

Caitlin Funk
 Dr. Kendrick James
 LLED 367
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Writing Prompts

Prompt: Write about your trip home

Content constraint: use mostly simile or metaphor. Place a straight line under a simile and highlight a metaphor

Extension: use alliteration as much as you can

Formal constraint: prose

Context constraint: 10 minutes

Grade: 9, 10, 11, 12

Intended Outcome: to be able to identify the difference between a simile and a metaphor.

Connection to language acquisition: practising the non-literal uses of language. Reminds an ELL student that metaphors and similes are not literal, and helps them to identify them.

Materials needed: paper and writing utensil. Definition and examples of simile and metaphor to write on the board. Extra highlighters.

Exemplar:

Since we've entered fall, each evening I return home in a curtain of night. I walk around blind as a black bat, since it's so dark. I take the bus because biking bewilders me. Some people say biking is as easy as shooting fish in a barrel. I disagree. With a cold stare I glare at the cyclists, keen to return to their houses. I've always wanted to be a proficient cyclist so I could say that I was as strong as an ox. Alas, I transit towards my tight as a tiger tortoise, Beyoncé; the apple of my eye.

Prompt: Write an ode to your favourite junk food

Content constraint: Keep the emotion of an ode

Extension: use the ABABCDECDE rhyme scheme

Formal constraint: poem

Context constraint: 15 minutes

Grade: 11/12

Intended Outcome: utilize emotive and passionate language

Connection to language acquisition: Recognizing which words are appropriate for certain contexts due to denotations and/or connotations

Materials needed: paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar:

O my dear Charleston Chew,
Your dark centre intrigues me
The soft nougat stays with me for hours
You are enveloped with chocolate so malty
Which melts upon my touch
Though you stain my shirt
And rot my teeth,
Mine forever you will be

Prompt: Write a cubic poem of 3 words per line, 3 lines per stanza, 3 stanzas in the poem

Content constraint: Use only words that are verb-nouns

Extension: can “ed” or “s” the words to create a sense of time

Formal constraint: poem

Context constraint: 10 minutes

Grade: 9-12

Intended Outcome: For the students to recognize what a verb-noun word is

Connection to language acquisition: learning a new way to use a word you may have known for a while.

Materials needed: paper and writing utensil. Examples of a verb-noun to write on the board

Exemplar:

“The Voter”

Still triggers rats
Suit tabled lead,
Record chair funk

Changed plans shared
Make shit vote
Work smell levels

Tank tip tutors
Sign kids cut

Steak heart-drive

Prompt: Use the 3 words from what3words.com of a location that is familiar to you (ie: your house, favourite cafe, school etc) to describe that place.

Content constraint: using the 3 specific words.

Extension: while using the 3 words, also use antonyms or synonyms of those words.

Formal constraint: prose

Context constraint: 15 minutes

Grade: 9-12

Intended Outcome: To play with words and explore the vocabulary we know

Connection to language acquisition: learning new words and connecting them to words we already know

Materials needed: everyone will need access to a device to use What3words.com.

Paper and writing utensil

Exemplar:

49th Parallel on Yew Street has the most fantastic atmosphere - it truly **calms** my soul. In order to effectively communicate what you would like to receive from them, you should know all the proper **terminology**. For example, a Bismark is quite different from a Bostock. One is a filled donut while the other is similar to baked french toast. While I wish I could go there everyday, my bank **affords** me not this pleasure.

Prompt: Write a grocery list (2 minutes). Now, write about at least one of them exploding (10 minutes)

Content constraint: Must be in the present.

Extension: Include one adjective in each sentence. Cannot repeat adjectives.

Formal constraint: list, then prose.

Context constraint: 12 minutes

Grade: 9-10

Intended Outcome: Have the students explore how something mundane like a grocery list can be exciting

Connection to language acquisition: explore what types of aggressive language adequately portrays the scene. Also explores sensory language

Materials needed: paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar:

List:

Bananas

Tuna

Mayo

Sourdough loaf

Chia seeds

Chocolate ice cream

Honey

Oats

Story:

