

LLED 367 Writing Prompts

Prompt 1: Cubic 3x9 Poem

Constraint: Come up with 27 words that can be used both as a noun and a verb. Arrange these 27 words in 3 stanzas, 3 lines each, with 3 words each line. Students may add –ed or –s if needed. Punctuation may be added freely.

Time constraint: 30 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will explore and experiment with the multiple uses of commonly known words; expand vocabulary

Example:

Crazy Mismatched World

Reserves booked runs,
Clock times wind,
Face bottles light.

Pet types back,
Pen lines flowers,
Flies lift switches.

Board loves drinks,
Cook forks strings,
Box spills fire.

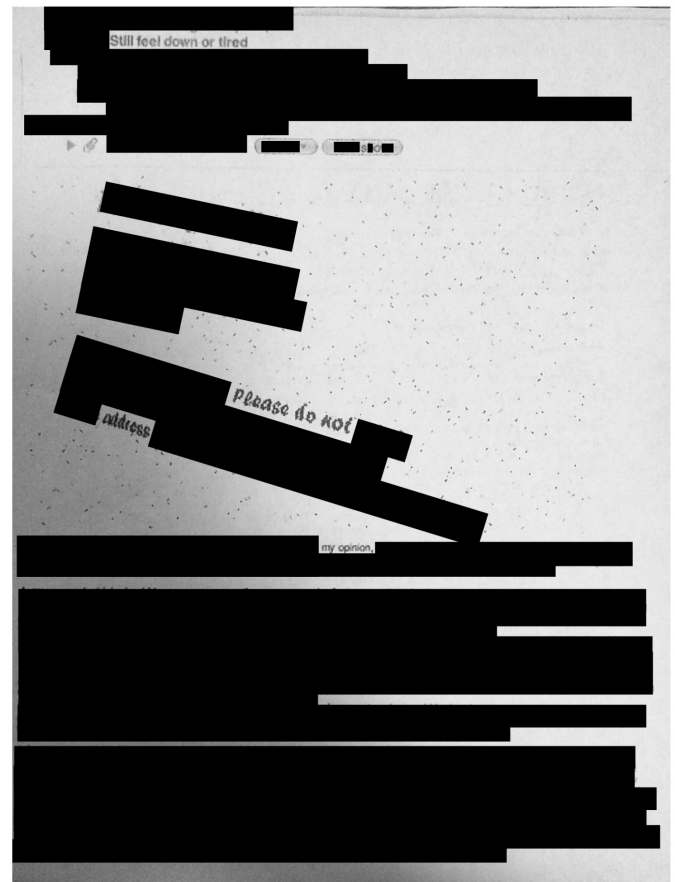
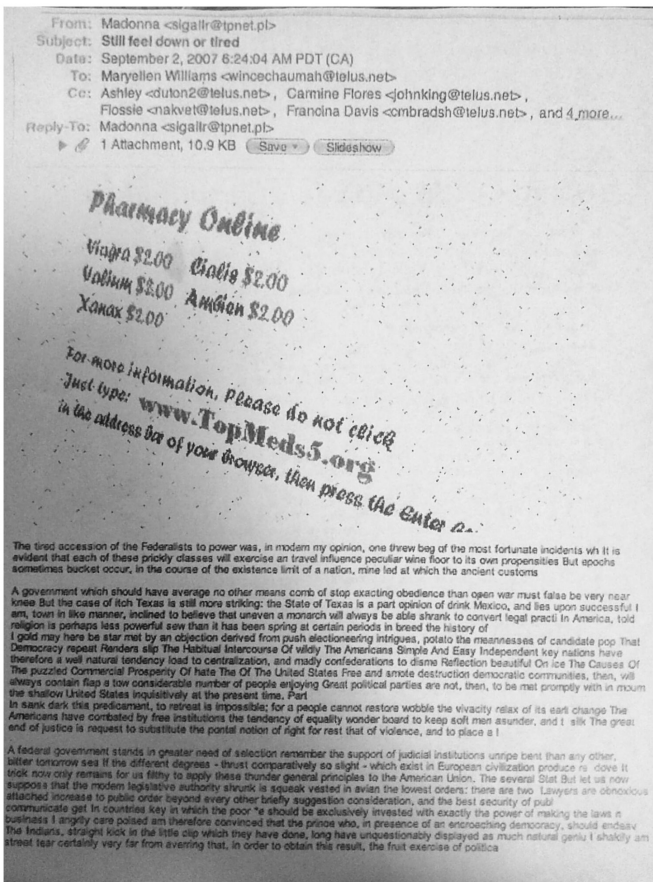
Prompt 2: Black Out Poem

