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LLED 367

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### 10 Writing Prompts

1. Write a poem about something that transforms or changes over time using the adverb combination.
  - a. Adverb combination:
    - Time + (subject+verb\*)+ manner + duration + place
    - *Last night* they argued *loudly for an hour in the dining room*
    - can vary\*
  - b. Minimum 5 lines
  - c. Context constraint: 15 minutes

*Exemplar:*

Last year the trees budded brightly all summer in the park.

When it rained, the leaves drifted softly during the fall onto the roads.

This year, the workers logged loudly for many days down the street.

This summer, the workers built houses repeatedly for four months where the park used to be.

Today, the trees work silently all year inside the drywall of the houses.

*Intended Outcome:* In this activity, students are focusing on adverb combinations, allowing them to provide descriptive details about an event. The adverb combination focuses on sentence structure and flow. This exercise would also work for helping students play with language for poetry. Students can be prompted to play with the combination to form poems, where a line may bring attention to itself because it stands out from the regular combination of adverbs.

2. Write a short (5-7 sentences) paragraph that describes an activity you enjoy doing or recently engaged in. Choose a “main” verb or adjective to base your narrative on and use variations or synonyms of that word a minimum of 4 times throughout your writing.
  - a. Main word can be limited to “dead words” or a list of words can be provided
  - b. An extension to this activity would be trying to use more than one word
  - c. Context Constraint: 15 minutes

*Exemplar:*

1. I recently had the **liberty** of visiting California. My friends and I drove from Surrey on a Sunday night, and made it to Redding California on Wednesday. We happened to be there for **Independence** Day, making it just in time for the fireworks. I am not the type who usually gets excited for fireworks, but this fireworks show was amazing! They had many different shapes and patterns that I had never seen before. Although Canada is strong and **free**, American has the **right** to brag when it comes to fireworks.
2. I frequently go **jogging** at mud bay, a **beautiful** park on the edge of Surrey. I no longer enjoy **exercising** in my neighbourhood since I was **dazzled** by the park. The park trail **runs** along the edge of the water, a bay that connects to crescent beach. The trail is surrounded by blackberry bushes and large trees. When I take the opportunity to **walk** (not so much an opportunity as just being tired) I enjoy taking in the scenery around me. A few times I have had the chance to encounter some **stunning** eagles sitting in a tree nearby. The smell of the seawater, the **alluring** greenery, and the quiet of the park makes me shorten my **strides** just to take it all in.

*Intended Outcome:* This activity pushes students to think carefully about their word choice to describe their intended meaning. This activity has students focus on the importance of word choice and expands their vocabulary by allowing them analyze the possibilities of their chosen word.

3. Pick a person or place you are familiar with. Create a poem where each line begins with the letters that spell that person's name or your chosen place. Each line must use alliteration and describe the person or place you intend to write about.
  - a. Context Constraint: 20 minutes

*Exemplar:*

**C**loudless coastline  
**A**dventurous activities  
**L**avish landscape  
**I**nnovative industries  
**F**lamboyant Flowers  
**O**pen outdoors  
**R**aging rapids  
**N**oisy nights  
**I**nsufficient income  
**A**lways amazing

*Intended Outcome:* This exercise allows students to play with language and sound using alliteration. Since the students must describe the person or place they choose, it narrows the focus and limits the words they may choose. Writing it, student may find they must focus on adjectives and nouns to comprehensively describe the person or place.

4. Write out the dialogue of a conversation you had with someone recently. You will write the dialogue and the expressions similarly to how conversations are written in literature. The dialogue must be written out in full and the reported speech cannot use the word “said”. Your lines of dialogue must be a minimum of 10 lines.
  - a. Students may also use the dialogue of a show they watch and write out the reported speech as they interpreted it
  - b. Students are encouraged to play with the way the text is written as well (such as using capital letters to highlight diction changes) and then read it aloud to show the emphasis of words
  - c. Context Constraint: 15 minutes

*Exemplar:*

“I got my FA!” I exclaimed.

“So does that mean you know where your practicum is?” my mother questioned.

“No. I just know who my FA is” I responded.

“So having an FA doesn’t mean anything then?” she teased.

“But it’s exciting because it’s the first thing we know about our practicum” I murmured.

“But it doesn’t *really* tell you anything important” she laughed.

“I think I’ll be in Surrey. Because another girl has the same FA. So I should be in Surrey” I argued.

“But you don’t know for sure.” She snickered as she walked away.

“*IT’S STILL EXCITING THOUGH!*” I called.

“I don’t *really* know anything actually” I confessed quietly.