As I walk to my car, I can feel my bag getting slightly cold in my arms. I know that there's some ice cream in the bag, so I assume the cold is simply seeping through the brown bag onto my arm. I open the truck and put down my heavy groceries to see my dog darting back and forth from the back seat to the trunk. As I get into the car, my dog starts barking wildly. He's missed me, clearly. I let him out to pee, when I hear a BANG! I quickly glance all around me - no one has ducked, so it probably isn't a gun. Hold on... everyone is looking at me. No. Not at me. At my car. There is brown and tannish-yellow gunk all over my back windows. "WHAT THE...?!" I loudly exclaim. A man and his daughter come over to see if I need help. "What happened here?" the girl inspects. "Shauna, don't be nosy," quietly chides her father. I don't answer. I'm still stunned. I look over at my dog, Shenanigans, and he looks a bit guilty. I also notice he has a bit of red metal stuck on his collar. As the man and his daughter watch me, I bend down slowly to examine the metal. I can hear the bystanders talking to me, but I don't register their wah-wah-wah words. Of course he did, again. Shenanigans constantly lives up to his name. The nosy daughter starts to open the gunk-filled trunk before I can finish saying "Stop." WOOSH HHH it all flows out. Ice cream and bananas, the two things on the left-side of the bag, fall down like icicles. White foam is flooding the back of my car. "Shenanigans, when are you going to stop playing with my fire extinguisher?"

Prompt: Write your opening scene as a guest character on your favourite TV show

Content constraint: Like a play, mostly dialogue with some staging and directions

Extension: incorporate 3+ gerund-nouns

Formal constraint: prose with heavy dialogue

Context constraint: 20 minutes

Grade: 11-12

Intended Outcome: The students practise using dialogue in their writing

Connection to language acquisition: by having it be a TV show they know, they will be comfortable, and potentially excited, to pretend they are interacting with characters from their favourite TV show. They will also have to write in the given style.

Furthermore, the students will be writing language that they may never have written before (ie: Game of Throne's formal tone and use of "thou")

Materials needed: paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar:

Lorelai: How do I not know Caitlin? I thought I knew everything about your life! Apparently not. There's a person I don't know in your wedding party. And I thought we were so close

Rory: Mom, of course we are! You've heard me talk about Caitlin. I just usually call her Kiki. She doesn't like nicknames, but once I heard her brother use it, I had to also!

Lorelai: Don't SCARE me like that, Rory. I need to know everything. And since I'm not Carnac the Magnificent [places wedding party list of names to her head] I had no clue who she was

Rory: Well, she'll be here in just a few minutes. Jess called from the airport with her in the car over an hour ago.

Lorelai: Good. I'll get some snacks ready. [She gets out pop tarts, tater tots, chips and popcorn.]

Ding dong

Rory and Lorelai: "COME IN!"

[Jess opens the door, carrying a large bag. Caitlin walks in with a shoulder bag and a smaller bag. She is amazed at where she is]

Jess: ... you really should think about leaving Portland. You seriously still smell like kombucha and hops, even after the 8 hours of travel.

Caitlin: Well, by the looks of this place Stars Hollow could be my new home.

[Rory runs into the foyer. Jess slides into the kitchen]

Rory: KIKI! You're here!

[They hug, major smiles]

Caitlin: RORY! It's been too long

Rory: Hasn't it? It's almost been 10!

Caitlin: Never again!

Rory: Yea, never!

Caitlin [said in a sneaky whisper]: So, your man is a hunk. Also such a bad boy. How did you meet him? No wait. Let me guess... while dealing drugs to pay for Yale?

Rory: ha. Ha. ha. So funny [rolls eyes]. I don't miss that wit.

Lorelai: Poptarts are here! Hi Kiki!

Caitlin (to Rory): You told her you call me Kiki?

Rory: You know how this works. I can't keep anything from my mom.

Prompt: Upshift the song “Cold Water” by Major Lazer Ft Justin Bieber and MØ or “This Is What You Came For” by Calvin Harris Ft Rihanna

Content constraint: Must be one of the two songs

Extension: shift it to Early Modern English (Shakespearean English)

Formal constraint: lyrics/poem

Context constraint: 15 minutes

Grade: 11-12

Intended Outcome: practise writing in a different style than the students normally would. Also learning to elevate the language they commonly would use

Connection to language acquisition: reminds them of synonyms. Begins with approachable language, so it's easier to manipulate rather than create something new.

Materials needed: Copies of the song lyrics. Paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar (1):

Everyone enjoys psychedelic drugs at times, correct
 What else can we do when we are upset?
 And so, breathe deeply and release
 Do not allow yourself to drown on your lonesome.