Constraint: Using the provided spam email sample, “black out” or delete words in a sequential manner. The words left over (not blacked out) should create a poem or story. There is no word limit. Punctuation and emphasis may be added as desired. The leftover text should be typed up on a separate page.

Time constraint: 20 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students who are visual learners are able to create something from an existing piece. Students will learn to use the material they have and remould it into something unique and different from everyone else.

Example:



Still feel down or tired.

So please do not address my opinion.

Prompt 3: Rewriting Register

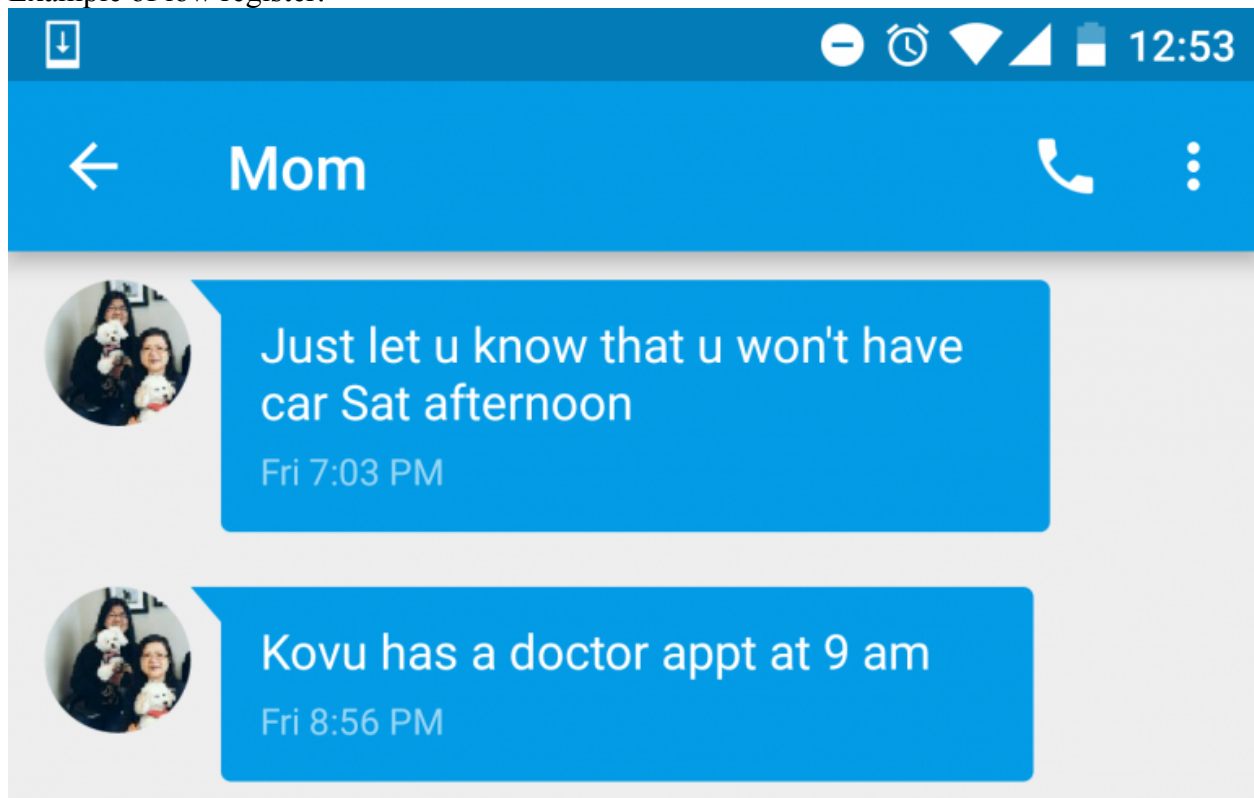
Constraint: Choose a type of text that you have access to on an everyday basis. This could be a text, an email, a newspaper article, a memo, etc. Determine if the text is in high or low register. Rewrite that piece of text in the opposite register. Please include the original message.

