

Writing prompt 1

Shakespearian Insults:

- In groups of two, from a list of Elizabethan vocabulary, develop a conversation/argument between two characters in popular culture today.
- In parentheses, translate your Shakespearian insults into modern day dialogue.
- Present these at the end of class *ad dramatis* (in dramatic form).
- Grade 8 & 9

Constraints:

- 40 minutes
- Working in partners
- Must include background context
- Dialogue only

Intended outcome: To introduce Shakespeare, drama and Elizabethan dialogue to the class in a light-hearted setting. Students will be able to pair together, brainstorm and create a short scene where characters of their choice can be taken out of modern context and placed into the Elizabethan era to fight in a battle of wits. This captures the importance of wit in Shakespeare's characters, allows students to play around and adjust to Elizabethan dialogue, and has them making connections with popular culture and characterizing modern, iconic forms of media.

Exemplar:

Spongebob: A pox upon thee, thou perilous sea-star for crippling my fair pet, my love, my snail. By my trowth, thy weight measures against that of a thousand hackled pork hocks, whilst thy brain is but the size of a single snout. (You sat on my snail, you fat, dumb starfish.)

Patrick: May thy snail be set upon by ravens, his eyes ripped asunder and set ablaze in the depths of a crucible, only to be drawn and quartered by daylights end. (I hope your pet snail dies a horrible death.)

Spongebob: Fie! Thou truly art but a clouted, boil-brained cox-comb! Thine eyes see naught but pig-farkers and hogwash! Thou placed thy moldered, putrid rump on my sweet pet and thy soulless, decaying crux t'weren't vexed in the least to fixeth his now shattered shell. (You really are dumb! You didn't look where you were sitting, crushed my snail's shell and you didn't even care to help fix him.)

Patrick: Thou art simply a snail-farker – thy carest more for wretched beast than for star-shaped creatures! May thy Krusty Krab be full of draught, waste and despair as thou Jellyfish Fields be wrought with death and decay. And foremost, thy snail be sat upon by a thousand, moldered, putrid rumps for all eternity. (You care more for your pets than you care for your friends. I hope your restaurant loses its business, your jellyfish die and most of all for your snail to be crushed constantly, forever.)

Writing Prompt 2

The Tyger, by William Blake – The “_____”, by you

- Choose any animal and write a poem in the style of William Blake’s “The Tyger”
- Grade 8-10

Constraints:

- 5-6 Stanzas
- 30-40 minutes
- Must have rhythm and meter
- Include and highlight 5 poetic devices such as:
 - o Personification
 - o Imagery
 - o Pathetic fallacy
 - o Alliteration
 - o Repetition
 - More is always welcome!

Extension:

Write second poem with an animal that *contrasts* your animal in some way. (Prove its contrast through the poem.) OR: Read poem out loud to class and emphasize the down-beats of the poem

You may use online rhyming dictionaries

Intended Outcome:

Students will be challenged with writing poetry to mimic a certain descriptive style while being aware of the rhythm and flow of a poem. Rhyming is not a crucial factor, the focus is mainly on developing imagery in poetry, allowing students that are apprehensive about poetry to write more freely.

Exemplar:

Fox, fox, slinking away,
Down the streets, through night and day.
What predator or enemy
Could tame thy sneaky legacy?

On which towering, rotting garbage can,
Did thy stand upon and challenge man?
On what canvas did thy paint upon,

With thy bushy tail, did taint spawn?

And what baring teeth, and sharpened claws!

Could scrape the beating of these paws?

And then make blood of rodent small

Finally stop – no longer fall?

And what cackle and what howl

Could steal my feathery fowl?

And rob thy chickens of their eggs

Ignoring rooster calls that beg?

Fox, fox, slinking away,

Down the streets, through night and day.

What predator or enemy

Could tame thy sneaky legacy?

Writing Prompt 3

Found Poem

- Create a poem using 3 or more different types of media/literature forms that you pick from
- Examples: song lyrics, newspaper articles, novels, emails, tweets, magazines, movies etc.
- Grade 8-12

Constraints:

- 4-6 stanzas
- Must include a context (make sure that it makes sense!)
- Categorize as best you can, the type of media used
- 25 minutes

Intended outcome:

To show students that literature, poetry and other forms of art/media are not all based on paper. They are able to take on different forms that may include aural, digital, factual, sculptural, etc. They are able to work with modern media which can be cultural and personal. This inspires students and motivates their interest in the subject of poetry while demonstrating that poetry is timeless.

