

Prompt 1: create a cubic poem (a poem with 3 stanzas made up of 3 lines with 3 words) that contains only words that are able to function as both a verb or a noun.

Formal Constraints: The poem must consist of 3 stanzas of three line. Each line must be three words long. You may add “s”, “ed”, or “ing” to the end of any word.

Content Constraint: each word in the poem must be able to function as both a noun and a verb.

Intended outcomes: Students will expand their vocabularies by learning that certain words have multiple meanings and uses. In this prompt, students will play with language and poetry to remove their fear of “bad poetry” and make students realize that poetry isn’t scary or stuffy, but is actually fun. Students will learn about form constraints and will learn to work within those constraints to make poetry.

Buffalo Buffalo Buffalo

Grouse ruins stuffing

Writing essay swill

Flinching crew man

Darts pop balloons

Squires top knights

Measuring squash seeds

Present time wrinkles

Ferrets crease suits

Spring swelter kills

2. Choose a text (formal communications from UBC - letter of acceptance). Register shift that letter down

Prompt : Choose a text (from your own life--such as an email or a text, literature--such as a poem or a passage from a novel, or the media--such as a paragraph from a newspaper article or the lyrics to a poem) and shift the register either up or down. That means, change the tone and the language of the text to affect either a casual or an academic register.

Formal Constraints: Must change the language of the text to reflect the chosen register (academic or casual)

Contextual Constraints: 15 mins

Intended outcomes: Students learn the differences between different tones/register, and the contexts in which they are appropriate. Students will learn to distinguish between words and phrases that are appropriate for different instances and subjects.

Materials: A text from the students' lives (email, text message, etc), media, or literature

Extension Activity: Shift your same text to another register (e.g. if you shifted down, shift up)

Suh Rusko,

CONGRATS GURL! You totally got into UBC, FR. #yeet #lit #PMHT. This * U R going 2 learn how 2 teacher in the High School English BEd ☐☐ in Vancity.

Here's your student#. You need it 2 sign up 4 courses. If you need 2 get back at us, you also need that #. You can only go here 2016/7 so don't go trying to go here next year. Zeen?

You gotta let us know yes or nah with a form (PFA). Get it back to us by 2 weeks from now strict, no later or you can't go here. Bible.

Lates,

Claudia Buffone

Prompt 3: Rewrite the poem “My Papa’s Waltz” by Theodore Roethke from the perspective of the father. Use the same structure and scenario of the original poem

Formal Constraints: Must follow the formatting of the original poem - 4 stanzas of 4 lines

Intended outcomes: students will learn to create literature from a specific perspective.

Students will need to select words that represent a specific perspective. Students will learn that POV is inherently tied to meaning.

Materials: Class set of “My Papa’s Waltz”

My Waltz

Stumble... lurch

Shit

I should have drunk less

.... I should have drunk more

Close one eye, it always helps

Fuck! ... Who put the pans there

My fucking wife is glaring

My fucking kid won't let go

I grab him

His bloody face in my bloody hand

My bloody hand

His bloody face

Bed

Jesus I need to go to bed

My whole bloody life

... lurch stumble

Prompt 4: Write a paragraph or story completely in alliteration. Choose one letter and write a piece that uses only (or as much as possible) words that begin with that letter. Students will read their pieces to the class

Formal Constraints: You may use “and”, “it”, “to”, “that”, or other small words, but they should be used sparingly.

Intended outcomes: Students will learn to identify and use alliteration. Students will expand their vocabulary by finding synonyms for common words that begin with a particular letter. Students will also learn to appreciate the powerful effect of alliteration on how polished it sounds when read aloud.

Materials: Thesauruses

Bumptious Beatrice blathered boundlessly, broadcasting brash beliefs. Beside Beatrice, Bernard barely bit back bile.

“Ban base books! Ban bawdy books! Bring back Bibles!” Beatrice bleated.

“Ban brainwashed Baptiste bumpkins,” Bernard brooded.

Beatrice, backbone bent backward, basked in ballyhoo. Bulbs blazed brightly, bathing Beatrice in brilliance.

“Blast!” Bernard bemoaned. “Better believe Beatrice’s believers beat Bernard’s bookish backers.”

Prompt 5: Write instructions for an everyday activity/movement. The teacher will perform the actions for the class

Content Constraints: must be something appropriate that can be performed in class. The teacher will act out the instructions afterward to see if they work.

Formal Constraints: Must be written as a “how-to” manual for a simple movement or activity

Contextual Constraints: 5 mins. Cannot test out their instructions on classmates before handing them in.

Intended outcomes: Students will learn to be precise with their language, and direct in their writing. This will also show students that writing that makes sense to the writer might not make sense to a reader.

1. Lie face down on the ground with palms flat on the floor under your shoulder and toes curled under and on the floor.
2. Keeping stomach tight to prevent the torso and hips from bending, press palms into the floor and straighten arms.
3. Keeping body straight, bend elbows and lower body back to starting position

Prompt 6: Write a six word story

Formal Constraints: Must tell a story in only six words. It is important to remember that a specific story must be told, not just a generic description of something.