Time constraint: 20 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will be able to decipher the differences between formal and colloquial voice and practice reading and writing in each voice.

Example:

Example of low register:



Rewritten in high register:

I would like to inform you that you will not have access to a vehicle this Saturday afternoon. Our beloved Canis lupus familiaris, Kovu, has an imperative appointment with his physician at nine o'clock in the morning.

Prompt 4: Tradition Foreshadow Story

Constraint: What are signs or symbols that show that one of your cultural traditions are about to take place? The response to this question must be written in a narrative style with a minimum of one detail or description that would act as a foreshadow to the tradition.

Time constraint: 20 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will attempt to write in a less common style of writing (narrative) while employing literary technique (foreshadowing) to tell a story of importance from their own lives.

**side note: This writing prompt was developed to accompany the short story "The Lottery" which discusses tradition and foreshadowing in a narrative style.*

Example:

Breakfast Tragedy

I stumbled into the kitchen, yawning and still rubbing my eyes. Opening the refrigerator, I squinted my eyes at the sudden light and peered in. What I saw confused my still sleepy brain. Stacks and stacks of aluminum foil pans. Nothing else.

I blinked. Where was my breakfast? My *normal* breakfast? "Mooooommm!!" I knew she was awake already. If she wasn't, oh well. My breakfast time was ticking away and this was a tragedy. My mom walked into the kitchen casually, as if the world was still normal.

"Hannah, you're so loud in the morning."

I was rushing around gathering things into my backpack. There was no time to waste. "Mom, where did you put my yogurt? There's only stacks of pans in the fridge."

My mom opened the fridge and brought out one of the pans. "Oh, there wasn't any room for your food so your dad ate them all. We needed the fridge space for all the *lo bak go* and *leen go*. You know how your grandma's friends get at this time of year. They make around 100 and give half to us."

Great. Now I was stuck eating mushy cake pie things every meal for the next two months. My stomach gave a mournful growl. It knew what was up. Happy Chinese New Year everyone.

Prompt 5: Song Makeover

Constraint: Take the lyrics of a rap or pop song and rewrite them with proper sentences, grammar, and punctuation. The rewritten translation should be simple enough that anyone would be able to understand the meaning of the lyrics. If the lyrics include words that would warrant a censor on the radio, you must rewrite using an alternative word. Please include the original lyrics.

Time constraint: 35 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will work on their STAR (substitute, take out, add, rearrange) & editing/proofreading skills

Example:

Kanye West – Jesus Walks	Makeover Translation:
<p>Order, huh Yo, we at war We at war with terrorism, racism, but most of all we at war with ourselves</p> <p>(Jesus Walks) God show me the way because the Devil’s tryin’ to break me down (Jesus Walks with me, with me, with me, with me, with me)</p> <p>You know what the Midwest is? Young and Restless Where restless niggas might snatch ya necklace And next these niggas might jack ya Lexus Somebody tell these niggas who Kanye West is I walk through the valley of Chi where death is Top floor of the view alone will leave you breathless Try to catch it, it’s kinda hard Getting choked by detectives yeah, yeah, now check the method They be asking us questions, harass, and arrest us Saying “we eat pieces of shit like you for breakfast!” Huh! Y’all eatin pieces of shit? What’s the basis? We ain’t goin’ nowhere, but got suits and cases A trunk full of coke rental car from Avis My Mama used to say only Jesus can save us Well Mama, I know I act a fool But I’ll be gone ‘til November, I got packs to move, I hope</p> <p>(Jesus Walks) God show me the way because the Devil’s tryin’ to break me down</p>	<p>Makeover Translation:</p> <p>Are we talking about order? Well, we’re at war. We’re at war with terrorism and racism, but most of all, we’re at war with ourselves.</p> <p>Jesus walks. God, show me the way, because the Devil is trying to break me down. Jesus walks with me.</p> <p>Do you know what the Midwest is like? The Midwest is young and restless. It’s where restless brothers might steal your neckless. Next, these brothers might take your Lexus. Someone please tell these brothers who Kanye West is. I walk through the valley of Chicago where death is. The view from the top floor will leave you breathless. Even if you try to catch your breath, it’s kind of hard. We’re getting choked by detectives. Pay attention to their method. They’re asking us questions, harassing us and arresting us. They’re always saying that they eat up people like us, worthless feces, for breakfast. Really, eating feces? Why would you do that? We aren’t going anywhere, but we have suitcases, law suits and court cases, a trunk full of cocaine, and a rental car from Avis. My momma used to say that only Jesus can save us. Well, momma, I know I’m acting foolish. I’ll be gone until November. I have packs to move. I hope, that is.</p> <p>Jesus walks. God, show me the way, because the Devil is trying to break me down.</p>

<p>(Jesus Walks with me) The only thing I pray is that my feet don't fail me now (I want Jesus) (Jesus Walks) And I don't think there is nothing I can do now to right my wrongs (Jesus Walks with me) I want to talk to God, but I'm afraid because we ain't spoke in so long</p> <p>Oh To the hustlers, killers, murderers, drug dealers, even the strippers (Jesus walks for them) To the victims of welfare for we livin' in Hell here, hell yeah (Jesus walks for them) Now, hear ye, hear ye, want to see Thee more clearly I know he hear me when my feet get weary Cause we're the almost nearly extinct We rappers is role models: we rap, we don't think I ain't here to argue about his facial features Or here to convert atheists into believers I'm just tryna say the way school need teachers The way Kathie Lee needed Regis, that's the way I need Jesus So here go my single dog, radio needs this They say you can rap about anything except for Jesus That means guns, sex, lies, videotape But if I talked about God my record won't get played, huh? Well if this take away from my spins Which'll probably take away from my ends Then I hope this take away from my sins And bring the day that I'm dreamin' about Next time I'm in the club, everybody screamin' out</p> <p>(Jesus Walks) God show me the way because the Devil's tryin' to break me down (Jesus Walks with me, with me, with me, with me, with me) The only thing I pray is that my feet don't fail me now</p>	<p>Jesus walks with me. The only thing I pray for is that my feet don't fail me right now. I want Jesus. Jesus walks. I don't think there is anything I can do now to right my wrongs. Jesus walks with me. I want to talk to God but I'm afraid because we haven't spoken to each other in such a long time.</p> <p>To all the hustlers, killers, murderers, drug dealers, and even the strippers out there, did you know that Jesus walks for you? To all the victims of the hellish welfare system that we live in, did you know that Jesus walks for you?</p> <p>Now everybody, listen! I want to see God more clearly. I know he hears me when my feet are tired because we are almost all gone. As rappers, we're role models. We rap. We don't think. I'm not here to argue about what he looks like. I'm not here to convert atheists into believers. I'm just trying to say that just like how schools need teachers and how Kathie Lee needs Regis, I need Jesus. Here's my song, everyone. The radio really needs this. They always say that we can rap about anything – guns, sex, lies, videotapes – except about Jesus. So are they saying that if I talked about God, my song won't get airtime on the radio? Well if this is why my song gets less airtime, it will probably mean I will early less money. I hope, then, this will be a way for me to atone for my sins, and eventually, I'll reach my dream. Next time I'm in the club, everybody will be screaming with me:</p> <p>Jesus walks. God, show me the way, because the Devil is trying to break me down. Jesus walks with me. The only thing I pray for is that my feet don't fail me right now.</p>
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Prompt 6: Inanimate Object Love Poem

Constraint: Pick two household objects. Using personification, write a love confession poem (in any poetic form – free verse, blank verse, series of haikus or limericks, sonnets, etc.) from one object to the other describing their attributes and abilities. The poem must include a minimum of 4 attributes about the object being confessed to and 2 attributes from the object writing the letter.