Exemplar:

I'm going back to 505

If it's a seven-hour flight or a 45 minute drive

You have distracted from my creative process

You may be talented but you're not Kanye West

Oh you saint,

America don't love you.

Fame! You'll be as famous as can be.

With the whole wide world watching you win on TV.

Name one hero who was happy.

Tut, tut – fame clearly isn't everything.

Oh you saint,
America don't love you.

Forms of media used:

Song lyrics: Arctic Monkeys – 505, Vampire Weekend – Ya Hey

Twitter: Tweets by Kanye West

Children's literature: Oh, the Places You'll Go! – Dr. Seuss

Youth literature: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone – J.K. Rowling

Popular literature: The Song of Achilles – Madeline Miller

Writing Prompt 4

Writing a Short, Short Story

- Students will write a short story that is 1 to 3 pages maximum (300-600 words)
- Must include a main character and a significant event or conclusion (see example below)
- Grade 11 & 12

Constraints:

- Have the actions of the character hint at their backstory
- Written as an excerpt from an untold backstory – think: diving into a section of a story. There is no intro that explains the character, only context!
- 60 minutes: Come to class prepared with writing ideas
- Include 1 – 2 Quadrasyllabic/pentasyllabic intensifiers
- Include a symbol
- Include prepositional temporal phrase

Intended outcome:

Students will learn how to capture and identify critical moments in a short story plot. They will also learn that some things are able to be left unsaid as long as the context has enough power to fill in the blanks. Adding small hints and descriptive words into the short, short story allow for the reader to pick out key characteristics of the protagonist, as well as focus less on plot and more on crucial elements that make the story exciting, interesting and compelling to read.

Exemplar:

Almost as if absorbing the mannequin’s own mystic glow, Shaye began to feel the ability of motionless consume her. It started from the tips of her fingers and gradually crept its way up her raised arms, stealing its way onto her face. Her frozen smile beamed, indulging in the feeling of the symmetry of her body. Shaye loved it. She basked in the glory of this peaceful stillness.

As the sun sunk below the horizon line, casting a deep red flare throughout the room, Shaye snapped out of her euphoric high and realized that the department store was still deserted. Her mother was nowhere to be found. She tried to step off of the platform but realized that she couldn’t feel her legs at all. She tried to move her arms but they wouldn’t budge from their position. She panicked and realized that she could only stare straight ahead, continuously smiling a beautiful and vibrant smile. Footsteps echoed, gradually approaching her and she felt relief wash over her. Shaye’s mother stood before her, beaming. She was looking up at Shaye with a joyous rapture that ignited a flare of love in her eyes. An expression that Shaye hadn’t seen in years.

“You look perfect, Shaye.” Her mother breathed.

Shaye felt an incredible wave of joy overwhelm her, as if a final wave of success had come washing over her. She truly was a breathtaking thing, standing on the platform in model stillness, a piece of art to be gazed upon in adoration and wonder. Finally, the numbness that had held her limbs and soothed the pain in her ankle had reached into the depths of her heart and she became completely static. As her mother walked away, smiling with a sigh of acceptance, Shaye continued to stand poised and motionless, her vision beginning to dim as the horizon’s shades of red faded into grey hues of dusk and midnight fell upon the department store windows.

Writing Prompt 5

555 Brainstorm Write:

- The teacher will have 5 teams and 5 topics and 5 objects written on pieces of paper
- Students will close their eyes and pick from a box which topic to brainstorm/wordstorm on and the 1 object that must be included in the story – all papers are face down until each group has picked
- Once students have picked their piece of paper, they may flip it over to reveal the topic
- They have 5 minutes to write down as many words as they can that relate to that topic in their groups, on a large sheet of paper
- Teacher will then reveal to them what they will do with this topic and object – speed write
- Grade 10-12

Constraints:

- Include at least 5 items on the CFLAT list of language features
- 10 minutes to write, using as much of the words that were brainstormed together as a group in your work
- 5 subjects: Dancing, war, gaming, addiction, sports
- 5 objects: dog, shoes, weapon, cash, controller

Intended Outcomes:

Students will practice speedwriting and getting ideas down quickly. A large map of vocabulary and issues relating to themes will demonstrate the importance of brainstorming before writing. Students will also be able to collaborate in groups to brainstorm ideas as suggestions and prompts will be shared in this experience, showing that peers are able to help them in their writing.

