acts, describe Gina's physical condition. Show how awful it is not to know where the horror is coming from. It will make your readers feel it strongly.

Prompt 19:

A sick one: Conrad holds his daughters Karina and Kimmy and his son Konstantin in his basement. After all, he made them, so they are his, right? They are chained to a wall, with some teeth missing and their skin yellow as pus from lack of sunlight.

One night, as Conrad cuts Kimmy's toenails, she convinces him she is old enough to do it herself. When he hands her the scissors, she stabs him in the eye. Will the kids be able to free themselves? Will they kill their torturer, who happens to be their dad? Or will Conrad save himself and teach them a lesson? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

This scene is so disgusting that your audience will be very aware that it's disgusting. So don't point your finger at Conrad, and don't judge as an author. Just let the story's facts speak for themselves and show the scene in a very austere and unemotional way – that will get under your readers' skin!

Prompt 20:

Zombie apocalypse has arrived. TV stations finally have the audience they deserve... For the zombies, it's one huge party, and the humans are desperately holding onto their arms and socio-economic systems.

Four zombies are robbing a bank. Their advantages: Bullets don't bother them, they really don't need masks, and they have a natural gift to scare the shit out of the employees. Disadvantages: They are just so damn slow. Imagine a bank robbery in slow motion, and a couple of limbs falling off the robbers on their way out... Will the rotten gang get away thanks to their 'Shock and Awe'? Or will the guards be quick-witted and find a way to protect themselves and attack? Where is the hunt going? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Show how absurd this scenario is. How is it different from an ordinary bank robbery? Think it through, and you will get to a couple of interesting scenarios.

Thriller Writing Prompts

Prompt 21:

Jeff is the bloodhound type of a prosecutor. He is currently prosecuting the big ice cream company “Freezelicious.” They are accused of using harmful ingredients. Since Jeff took on that trial, he has been having the feeling that somebody is following him. Yesterday at the gas station, today during the break at a restaurant, and now this Mercedes has been behind him for 20 minutes.

He makes two daring and illegal maneuvers with his car, but just as he thinks he got rid of the Mercedes, it appears in his rearview mirror. He parks at a shopping center and disappears into the bathroom. After a while, the Mercedes driver comes in, and Jeff smashes him against the wall and starts to interrogate him. Turns out the guy isn’t sent by Freezelicious, but by their cheaper competitor Mega Cream. They want to make sure nothing bad happens to Jeff, because they are afraid Freezelicious wants to get him out of the way. Will Jeff just be pissed and throw the guy out? Or will he be secretly grateful? Has Freezelicious indeed planned an assassination? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Write Jeff’s inner dialogue in short sentences throughout the scene, and alternate it with action bits. Let him wonder whether somebody is following him (yes, no, yes, no) and what they could want. Show his anxiety and uncertainty.

Prompt 22:

Seems like Amanda’s new co-worker Gregory does not waste any time: On his second day in office he asked her out. She declined, and the next week he asked her again with flowers in his hand. She explained he wasn’t her type, no hard feelings.

Today, when she leaves her house, she finds a shocking image: Somebody nailed her cat to the trashcan! In tears, she pulls her lose and buries her in the backyard. On the bus to work, dreadful thoughts race through her head: How can a human be capable of doing something like this? Did Apple suffer for long? Was it just some cruel and mindless kid? Is she in danger? And did she forget to close the bathroom window...?

At work, Gregory sticks his head into her office: “So how is your cat?” he asks... How will this terrible poker game continue? Can Amanda keep cool? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Again, get into Amanda’s head and play with her uncertainty. How would it make you feel if your co-worker was a dangerous maniac? Grief, terror, vengefulness, remorse... you can draw from all of these strong emotions.

Prompt 23:

Herbert wants to call his son Gerd in from playing in the garden. But he only finds Gerd’s teddy with the head missing, and a note to bring 100,000 € to the Zombie House at the amusement park. If he informs police or doesn’t pay, he will get his son back like his teddy...