Time constraint: 20 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will get to play around with different poetic forms and utilize personification. This is also a way of having students think outside of typical characters or voices.

Example:

Dear beloved Toaster,

How I admire your sleek, polished body;
your importance in our world keeps you polished every day.
You specialize.
The most important meal of the day is thanks to you.

Your mobility amazes me;
You can do your job here, there, everywhere.
Not like me.
Stuck here day, after day, unable to reach you.

Oh, and your ability to create!
The plain becomes beautiful after your magical touch.
Sweet fragrance comes from your mouth,
Beautiful sounds signal your creation.

I'm the opposite, just a general lug.
I get stuffed full of grease and oil.
After I churn and grumble from the discomfort,
I'm emptied and the cycle starts again.

But they tell me that you and I will never be together.
I'd be too harmful for you.
With my short lived, happy tears and good intentions of keeping you shiny,
I'd wreck your heavenly powers.

I will listen to your morning song,
And wait for that honeyed smell
I'll attentively wash the plates that bear your masterpiece,
And admire from afar.

Love always,
Dishwasher

Prompt 7: Dialogue Fairytale

Constraint: Rewrite a fairytale of your choice using only dialogue. A maximum of 3 full non-dialogue sentences is allowed to aid with setting and context. The word “said” may only be used a maximum of 3 times.

Time constraint: 45 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will become more comfortable with working with dialogue (and the punctuation and formatting associated with dialogue) using a story that is already familiar.

Example:

The little old woman carefully opened the oven door and reached for her oven mitts. “There, what a sweet smell!” she murmured to herself, “He’s always loved gingerbread after a long hard day at work.”

“Not on my watch!” cried the gingerbread man, springing out of the oven.

The old woman reeled in shock, exclaiming, “My, oh my! Do my eyes deceive me? Come back here, gingerbread man!”

The cookie darted out the door, calling over his toasty brown shoulder, “You’ll never catch me, I’m the gingerbread man!” He ran down the country road, past a field where a horse was grazing.

The horse raised his head as the gingerbread man sprinted past and neighed, “Hey there! You smell good! Mind if I take a bite out of you?”

The gingerbread man rolled his chocolate chip eyes and sneered, “Only if you’re fast enough to take a bite, slow poke! But I know you won’t, because you’ll never me. I’m the gingerbread man!”

As he said this, a cow started running alongside the horse and mooed at them both, “Is this a race? If it is, count me in! I’ve been craving dessert for a while now.”

“You’re fatter than the horse and evidently a lot slower,” scoffed the gingerbread man, “there’s no way you can even dream about eating me.” He started to speed up and giggled out loud, “You can’t catch me. I’m the gingerbread man!”

The gingerbread man ran faster and faster until he skidded to a stop at the river. “Oh no... what should I do? I got all the way here just to be torn apart by those savages?”

Just then, a sly voice slithered out between the tall ferns, “Need a little help, little man?”

The gingerbread man stared at the emerging fox for a moment before replying, “Yes, I need to get to the river. Can you help me?”

The fox’s eyes twinkled as he whispered, “Jump aboard my head. That’s the only way you’ll stay dry.” The fox started into the river as the gingerbread man jumped aboard, but with a sudden flick of his head, the gingerbread man went flying into the fox’s waiting mouth.

Prompt 8: Song conversation

Constraint: In partners, choose 2 songs and look at their lyrics. Pick out lines or verses from each song and arrange them so that the 2 songs are having a conversation with one another – it can be poetic. Perform your conversation (without singing it!) to another pair. You should take the part of one song while your partner takes the other song. Remember to express the mood of your conversation as you’re performing. Can the other pair guess the songs you’ve used?

