

Writing Prompts and Tips

As author Neil Gaiman says, “the world always seems brighter when you’ve just made something that wasn’t there before.” I would love to see what you make--even if it has nothing to do with these prompts! And, if you take a piece through the writing process, you will have the option to be featured on the website the following week.

- Monday:
 - Prompt: Write an ode--a poem that celebrates a specific subject--about something unexpected.
 - *Tip: Look to other authors to help you get started. Read a mentor text, such as the excerpt from “Ode to Pablo’s Tennis Shoes” by Gary Soto, to spark inspiration. Think about what you like in Soto’s poem. Try something similar in yours.*

Pablo is in bed listening
To his mother laughing
to the Mexican novelas on TV.
His shoes, twin pets
That snuggle his toes,
Are under the bed....
He wants to be
Like his shoes,
A little dirty
From the road,
A little worn
From racing to the drinking fountain
A hundred times in one day.
It takes water
To make him go,
And his shoes to get him
There....

- Tuesday:
 - Prompt: Write an advertisement convincing someone to buy one of your (real or invented) possessions.
 - *Tip: As you brainstorm your topic, add words to an alphabox chart (see below for an example). If you get stuck while writing or are wondering, “What else can I add?”, check the chart to jog your memory.*

Alphabox Topic: Ballet

A Arabesque	B Ballet Baryshnikov Barre	C Choreography	D Développé
E	F French Fondu First position	G	H
I	J Jeté	K	L
M	N	O	P plié Pointe pas Pirouette
Q	R Relevé Russian	S Second position	T tutu turn out
U	V	W Working leg	X, Y, Z

- Wednesday:
 - Prompt: What happens on a superhero's day off?
 - *Tip: To develop a realistic fiction character, start with someone you know and then make changes. For example, try creating a list of things this person likes and dislikes. Now add some fictional likes and dislikes to your list.*

- Thursday:
 - Prompt: You find out that your neighbor's brick house is actually made of painted books. Which one do you want to read first, and what happens when you take it?
 - *Tip: Authors usually move quickly through less important parts of stories and slow down to really tell the most important parts. Reread your story. Draw a box around the most important, exciting, or interesting part. Is it also the longest part? If not, spend some time developing it by adding more details or information. (You can also look back at other parts of the story to see if there's anything you can cut out.)*

- Friday:
 - Prompt: When you look back at this time years from now, it will be a unique experience that you'll remember. Now that you've been home for a few weeks, write to help you remember as much as you can: what is school like now? What daily routines do you and your family have? Have you come up with any new traditions or ways to have fun?
 - *Tip: Show the big idea with your title. Either before or after you draft, brainstorm a list of titles for your piece--as many as you can. Look back over the list and think, "Which feels truest to what I really want to say?"*

Word Ladders

In 1877, Lewis Carroll, who wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, invented word ladders as a game for two bored children with "nothing to do." While you don't have that problem, try one if you find yourself wanting a quick brain challenge. Look for new ladders here each week (but if you can't wait that long please [email me](#) for more options). You can also create your own and send them to me to publish.

*Corresponding PDFs sent via email.