Four days later, police are waiting outside the Zombie House, while Herbert roams its eerie corridors, with a backpack filled with 100,000 €. Suddenly, out of the dark, a moldy looking hand grabs his backpack, while his son appears at the end of the corridor. He lets the backpack go and walks towards his son, who suddenly disappears... Will a wild chase between zombie masks ensue? What is waiting in the dark? Will the kidnappers notice the police, and what will they do then? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Uncertainty and mood! Describe the horrible thoughts of a father fighting for his son. Describe the dark, frightening atmosphere of the Zombie House. Here, your worst nightmares come true...

Adventure Writing Prompts

Prompt 24:

An expedition into the jungle has gone wrong. Desmond is an intrepid, bearded explorer who set out with his team to explore the tropical wild. But they got caught by aborigines.

Then something strange happens: Affectionately, they are asked to put on shoes made of parsley and onion necklaces... Seems like these aborigines are hungry.

Jungle-smart Desmond knows their best bet is to make themselves look toxic. He orders his team to rub violet berries and black roots all over their bodies, to punch a couple of each other's teeth out and to writhe and babble like an insane person. Will the wild tribe be disgusted, and what will they decide to do with them? Or will they just laugh and proceed to produce a tasty casserole? You decide!

Prompt 25:

Four women are stranded on a small, rocky island. To their dismay, the boat they came in is leaky. The extreme situation makes their masks come off and exposes the true nature of each one:

Ellen freaks out. She blames Ruth for booking a damaged boat and Mary for forgetting to take walkie-talkies with them, even though she had been in charge of equipment.

Ruth can't stop sobbing, she is pale and shaky and can't be moved from the rock she is sitting on.

Mary tries to bring all of them onto the same page, so they can work together. She holds Ruth in her arms and sings to her.

Bethany makes a list of possible actions to take and tries to assign tasks to everyone (look for food, try to repair boat, look for material for smoking signal, etc...).

Describe the group dynamics. It could be an upward or a downward spiral. Will the women work together and find a way out of this? Or will they become worked up against each other and start to fight? Will a rescuing boat show up

once they are at their lowest point and make them all feel shocked about themselves? You decide!

Prompt 26:

Tobias and Rafael, two colleagues, are trying to reach the top of a mountain in the Himalayas. They are close to the peak, but Tobias knows it's too dangerous to continue. Once they reached the top, it would get dark and cold, and the descent would be very dangerous. He decides to turn around, but he can't get Rafael to come with him.

At night he is in his tent and hears Rafael asking for help over the walkie-talkie. The poor guy is sitting high up there in a freezing cold cave without food, and it's not clear whether he will survive the night. Will Tobias risk his life for a colleague who has disregarded all safety rules? Or will he just encourage him over radio and pray? Will there be calm conditions the next day? You decide!

Action Writing Prompts

Prompt 27:

Alfredo is a celebrity cook who loves the good life. That's why he owes the mafia money.

One day, two gentlemen shaped like bull dozers in suits pay him a visit. They quickly surround him and send him friendly reminders to pay with their brass knuckles and baseball bats. But Alfredo is quick and flexible. He rams a cucumber into their ribs, then quickly jumps over the big counter in the middle of the kitchen.

The weapon of a cook is food... He throws some butter at their feet, so they slide and stumble, and scatters pepper into their eyes. Howling, disorientated and furious, they speed in opposite directions around the block. Alfredo quickly jumps onto the counter, and coming from opposite directions, they crash into each other like colliding trains and stay on the floor unconscious. Alfredo goes on to cook a celebratory cake.

Will the two suddenly wake up and go for Alfredo again? How will he get their heavy bodies out of there? Or is this won already? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Mix the threat and pain of the cold-blooded torturers with quick dynamic phrases of action (verbs of movement; commas not full stops; graphic descriptions).

Prompt 28:

Prison break time is the best time of the year: Hector, Axl, and Hans have been digging their way to freedom for months. Tonight, they lift the tiles for the last time, hastily crawling through the narrow tunnel. Stuck in the middle, they hear an alarm going off. How were they discovered so quickly? When they block the tunnel behind them with earth and debris, it feels like filling their own graves.

They hear guards crawling after them while rapidly digging the last tunnel part. Once out in the forest, they run! They discuss splitting up, but Hans refuses. They hide in trees, but are discovered by police quickly. They jump into a river, hearing police dogs behind them. Flushing down the river, a waterfall comes up. Whaaaam, freefall! Surely no policeman or dog can follow them here, so they feel safe finally! Until they are washed right into the arms of police waiting at the shore... How is that possible?