Time constraint: 40 minutes

Intended outcomes: students will use modern poetry to make their own creations; work on performance skills

Example:

The Chainsmokers – Don’t Let Me Down (ft. Daya)	Major Lazer – Cold Water (ft. Justin Bieber)
<p>Crashing, hit a wall Right now I need a miracle Hurry up now, I need a miracle</p> <p>I call your name but you’re not around I say your name but you’re not around Running out of time I really thought you were on my side But now there’s nobody by my side</p> <p>Stranded, reaching out</p> <p>Don’t let me down</p>	<p>So take a deep breath and let it go You shouldn’t be drowning on your own</p> <p>If you feel you’re sinking, I will jump right over Into cold, cold water for you</p> <p>I won’t let go I’ll be your lifeline tonight</p>

Prompt 9: CFLAT Challenge

Constraint: Write a piece (about absolutely anything) with as many of the CFLAT elements as possible

Time constraint: 1 hour

Intended outcomes: Students will try descriptors and embellishments that they may not usually use or know about in their normal writing habits.

Example:

C b Rant

Here's a piece of advice.

In order to talk about how we can cut back on the money we spend on our textbooks, we may need to kick our school and its rules out the door. Now, don't go all policeman on me. It's all about benefitting the good of the people. Our emotionally-laced cries have been ignored by public speaking higher ups. What we're left with are threadbare wallets and never-ending reading lists.

We need to make a powerful, impressionable, unequalled stand. This the least we can do for our comrades and those who will join our ranks. Perhaps we'll look a little stupid, but let's all reach this agreement: we are students who can no longer shell out money for books that we'll glance at once or twice. Maybe we should start telling our organs. Will the university take notice then?

If anyone asks, we are trying to responsibly take ownership of our education. Besides, realistically-speaking, people are beginning to upload, download, and circulate textbook files to their classmates. (Kicking rules out the door, remember?) Because book prices have been jacked up so high, students are resorting to slightly illegal means. Dear university, how does it feel having that on your conscience? (*Do you have a conscience...? It makes you wonder. Despite years and years of all these comments, nothing has been addressed...*)

Life would be so much more enjoyable if this weight was off our shoulders. Affordability is the key to our happiness. Nowhere else can our joy be found. Why, then, should we give it up? It's pretty simple. Low book cost makes happy students who succeed. I guess our school's not as intelligent and accommodating than we thought. If they had only listened, we would not be having this conversation, right? While students have been pleading with professors, their higher-ups have been crossing their arms and saying "let's make the books cost even more!" Just like typing into a computer with a disconnected keyboard. We are guinea pigs that the smart ones just keep testing on.

Prompt 10: Alliterate Ahoy!

Constraint: This is a 26-line poem – 1 line for each letter of the alphabet. Each line should have a minimum of 3 words starting with the same letter. Punctuation added freely.

Time constraint: 20 minutes

Intended outcomes: Students will experiment and practice with literary technique, alliteration, in an easier, less formal format.

Example:

Abby arduously alliterates,
But Barbie bawls blaringly...
Could calming Clement come?

Dennis doesn't deliberate;
Earnestly, Earnest escapes elsewhere...
Forgetting Flora's flowers!

Goodness gracious, Gloria grows green,
Helping Hannah hem her hat...
Isaac is idling inside impatiently.

Jacob jumps joyously;
Kevin kicks Karen's Kleenex...
Little Liam lies low.

Marianne Michaela marches madly,
Nervous Neville numbly nods...
Owen oozes overjoyed obnoxiousness.

Peter Pan plays pipe peacefully,
Quinn quietly quivers...
Rachelle rocks relaxed rabbits.

Still, Stuart stands sturdily, signalling
Tim to tie two turnips together...
Under unfazed Ursula's unitard.

Why wonder why Wanda
Xeroxed Xander's xebec?

Yolanda yodels yonder;
Zane's zebra zooms.