Exemplar:

(Brainstorm on “war” with the object “dog”)

Gun shooting bomb explosion death decay helmets fighting winning losing hurting tanks
Germany fighter jets sacrifice messenger code pain remembering trenches Canada training team
soldier blood tired attack attrition barking loyal friendship

Marley leaped over the trenches, dashing straight towards the oncoming explosions. He was heading for the limp figure. Alongside a flurry of bombs, he had to watch for incoming bullets. He forgets though, in the critical moment of ducking under a whirling bullet, that there are land mines to be wary of. All of a sudden – an intruder charging towards him, sets the dreaded mine off and sends the both of them flying, sky high – he’s broken a leg as he lands, yelping in pain. No sign of the intruder, but he gets up and plows through, ignoring the wails of despair and the thundering tanks making their way towards his side of land. As his unit calls out, the chorus of sounds all crescendo around him chaotically, persuading him to take cover for the

next approaching airstrike. He barks back as if to confirm that he is aware of what he is getting himself into. But he had to keep on moving for Derek. His best friend was on No Man's Land and he had to save him – finally, weaving past spikes and limping gingerly on his three remaining legs, he pants heavily as he approaches Derek. Or what was left of him. It was too late.

Writing Prompt 6

“Illustration of a Portrait”

- Come to class with a picture/selfie of a person that you do not know personally.
NOTE: nobody from this school. In other words: Instagram famous profiles, celebrities, the weatherman, etc.
- Write a descriptive narrative about a moment in this person’s life
- Grade 10 to 12

Constraints:

- Write in one of the following styles...
 - o As if you were observing them through God’s eyes (3rd person omniscient)
 - o As if you have encountered them for the first time (2nd person, as you)
 - o As if you were their friend spending time with them (3rd person limited)
 - o As if you were seeing through their eyes (1st person, as them)
- 500 words, marked for imagery and description
- 45 minutes

Intended Outcome:

Students will improve on their description of characters based on their appearance and how it reflects their personality. Detailed description in narrative writing is also emphasized as it creates a strong sense of atmosphere and mood. Students have the freedom to choose who to write about and what perspective, while gaining inspiration from the small amount of information that their intended person has provided them through their physical appearance. They are able to search different forms of media for a source of inspiration to write from.

Exemplar:

You stumble into the dimly lit room at an ungodly hour, unaware of the subdued voices surrounding you and instead focusing on the faint glow of red that washed over the sea of tired, nameless characters, all slumped in their seats. The smell of smoke and alcohol strike your nose, enticing you forward – or rather, pulling your leash. Your head was a broken carousel, spinning faster than you could bear. A flat whiskey was probably the last thing that you needed at the moment. You only meandered into the bar to stall from the biting cold of the lonely December that was waiting to latch its teeth into your trembling arms. You stumble once more – clumsier than your usual, drunk self – and grab onto the nearest chair. The chair that seated a girl. She chuckled at you, her eyes turned slits as if to mock you for your poor choices. Her jet black locks cascaded down her face like a veil and her Cupid’s bow lips turned upwards in a smirk. If she had a name, it probably would have been like, “Mystery”... or something. You couldn’t think straight at the moment, so screw that train of thought. As you peered into her hard, obsidian eyes, you just knew that she could make you feel better. Without a word, she dropped a wad of cash onto the counter, stood from her chair and grabbed her black, leather jacket, gesturing for you to join her out in the cold, empty street. As if in a trance, you stalk after her, your mind suddenly clearing as if the bar’s atmosphere had been the culprit behind smothering your thoughts.

Outside, the winter air greeted you like a barbed wall of ice. You bare your teeth and trudge on, looking wildly around for the girl. Up ahead, she's swinging solo under a dying lamp post. You run after her – you can't lose her like the last one. Her silhouette bounces off moon beams, she was the only source of light. You catch up to her finally and she lurches around to grab your arm. She's stronger than her slim figure appears, and she starts to spin you around. You're thrown off guard but it's three in the morning and weirder things have happened. Both of you stop at the same time and she blinks with those hardened eyes. She takes off her jacket and in the glow of the lamp post from behind, you can see her skin – covered head to toe in ink carvings. Daggers, lyrics, skulls. She's a book that you hadn't yet had the chance to read and tonight you were finally able to turn the covers. She let out obscenities about how the world had abandoned you both, her voice like a vicious bell, ringing angrily and mockingly, echoing into the alley overhead. Then, she dropped onto the snow, her pale skin fusing with the blank canvas of the ground. "Tonight, it's just you and me." You know that she is crazy now, and you realize that you are too. You take off your jacket and drop onto the frozen ground and let December erase your thoughts, together with a stranger.