The cops have handcuffs for Hector and Axl, and a towel for Hans, who takes a tracker out of his sock... Will the other two try to strangle him? What will be his reward, and how could he have the guts to betray his companions? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Make it a big surprise and mystery how the cops always know where they are. And give us a taste of what it feels like to be human prey: Use short, quick, hectic sentences to give a sense for the quick pace of the hunt.

Prompt 29:

The “Three Apples” hospital is in flames. On the 9th floor, nurses Jenny and Linda try to save the babies of the premie ward. The way downstairs is already blocked by flames, and there is only one way left: Up!

The girls are on the rooftop with the babies, and Jenny brought a container, and a sheet they use as a “cable.” She ties one end around a chimney and sails

over the gap onto the neighbor building with a blood-freezing jump. They push the babies safely to the other side one by one like on cable cars, until only Linda is left. But she has major fear of heights, and now the babies are safe, her body has time to panic. The flames come closer.

Will Jenny be able to help her out with another trick? Will she find her courage, or will a helicopter rescue her at the last moment? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Babies and puppies are your best pawn! Make your reader fear for these helpless little creatures, and fall in love with their brave and quick-thinking helpers. You can heighten that effect by giving the girls very distinctive personalities, and showing their inner struggles. They are no superheroes, they have to earn this!

History/Medieval Writing Prompts

Prompt 30:

The middle ages. One of the famous “morality plays” is played in the village. These are basically thinly veiled guidelines for the people on how to behave. This one is for kids though, and very short to allow for their attention span. It tells kids how to behave properly, so mom and dad will love them and they won’t go to hell.

The play features Adam, the good kid, clean and in white like an angel; and Roger, the bad kid, looking nasty in rags and always misbehaving. Several allegories are also around: Obedience is a thin figure in a long, flowing dress, always looking down. Diligence is a muscular guy with rolled up sleeves and leather apron; Adam tries to be like him, while Roger bites his leg. In the end, Adam is showered with candy toys and even a pet calf, while Roger gets a bloodletting and an ass-whipping. But suddenly the kids in the audience start to cheer and stamp: The calf has lifted its tail and peed all over Adam!

Do the kids get their own morality out of that play? How will the director and authorities turn this around to keep them in line? Will independent thinking or order prevail? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Create a couple more figures for the “play within the play.” If you constantly switch between the reality of the village and the reality in the play, it will make for nice variety. Get creative on both ends!

Prompt 31:

Francis is a troubadour all girls have a crush on, kind of the Justin Bieber of the 12th century. He has been courting charming Amalia night after night under her window. Tonight, he sings her his romantic poem “Thou Art the Bellows of Mine Heart.”

Amalia is enchanted, but soon rumbling is heard in the house: Her father has woken up, and that usually leads to him chasing Francis around the house with a rolling pin. He is a wealthy merchant and doesn’t approve of her tie to a penniless poet. The rumbling becomes louder while they speak.

Finally, merchant Robertson rips open the front door and screams up at his daughter: “What happened to the rolling pin!?” Turns out Amalia has wisely hidden it... Will merchant Robertson get even angrier now? Or will he be charmed by his baby’s wit? Will he do damage to her poor suitor? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Love is in the air, so describe how and why these two are sighing/yearning for each other: The longing, the flirting, the plans. Draw from romances in your own life, because love never changed throughout the centuries. Disrupt that romance with an angry, drowsy man for great effect!

Prompt 32:

Ancient Rome: On a big “forum” (square), a slave auction is held. Huno, a big, muscular Alemannic slave in heavy chains is next in line. Gaius, a newly rich plebeian, wants to acquire him so he can wear himself out on his construction sites by pulling heavy blocks. Gracelanus, a town clerk, would treat Huno much better and use him as a body guard.

Huno is ordered to demonstrate his power, and he breaks thick logs of wood over his thighs. Gaius lets out humiliating comments like “Work it, proud

animal!” or “All the brains are in his upper arms.” He gives him the whip several times to test his resilience. Gracelanus, on the other hand, remains quiet, only to applaud the demonstrations.