*Intended Outcome:* This activity assesses student’s ability to write reported speech. Students are expanding their vocabulary by using words outside of those that are normally used (i.e. “said”). This activity teaches dialogue and highlights the power of word choice in writing.

5. Write a poem about a place you remember that you can no longer go back to. Use similes and/or metaphors to describe your place and a minimum of two parts of imagery (sight, sound, taste, feel).

a. Context Constraint: 30 minutes

*Exemplar:*

Wake up in the middle of the night  
to find It raining. Water drips from the ceiling,  
keeping a rhythm like the sound of a clock:  
tick tock, drip drop.

"Turn off when not in use."  
was written on the wall.  
Though, the switch was flicked up,  
the circuit was cut. Light  
would never come.

But when I wake up  
I see smiling faces  
on every wall  
and a childish drawn sun  
with the words have a nice day,  
under the rays of sunshine.

The white paint on the walls  
are a white board.  
One that couldn't be erased.

Walls crafted with colors;  
pink stars and little hearts,  
words of a prayer, inside jokes,  
and little love notes, like  
an album but instead of photos,  
it's a timeline of words.

A place where every quote  
comes with a story  
and every story brings a smile.  
Not just because the wall  
says "Smile because you can."

The closet, once filled  
like a sale rack at a store,  
is now empty. The floors  
no longer carry any weight.

It's time to leave

6. Write descriptive step by step instructions about a simple everyday task. Do not mention exactly what the task or object is until the end of your instructions. Your instructions must include: comparative/superlative structures, coordinating conjunctions, transitions, connections, and sentence adverbs. Each sentence must use as least one of these features but you do not need to use all.
  - a. Context Constraint: 25 minutes

*Exemplar:*

For starters, you should pick a pair that you have not worn in a while. But don't select a pair that doesn't fit as a result from you not following your diet! They should be tighter than sweat pants but looser than leggings. It is better to remain seated in the duration of this exercise than to stand. After you have made a choice, begin to scrunch up on side so you are able to put your hand easily through. As a result, you will be able to place your foot through the large opening at the top, and easily pull your foot through at the bottom. However, the job is only half complete! In addition, you must scrunch up the side you have not done up yet and again place your foot through the hole at the top so it comes through the small bottom hole.

Despite my directions initially directing you to remain seated, I highly suggest you stand up for the next step. However, before you stand, please ensure both feet are through the bottom holes. While you are standing, bend over as if you are about to pick up a barbell for a deadlift but instead reach for the scrunched up fabric around your ankles. Correspondingly, you will begin to pull the fabric up your legs as high as they can reach, unless they become fixed around your thighs. Nevertheless, you may need to hop up and down a two times to ensure they are in the right position around your waist. Finally, you may pull up your zipper with dominant hand, while holding the top button in place with your other hand; as a result, you will be able to easily force the button through the hole or just leave your pants unbuttoned and cover yourself with a nice loose top!

*Intended Outcome:* Students will be able to think logically about forming sentences that flow and connect. This activity builds on vocab and allows students to apply knowledge about the structures in a fun way. It assesses their ability to create a coherent and logical paragraph. Having the students refrain from writing the task or object they are discussing forces them creatively think around it by describing the object in different ways.

7. Write a poem that describes a person's appearance using metaphors. You cannot use "like" or "as."
- Students can be prompted with lines from a poem that begin with describing someone or free write about a real or imagined character
  - Context Constraint: 25 minutes

*ORIGINAL*

DEMETRIUS (3.2) Page 873

*(awaking)* O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!  
 To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?  
 Crystal is muddy. Oh, how ripe in show  
 Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!  
 That pure congealed white - high Taurus' snow,  
 Fanned with the eastern wind - turns to a crow  
 When thou hold'st up thy hand. O, let me kiss  
 This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

THISBE (5.1)

Asleep, my love?  
 What, dead, my dove?  
 O Pyramus, arise!  
 Speak, speak. Quite dumb?  
 Dead, dead? A tomb  
 Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
 These lily lips,  
 This cherry nose,  
 These yellow cowslip cheeks  
 Are gone, are gone.  
 Lovers, make moan.  
 His eyes were green as leeks.  
 O Sisters three,  
 Come, come to me  
 With hands as pale as milk.  
 Lay them in gore,  
 Since you have shore  
 With shears his thread of silk.

...