Writing Prompt 7

Nature Walk Assignment

- Students will go on a nature walk and stop at certain checkpoints to observe their surroundings, writing down key senses of what they see, hear, smell, touch and even taste
- Inside, students will write a poem that includes 4 of the 5 senses
- Grade 8-9

Constraints:

- 4 to 5 stanzas, one stanza for each sense
- May be free verse, include rhyme, rhythm, etc. – up to the student
- Include at least 5 poetic devices
- Include an illustration of moment on the Nature Walk that stood out to them

Intended Outcome:

Students will be shown that inspiration for poetry and literature comes from any source that they choose and that imagery is a powerful tool in describing a setting. They will also be able to visualize what they have written through illustration. When manipulated properly, they can make a setting appear happy and peaceful, or dark and dangerous. Students are introduced to poetry in an interactive setting.

Exemplar:

SIGHT

The dappled sunlight

Danced through the leaves

Softly grazing the gnarled oak trunks

With roots that have been grasping the floor for decades

SOUND

Crows caw crudely overhead

Creating a symphony of peril

Their voices echo off

Into the distance

TOUCH

My hands run

Over soft berries

As I squeeze these fruits
Their juices trickle down my finger

TASTE

I open my mouth and breathe
The forest air inside of me
It is sweet and full of vigour
Fresh and clean

Writing Prompt 8

Fairy Tale Rewrite:

- Students will write a story in the point of view of the antagonist of a fairy tale
- Manipulate the narrative so that the antagonist seems like the “good guy”
- Include irony, satire and humour in your narrative
- Take-home assignment
- Grades 11-12

Constraints:

- Include a sense of satire/sarcasm in the negative expression
- 500 – 700 words
- “Flip” the traditional characters’ personalities
- Include dialogue
- Do not use the word “said”

Intended outcome:

Students will be able to choose a fairy tale that they are familiar with and take on the unspoken narrative, thus creating their own character through the guise of an antagonist. Students will learn how to manipulate a storyline and learn how to create a satirical take on a traditional work.

Exemplar:

The wolf sulked through the trees, angry that the wretched woman at the market had taken the last of the bread for the day. That was the third time in a row and he sick and tired of it. That lazy woman, sending her small daughter into the woods to feed a lazy grandmother. The poor girl – what if she came across someone dangerous – or worse, *something* dangerous?! Perhaps if he were to find her along the path and accompany her on this trip, she would reward him with some bread. His stomach growled as he heard the echoing of a whistle ring through the forest. There she was, Little Red Riddle-Me-This or something. That tiny girl would surely be attacked at this rate, making so much noise in such a dangerous wood, oh he just had to watch over her! And her basket. But maybe he wouldn’t have to – who knows? She could be a clever child.

He emerged from the bushes as she approached and stopped her, asking her a question to test her intelligence: “Where are you going little one?”

She crossed her arms and replied back, airily: “To grandmother’s house up on the tallest hill!”

Okay, so she wasn’t a clever child.

Didn’t her mother ever teach her never to talk to a stranger, let alone tell said stranger where you’re headed? Yes, he definitely had to watch over her. He said his farewell and ran on ahead to watch for any threats out in the forest. A few minutes later, his ears perked up as he heard the swing of an axe in the distance – a crazy man was charging through the growth, his eyes wild with rage! The wolf had to steer him away from the unsuspecting girl! He howled to catch the axe-man’s attention and lead him away from the main path, into a densely wooded area. He

climbed a tree to escape the axe-man's clutches and bounded away, back towards the main path to find the little girl.

He had an idea of warning the grandmother as well, in case the axe-man were to return. The wolf sprinted as fast as he could to the top of the hill and knocked on the small cottage door. It creaked open. On the floor was grandmother – all 12 pieces of her.

My god, thought the wolf. *If poor Little Red Rhodesian Ridgeback or something sees this, she might never sleep again!* The wolf's stomach grumbled at this point as he had not eaten in three days. There was only one solution: time to clean up grandmother.

After some hard, honest work, and a few chipped teeth – grandmother's bones sure were brittle, he had a lisp afterwards – he settled into grandmother's bed and took a well-deserved nap. Only a few minutes later however, there was a knock at the door – it was Little Red Hot Chili Pepper or something. *Oh no,* the wolf thought, *what will she say when she realizes her grandmother isn't here?*

Wait a minute, she's a dumb child.