When the bid goes to 800 sesterces, these two are the only bidders left. Gaius is hesitating for a moment, and suddenly Huno turns to the side of the stage and lets a heavy log fall on Gaius’ feet. Screaming and swearing, Gaius jumps in circles, while the bid goes to Gracelanus. Will Gaius accept his defeat, or will he get back at them? If Huno is provoked further, can he keep his cool? You decide!

How you can make this scene shine:

Slavery is disgusting to the modern reader. It has an even bigger effect, if you, the author, don’t judge. Just present the auction as everyday life. Huno’s humility to his own fate, Gaius’ cruelty... try to describe it without emotions.

Dialogue Writing Prompts

Prompt 33:

Punker girl Samantha (pierced tongue, “Anarchy” tattoo, etc...) is detained for stealing a skateboard bit by bit from a sports store (wheels first, then axle, etc...). Her attorney George is a seasoned vet. At his office, he tries to explain to the stupid brat what’s about to happen and what he wants her to do in front of court: Explain that she had just been bored and curious how to disassemble a skateboard, wanting to prove herself, and that she would have brought the complete skateboard back. Samantha is not too concerned about all of this and wishes the old man was a little more chill.

Write their dialogue and show how differently they speak about their agendas, different words they use, tone, rhythm, etc... Will George hammer some sense into the teenager? Or will Samantha stay unimpressed and make him lose his cool? You decide!

What it’s good for:

It’s important your characters’ voices sound different from each other. This exercise trains you to give each character their distinctive voice.

Prompt 34:

Greta has lent her pick-up truck to her cousin Iris to transport some furniture. Unfortunately, a little accident happened: The truck perfectly fit around the pillar of the gateway.

Iris enters the kitchen, where Greta is cooking. At first, she is afraid to confess and wants to cheer up Greta's mood with some enthusiastic compliments. She hesitates and finally confesses.

Greta is busy and hectic when Iris enters, to get dinner ready before guests arrive. She is happy to see Iris return and asks about the furniture buying, then wants to rush her out of her kitchen. After Iris confesses, Greta feels like everything is going wrong on that day and becomes hysteric. Will Iris be able to calm her down? Or will the two women get into a big fight, just before the guests arrive? You decide!

What it's good for:

This scene takes the two protagonists through a rollercoaster ride of emotions. It will train you to always let your characters express their feelings and to insert a lot of emotions into your scenes.

Prompt 35:

Fibby & Fozzy are twins. Their mom has died recently, and their uncle Gerald wants to trick them out of the largest part of their inheritance. He just presented a new, fake will that would only leave them a small heritage. They discuss what steps they could take against their uncle's scam, and they speak about it at their mom's favorite place on earth, the zoo.

Show them walking through the scenery in a way that the animals provide some subtle subtext for whatever they are talking about. E.g. when they talk about how ruthless their uncle is, they watch a lion tearing his meat apart; when they talk about how they love their mother, they are watching a cute baby panda, etc...

What it's good for:

This should improve your sense to connect what your characters are talking about with their environment. Adding a bit of subtext is easy and makes your scene deep and rich.

Prompt 36:

A popular comedian sits on a park bench. He is the type that shocks and amuses his audience with outrageous ideas. A bum sits down next to him. The comedian asks the bum for change. Is this just a lighthearted joke that will ease out into a philosophical discussion about humanity? Or will the bum be seriously offended and react? You decide!

What it's good for:

Train your characters to sound real with this one. When the erratic, playful, ruthless comedian clashes with the tired bum, you can lend your characters raw and realistic voices.

Character Writing Prompts

A. Prompt 37: Shading

Jeff is a very analytical-thinking stock broker; people call him cold-blooded. Sheryl is an elementary school teacher with a big heart. Andy is an always positive and slightly naive flight attendant.

Describe their characters and add one trait to each of them that doesn't look like them at all. Describe why they have this trait.

What it's good for:

Giving your characters an unexpected trait is called "Shading." E.g. the wealthy, stingy man, who often gives to charity, so he can have the feeling his life has more meaning. If the unexpected trait makes sense, it will give your character a lot of depth and make her look very three-dimensional.