If you have the sensation of sinking, I will swiftly arrive
 Into frankly frigid water for you
 While we may part, over distance and time,
 I will maintain my patient demeanour towards you
 And I hope you recognize it

Thus each person loses the ability to orient oneself, correct
 It is through this we learn and grow
 Each day I would like to spend with you until we die
 Do not fight alone

If you have the sensation of sinking, I will swiftly arrive
 Into frankly frigid water for you
 While we may part, over distance and time,
 I will maintain my patient demeanour towards you
 And I hope you recognize it

I will not release you
I will be your salvation this evening
I will not release you
I will be your salvation this evening

Quickly, Swiftly,
Aid my as I am in an unstable vessel
I simply want to stay afloat
No one is with me
I desire for another to return me to my abode
A place that I can rest my soul
I need the truth, that you will not release me.

I will not release you
I will be your salvation this evening
I will not release you
I will be your salvation this evening

I will not release you
I will not release you

Exemplar (2):

Offspring, it is thus for which you have arrived
Lightning bequeaths each moment she sways
And the village gazes upon her
Yet, her eyes doth lay upon
Yeaaaaa
Yeaaaa
Yeaaaaaa
Yeaaaa
Yeaaaaa
Yeaaaaaa

Offspring, it is thus for which you have arrived
Lightning bequeaths each moment she sways
And the village gazes upon her
Yet, her eyes doth lay upon
Yeaaaaa
Yeaaaa

Ye++++++

Ye++++

Ye++++

Ye++++

We move quickened with the jests one plays
 Knows who the purpose of the way it is?
 We refuse to utter a word for which there is no need
 I state "To thy kingdom" upon departure

Offspring, it is thus for which you have arrived
 Lightning bequeaths each moment she sways
 And the village gazes upon her
 Yet, her eyes doth lay upon
 Ye++++
 Ye++++
 Ye++++
 Ye++++

Prompt: Construct your own piece from the spam e-mail

Content constraint: The students must use the words in the order they appear. They can create their own words by using only parts of a word, but it must go from the top to the bottom.

Extension: Limit the amount of full words you use from the email

Formal constraint: Prose or poetry

Context constraint: 15 minutes

Grade: 9-12

Intended Outcome: create their own piece by focusing on the words they see

Connection to language acquisition: Introducing new vocabulary (which would be found in the spam). More approachable for ELL students, as it is easier to manipulate rather than create something new.

Materials needed: spam e-mail handouts. Paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar:

"Her"

Madonna still feels attached to incidents.

She takes her time.

Lies upon lies.

Women are power.
 Nations load beauty on hate,
 The state contains tricks.

Speak
 Of
 Love

Prompt: Free write for 5 minutes.

Content constraint: Every minute, I will tell them a word they need to incorporate

Extension: Write it in 3rd person

Formal constraint: Prose

Context constraint: 5 minutes

Grade: 9-12

Intended Outcome: Have them understand that obstacles are challenging, but an invitation to try something new.

Connection to language acquisition: learning how to include a word they may not be very familiar with into their planned story. It will teach them to adapt and be flexible with their writing.

Materials needed: 4 words. Paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar:

As the cat came running around the corner, Julie watched her brother run away in terror. She began laughing. Hard. Her brother is 17 years old. She's never seen him be scared before. In fact, he usually scares her. Since she's only 8, he gets scared really easy. One time, around Halloween, he pretend he was puking out **pumpkin** guts. That really freaked Julie out. Her dad always gets mad when Kaleb scares her, mostly because that means there's one more person in mom and dad's bed that night. Seeing **Marbles** scare Kaleb gave Julie an idea: she decided to seek revenge on Kaleb. How, you ask? Well, by doing something that will startle him. Since Kaleb loves chips so much, she decided to use a snake-like slinky to jump out at him from the chip container! She wasn't sure how to make it... after all, she is only 8. Thankfully, she knows how to use **YouTube!** She watched several videos and, in only a few hours, managed to make her own trap for her brother. The next morning, she set up the trap. She didn't want her parents to accidentally open the chips, and thus have her terrifying trick **fizzle** out, misused. She had to tell her parents. They agreed that it was time for Kaleb to get a taste of his own medicine. After all, it is April 1st.

Prompt: Flash fiction. Read Hemingway's 6-word story. Now the students write their own

Content constraint: 6 words only

Extension: Use only one-syllable words

Formal constraint: as they wish, but only 6 words

Context constraint: 5 minutes

Grade: 11-12

Intended Outcome: Learn the power of word choice

Connection to language acquisition: Comprehend how each word has meaning and definition, so to be precise and intentional with language

Materials needed: Hemingway's story on a powerpoint or overhead projector. Paper and writing utensil.

Exemplar:

They found his bra in dirt.

Congrats on your pregnancy.

- His wife