He put on grandma's nightgown and hid under the covers – maybe this way, she would simply drop off the basket of bread and be on her merrily way, never to be scarred, and the wolf would have earned a fair reward!

Little Red Robinhood or something waltzed right into the small cottage and ran over to grandmother's bed.

“My, what big ears you have grandmother!”

Oh, so it's going to be like this huh... The wolf rolled his eyes and sighed: “The better to hear you with, -y dear!” His lisp was stronger than he thought.

“My, what big eyes you have grandma!”

She is really dumb, what the heck. Chuckling, he replied, “The better to *thee* you with, -y dear!”

“My, what big and broken teeth you have grandma!”

Okay, so maybe she deserves to know what really happened. “The better to meet you with, my dear! I'm actually the wolf and your grandma has sadly been murdered by a crazy axe-man...”

Except he couldn't form the letter 'm' and it turned out more like "The better to *-eet* you with, my dear!" and he couldn't even finish his sentence before she slammed him with her bucket of bread – mind you, it didn't hurt much, she was a weak little thing. But before he could stand up, the door burst open again (*doesn't anyone knock anymore?*) and the crazy axe-man stumbled in, swinging his axe like a tornado! He slipped over some leftover blood and the axe flew and lodged itself square between the wolf's eyes.

And that is the true end of the wolf.

Writing Prompt 9

Ode to Someone's Drawing:

- Students draw the first object that comes to their mind (5 minutes)
- They will anonymously hand in the drawing to the teacher who will then shuffle the drawings and hand them out to different students
- The students will then write a poem about the drawing they have received
- Grades 9-12

Constraints:

- The students will write a poem in the form of a Shakespearian sonnet relating to what they interpret the drawing to be
- 30 minutes

Intended Outcomes:

ICEBREAKER: Students will gain more confidence in illustrations which will benefit their sense of personal works of art and literature. The Shakespearian sonnet form will be introduced to them and they will focus mainly on the syllables and rhyme scheme of the poem. They will also learn that all peoples' works are different and some may be better than others in different forms but the critique that students may fear from their work being publicly displayed will diminish with encouragement and support from a healthy classroom environment. The students will also be able to communicate with each other afterwards and build a stronger classroom community.

Exemplar: [Drawing of a Dog]

This dog, its sense of smell is strong and clear.

He barks and then his tail wags back and forth.

He runs around and cuddles close so dear,

A pointer dog he stops, his nose turns north.

The mailman's here he rides on up the street!

He honks his horn and greets this dog hello.

The dog, it's ready to accept a treat,

He stands upon his hind legs and bellows.

He catches treat, it's balanced on his nose.

His sharp, sharp teeth they clutch onto the prize.

He chomps! The treat makes mailman the best bro.

This dog, though kind, you just can't tell from size.

He is a good boy, waiting patiently,

He'll say hello for treats for all to see!

Writing Prompt 10

Register UP

- Students will choose a song and transpose the register up to sound more sophisticated and formal.
- The higher the register, the higher the mark!
- Grades 9 – 12

Constraints:

- 10 – 15 lines
- 20 minutes

Intended outcome:

Students are able to explore larger and more formal pieces of vocabulary in an interactive and personal way. Giving them their own choice of what to work with allows for students to become more engaged in the writing activity.

Exemplar: [Nicki Minaj – Anaconda]

[CHORUS]

My reptilian serpent does not,

My reptilian serpent does not,

My reptilian serpent does not desire your company if you do not possess rising, baked yeast,
dearest one.

[1st Stanza]

Joyous male-specified item, titled Troy, whom resided in the state of Detroit

Distributed miscellaneous paraphernalia, Troy was acquiring strong economic gain

Troy was in hostile opposition with societal laws. However, Troy took up residence in a
grandiose palace

Purchased lavish model automobiles, Troy was providing me with extravagant choices in fashion

This is quite an amazing, amazing, amazing experiential episode in my life

I have a concealed firearm hidden in my belongings, gaudy female, I arrive in the fashion of
appearing predisposed to terminate

Which gaudy female desires to begin this procession? I have already initiated quite a time past.

I am under the influence and am not intellectually able to ascertain what Troy is divulging
towards me.

Troy is able to decipher that I consume a healthy amount of sustenance and nutrition.