B. Prompt 38: Description

Romeo is a young private detective who dresses like a college boy, with baseball cap and saggy clothes (excellent disguise!). Lana is a stressed restaurant manager. Hannah is a street-artist selling her artwork on a busy corner.

You are having coffee on a lazy Sunday afternoon and are observing each of them separately. Describe their looks, clothes, movements, etc..., so we get a sense for who they are.

What it's good for:

Train to describe your characters with this one. Give your readers a sense for who your figures are, simply by listing observations about them. This is pure "Show, don't tell!" and satisfying for your reader, as she feels like the observer herself.

C. Prompt 39: Backstory

Mariella is an arrogant high-society lady with an expensive fur coat and a little poodle. Henry is a pickpocket with the body language of a beaten dog. Susan is a "speedy reporter," always driven by the desire to get the latest news first.

Describe their backstories in a couple of sentences each: How did they grow up? What are their biggest fears and desires? What made them who they are? How were they hurt?

What it's good for:

This prompt will get you into the habit of rooting your characters in a strong backstory. It will make them look as embraceable as your best friend.

D. Prompt 40: Behavior

Hans is a funny hot-dog street vendor who likes to entertain his customers. Tia is a tax inspector who always welcomes expensive jewelry from companies. Laura is a waitress who is really good at making her customers feel welcome.

Show us how each of these characters would react to the following situations: Somebody carelessly shoving them on public transport. An acquaintance (not friend) asking them to borrow some money. Finding a beautiful rare snail during a bike trip.

What it's good for:

Here you are letting your characters act out of their distinctive personalities. We all react very differently to the same situations. Let your figures express themselves!

Plot Writing Prompts

Take the following words and construct a story plot around them. Use them in any order. Describe a short plot summary. Try to add something: Characters, locations, subplots, details, twists. The more you add, the more colorful your story will become. The only rule is that you must use all of the words. Slashes mean you can pick between words.

Prompt 41:

Suitcase – traffic jam – star – contract – drug – celebration – stairs/piano/autograph – beggar – apple

Prompt 42:

Library – rodent – love/hobby/fanatic – magic – flowers – legend/fairy tale/rumor – birthday pie – clock

Prompt 43:

Monastery/Brewery/Pet shop – breeding – tears – wheel – green – rebel – friend – cozy/thick/dirty

Prompt 44:

Cigar – anger – policeman – pill – polite – celebrate/encourage/humiliate – husband – double-edged

Short Story Writing Prompts

Prompt 45:

James and Agnes are throwing their engagement dinner. James' ex Dina is invited too. Secretly, she still loves him and hates Agnes. During the dinner, she spreads the rumor that Agnes scammed her boss Dimitri out of money/cheated on her fiancée with several of her co-workers/infected people at her office with some disgusting disease. At the after-dinner reception, Dimitri shows up unexpectedly, which leads to really awkward situations for a couple of people.

How will the guests look at Dimitri, Agnes and James? Which awkward misunderstandings and accusations will it lead to? Will somebody clear this up and get Dina kicked out, or will James lose all his trust in his fiancée? You decide!

Prompt 46:

Bruno and Benedict are two kids selling lemonade at their street stand. It's not going well. A stranger in a trench coat, with a wig and huge sunglasses stops by. He offers to buy all of their lemonade, if they do him a quick favor: Over there on the park bench, a guy with a big sports bag/lady with an expensive jewelry necklace/businessman with a black briefcase is sitting. They should threaten him/her with the knives they use for cutting lemons, and bring him the sports bag/necklace/briefcase. He says it's a prank for a TV show.

Will the kids agree, and will they actually pull through? If yes, will the wigged guy escape untroubled? Or will the little ones be smart, maybe talk to the guy/woman on the bench? You decide!

Prompt 47:

Randolph is a casino supervisor. He has a crush on that new croupier Lara. Lara on her part has a plan to take her own extra salary from the casino... The two stay after closing hours and get into a risky game: They will play one hour of roulette. If Lara wins, Randolph will turn a blind eye in the upcoming month while chips "disappear." If James wins, Lara will sleep with him.

Who will come out in front? Or will they call it a draw and declare two winners? And how will the dynamics between the two of them develop during the game? You decide!

Prompt 48:

Gary has been sleepwalking lately. When he wakes up in his bed, he doesn't remember where he has been, but he finds oily car parts/squashed chocolate/earthy bones in his bed (depending on the genre you want to write in).