*EXEMPLAR*

*DEMETRIUS (3.2) Page 873*

*(awaking) O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!*  
*To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?*  
*The blue ocean where I find myself lost.*  
*Swimming and searching, deeper and deeper.*  
*Into the sand, your skin – sinking into warmth.*  
*Your voice, the waves, harmonious with*  
*The swash and ebb of the ocean tide.*  
*Your lips the apple I'd like to bite.*

*THISBE (5.1)*

*Asleep, my love?*  
*What, dead, my dove?*  
*Murky water are her eyes*  
*In the unkempt forest of her hair, they hide.*  
*The moles and detritus structure her skin*  
*Yet more soft than the temper that lies within.*  
*Her voice with crows crackles in harmony*  
*Through her mud cracked lips, she sings a melody.*

*Intended Outcome:* The intention of this exercise is to have students focus on small details and describe those details using creative language. Students are gaining insight on how to use metaphor through a detailed description.

8. Write a narrative paragraph that describes a memorable place. You must use all factors of imagery (sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound) and a minimum of 5 prepositions.
  - a. Context Constraint: 25 minutes

*Exemplar:*

Mr. Fast was right. I should have gone to an elementary school. The Owl Rehabilitation Center was not for me. I knew on my first day within the first hour that I should not be there. When I arrived, I was given a tour of the facility I would be working in for 2 weeks on a high school co-op. I knew that I would be getting down and dirty. But I did not *really* know what “dirty meat”. The first stop on the tour was the kitchen, just **passed** the main office where they met clients. The kitchen, I was told, is where the rehabilitating bird’s food is “prepared.” How do you prepare predatory bird’s food? I was about to find out.

As we approached the kitchen, I began to smell a metallic incense. Then, it was metal mixed with wet dog. It was actually blood soaked feathers and fur. As we entered the bathroom sized kitchen, my eyes widened to take in the whole scene. Screeching horror music played in my mind as I gazed upon splattered blood on the ceiling and on the backsplash **behind** the counters. The woman leading me walked to the fridge **that sat opposite** the door. She opened the fridge door towards the counters to display to me the food they feed the birds. **On the top** shelf, dead quail; the **middle** shelf, packed with little yellow (dead) chicks; and the **bottom** shelf was reserved for their “speciality” of the day, a half cut up rabbit. I could feel my stomach turning, ready to bring up my scrambled eggs and toast from the morning. I turned away from the fridge in attempts to calm my nerves. I instead turned to the blood stained knives that hung **above** the counters. I was told those are the tools I was going to use to cut quail in half. My hands started to feel numb. I backed out of the kitchen, the metallic smell of blood imprinted in my nose. The woman turned to me and exclaimed “Sometimes you’ll be lucky to see an egg pop out of the quail when you cut it in half!”

*Intended Outcome:* Students will apply their knowledge of prepositions and imagery based on a personal experience. The imagery intends to help students write creatively with description and show detail. The use of prepositions forces students to think consciously about the place they are describing, adding further detail in the writing.



9. Identify all the verbs in the provided poem and determine the tense. Rewrite the poem in a different tense than the original by modifying the verb tense.
- Extension to this would be to change the verbs completely to change the entire meaning of the poem
  - The poem chosen for this exercise should use just one tense
  - Context Constraint: 15 minutes

*Original*

*Exemplar:*

The Road not Taken – Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference

Two roads **diverge** in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I **cannot** travel both  
And be one traveler, long I **stand**  
And **look** down one as far as I **can**  
To where it **bends** in the undergrowth;

Then **take** the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because **it's** grassy and **wants** wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
**May be worn** really about the same,

And both **this** morning equally lay  
In leaves no step **has trod** black.  
Oh, **I'll keep** the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
**I doubt** if **I will** ever come back.

I **am** telling this with a sigh  
**For** ages and ages hence:  
Two roads **diverge** in a wood, and I—  
**I'll take** the one less traveled by,  
And **it will make** all the difference.

*Intended Outcome:* This exercise allows students to focus on verbs and verb tense. By changing the verb tense, students may notice how the tone and/or the meaning of the poem is also different. In altering the verb tense, some changes to pronouns are also required.

10. Write a response to the provided poem from the person it is being written about.  
Respond in a way that disagrees with the original poem.
- Requires a poem being written about or to someone
  - Context Constraint: 25 minutes

*Original:*

Sonnet 18 – William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed.  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

*Exemplar:*

Compare me not to a summer's day  
But Fall, when the winds rage  
Chills that fracture the heart,  
Leaves litter the ground  
Roses stripped of their petals  
Exposed to the same cold  
That makes you bitter.  
But  
When a stillness commands the air  
And the sun cocoons your skin  
When the trees are no longer bare  
And the roses dress in red  
A celebration of solstice  
Compare me not to a summer's day  
But the seasons that change.

*Intended Outcome:* This exercise allows students to critically analyze the literature. Students will exercise their ability to respond to a poem and take on different perspectives.