

A Note from Ms. Navarro:

Dear Families,

I hope you are all safe and healthy, and finding ways to experience daily calm and joy amidst the stressful circumstances. I'm here to help. My goal for distance learning is to continue to provide support, but not bombard you with too much. (I know I have personally felt grateful but also overwhelmed by the many free resources suddenly popping up.) That said, if you would like more guidance, have questions, or simply want to connect, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I am available for office hours each weekday from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Simply [email me](#) and we'll go from there!

For writing inspiration you will find daily prompts, each paired with a simple tip, on my Writing tab. You might even enjoy working on these together as a family. (I plan to respond to them myself.) I am available for virtual conferences, so please share any writing samples with me via google document or photograph. *Children who take a piece through the writing process will have the option to be featured on the website the following week.

If you have the ability, I also suggest Authentic Interactive Writing (purposeful activities where you and your child "share the pencil"). [My latest School Notes article](#) has more information.

To continue daily independent reading, you may have access to enough books at each child's just-right level. If not, Epic--an online virtual library--is free for the next month. [Sign up here](#). While too much screen time is not optimal, unprecedented times call for flexibility.

Lastly, just for you: here is a lovely poem written this month by Lynn Ungar. It has given me some helpful perspective and it may offer you the same comfort:

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath —
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love —
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

I very much look forward to hearing from you!

Reaching out,
Emily

Read Aloud:

Hopefully read aloud time continues to offer a comforting routine and refuge for your family, but I also realize you are likely juggling your own work responsibilities. For more independent read alouds, one resource I recommend is [Storyline Online](#), where various actors share picture books.

These can be used simply for enjoyment, but each book comes with questions and extension activities, too (“Teachers’ Guide”). Stories can be sorted by age level.

For older children, many authors have taken to Twitter to read installments of their work each day. Here, for example, [RJ Palacio reads from *Wonder*](#).

A more comprehensive list of options is available [in this document](#).



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: You wake up one day in another family’s house (maybe even in a different country... or world!). They are very friendly but completely different from your family. What is breakfast together like that first morning?
 - *Tip: Imagine sharing your story with someone once you have finished. Who are you reading it to? As you write, pretend you’re talking to that person.*
- Tuesday:
 - Prompt: Find an object in the house. Maybe it’s one that matters to you. Examine it closely. Now, describe the object. Compare it to other things. What does this object remind you of?
 - *Tip: Observe the object part by part. Linger on one important or special part a bit longer, using more words to describe. Go through each of your senses--touch, smell, sound, sight, taste (only if it’s clean and edible). Don’t just tell what that part is called.*
- Wednesday:
 - Prompt: A dog as big as a house shows up in your neighborhood. He wants to play....
 - *Tip: Set a timer (perhaps for... seven minutes after you pick up the pencil). When it goes off, reread what you’ve written so far. Now pick up your pencil and continue writing to the end.*
- Thursday:
 - Prompt: Choose a family photograph and try to remember as much as you can about what was happening in that moment.

- *Tip: How does this memory make you **feel**? Start with one strong feeling and include details that show this.*
- Friday:
 - Prompt: You are going to start a food truck. What kind of food will be on the menu? What will the truck look like, and what will it be called?
 - *Tip: When you think you're done, reread the story. Think, "What do I have in my mind that is not yet on the page?" Add more details.*