Gary's nephew Walter is working at the car repair shop/chocolate factory/graveyard of the village. Gary asks him to stay at night after his shift, and observe what he is doing in his sleep. But is it even a coincidence Walter is working there? Is Gary subconsciously trying to tell his nephew something, to warn him, help him, or even sabotage him? Will Walter discover something funny or terrible, and can he even tell his uncle the truth the next day? You decide!

Writing Prompts with Pictures

Write a story around the following image:

Prompt 49:



Prompt 50:



Prompt 51:



Prompt 52:



Writing Prompts for Writer's Block

If you are troubled by writer's block, try one of these exercises. You will find your mind flowing freely again.

Prompt 53:

Think of a very happy day in your life. Describe what happened on that day and how it made you feel. Were you anticipating it when you woke up, or did you have no idea? What did the people around you say or do?

Just write and don't overthink. What you write really doesn't matter. This exercise is designed to get you excited and get your juices flowing, and that's the only thing that matters.

Prompt 54:

Hansel walks up to Gretel and asks her if she wants to go to the lake with him. She says yes. They dance off into the sunlight.

The most commonplace plot in the world. Your job is to write the entire scene as badly as you can. Uninteresting characters, predictable dialogue, action that makes no sense... Please make sure to mess it all up. The worse, the better! If everybody who reads it cringes, you have succeeded. And if you want, send it to me, and I will tell you how awesome it is you finally got back to writing: alex at ridethepen dot com.

Prompt 55:

Pick the window that's closest to you right now, as you read this. Look through it. Describe what you see in detail!

For this exercise, completely turn around at least one of your writing rituals: If you usually write at a desk, write on the couch or the floor; if you usually write by computer, write by hand; etc... The new approach will give you a fresh start.

Story Starters Writing Prompts

Write a story starting with the following sentence:

Prompt 56:

- Anderson knew Amanda as a cheerful person. But on that Wednesday, when she came into the office, she was carrying a big basket, and she looked really sad.

Prompt 57:

- Kai looked up at his scary task. This was the craziest thing any contestant of “Where there’s a will, there is a million” ever had to do. It was because he was first! Nobody had ever gotten one step from the million...

Prompt 58:

- “Once bitten, twice shy.” That’s all Emma could think while looking at handsome Luis and his bullterrier with the huge jaws. “Once bitten, twice shy.”

Prompt 59:

- The day Iggy came into Jasmine’s life, the postman rang twice. That was very unusual, and the reason why it happened was unusual too.

Prompt 60:

- Getting stood up at the altar is every bride’s worst nightmare. But what if it happens the other way around? On the day of her wedding, Sophie was nowhere to be found.

Prompt 61:

- “I’m so happy, Uncle Albert!” Priscilla screamed into her cell phone as her train was speeding towards London. At that moment, nobody knew that a far-reaching confusion would take place on the train soon.

Unusual Writing Prompts

Prompt 62:

Imagine you are a dog. Now tell me about a day in your life from your perspective. How do you spend your time? Waiting, going for a walk with your owner, hunting a cat? Which emotions do you feel? What concerns you, what makes you happy? What matters? What do you want? Follow your wet snout and describe a typical day.

Prompt 63:

Kurt and Sarah are neighbors in the same building, and they are arguing in the hallway. Kurt thinks he lent Sarah three eggs she never replaced. Sarah claims she replaced them a long time ago.

Emma, an elderly lady, passes by and feels obligated to join: Sarah owes an egg, but it's just one. The two of them tell her to keep walking, as it's none of her business.

Erin, a student, passes by, and tries to get all of them to make up in the name of peaceful neighborhood.

Charles, a stressed dad, shouts at all of them to shut up.

Finally, the police comes by and issues a citation against all of them because of public disturbance.

Describe this absurd scene, in which each new participant tries to resolve the quarrel, but tops it up by one additional level. What a mess! Show the good intentions of every party, and how the dialogue finally draws them into the argument. Have fun!

Images: Eyes in Jar: LaCozza/Fotolia; Hovering Furniture: Interior Design/Shutterstock; Space Traveller Meets Cavemen: anibal/Fotolia