Contextual Constraints: 5 mins in class

Intended outcomes: Students will learn to be succinct with their language, and that when language is succinct, each word has incredible power. Students will explore ways to insinuate past or future action rather than directly expressing it.

Asleep over a textbook, alarm blaring.

Prompt 7: Write a story in the Pilish style

Formal Constraints: The length of each consecutive word is representative of a digit in the number π .

3.141592653589793238462643383279502884197169399375105820974944592307816
406286

Contextual Constraints: 15 mins in class

Intended outcomes: Familiarize students with rigid constraints to prepare them for poetic forms (such as sonnets) which demand adherence to strict rules. Students will also expand their vocabularies by trying to find words that meet the digit requirements.

Materials: A list of 8 and 9 letter words that students may use if they wish. Students may use dictionaries and thesauruses as well.

Extension Activity: Write a Pi-ku, a piece in which the number of syllables of each consecutive word is representative of a digit of π

3.141592653589793238

See? A taxi, a black limousine if honest, broke its muffler, seatbelts, console extension, and its bar apparati.

Prompt 8: Write at least 5 euphonic and 5 uneuphonic phrases. Students will read their lists to the class

Formal Constraints: Do not focus on what a word *means*, focus on how a word *sounds*

Contextual Constraints: 10 mins in class

Intended outcomes: Students focus on how sound affects the meaning of words. It also helps students to blend and segment sounds. Students will read their lists aloud so the class can learn the effect of both beautiful and ugly sounding words.

Extension Activity: create a poem or story with your words. Think about what subject matters suit the euphonic or uneuphonic sounds

Crystalline structure

Lush bath bomb

Fractious filth

Feral punch

Platinum swizzle

Cinnamon stick

Flag pole

Sticky plastic

Blister clump

Slit ooze

Yeasty squat

Creature clutch

Prompt 9: You have just survived day one of the zombie apocalypse. Tell me what you did.

Formal Constraints: can not use the verb “to be”

Contextual Constraints: 15 mins in class

Content Constraints: students must write about how they would react to their world being overrun with zombies.

Intended outcomes: Students learn to strengthen their writing by omitting weak verbs. Helps students to eliminate passive voice in their writing.

First thing I did, I freaked the hell out. I mean, how could you not?! I absolutely lost my shit. I think the whole world did. Imagine zombies stagger-running around, fires raging in highly populated areas, and an entire race with an everyman for himself attitude. Scary stuff. The news jolted me awake this morning “A virus causing zombiism has taken over Vancouver. We have received news from networks around the world that authorities have located zombies in every major city.” Not a great way to start your day. I vaulted out of bed, and grabbed my phone to check if the CBC just played a morbid prank on everyone. No internet. No reception. I looked out my window and saw pandemonium. Corpses everywhere littering the streets with their entrails, blood spattered the sidewalks. I hear my neighbour screeching, and I looked over and saw her going apeshit on a zombie with a golf club. Sadly for neighbour Jane, she focused too hard on venting her terror on one zombie and missed the second one sneaking up on her. Holy shit, Jane just got eaten by a freaking zombie! Scarred for life. For real. And here began my freaking the hell out. It only lasted for a few terrified moments. After my panic attack, I rushed downstairs to grab my earthquake kit. Thank god I have always kept one in the house. You can only maintain cheerful detachment for so long when your teachers keep using extreme scare tactics about “the big one”. After watching “28 Days Later” I added a baseball bat just in case the zombie apocalypse became a thing. How prophetic am I, because check me out, smack dab in the middle of the zombie apocalypse. At this point, I kind of froze. Should I drive to my parents’ house? Would I be safe outside? Then I heard a CRASH from my kitchen and a particularly gross looking zombie shuffled in. All coherent thought gone and acting purely on instinct, I rushed the thing and walloped it on the skull. One disgustingly wet thump noise later and I had neutralized the threat. Then I threw up. Give me a break. You would have to. With the back of my house totally exposed, I needed to get somewhere more secure. OK rents, here I come! I grabbed my keys, steeled myself for some serious trauma, and charged outside. One battered zombie later and I found myself driving down the chaotic streets to my parents’ place.

Prompt 10: Take the poem “How many times have these low feet staggered” and format it. Students will share their formatted poems with the class by writing them out on large sheets of paper.

Formal Constraints: Can add line breaks, punctuation, and capital letters. Cannot add or change words

Contextual Constraints: 10 mins in class, no access to the original published poem

Intended outcomes: Students will learn the importance of formatting, and how it can change the meaning of a work. Students will see the many different ways that one poem can be formatted, and how that changes how the reader interprets it.

Materials: a class set of unformatted copies of “How many times have these low feet staggered”. Large sheets of paper and felt pens.

How many times these low feet staggered?

only the soldered mouth can tell

Try -

can you stir the awful rivet?

Try -

can you lift the hasps of steel?

stroke the cool forehead hot?

so often.

lift if you care the listless hair,

handle the adamantine fingers.

never a thimble more shall wear.

Buzz -----

the dull flies on the chamber window

brave shines the sun through the freckled pane,

fearless the cobweb swings from the ceiling.

Indolent housewife in daisies lain.