

- Sentence starters help writers' block

- Give kids an assigned audience, such as write as if a 1st grader or kindergarten is going to read this

- it gives them

an "out"
- study children's

literature as a mentor text

- character dialogue, sensory details, character's motivation, character's thoughts / feelings

- can focus on one at a time

- mix up final product - it doesn't always have to be an essay:

- brochure, play, debate, commercial

- take the quickwrites + turn them into essays

- "How To" guide / expert piece

Writing Process

1. **Pre-Writing:** The pre-writing stage helps expand or narrow focus, and identify and/or organize ideas. It is the planning phase of the writing process. The Idea and Organization Traits are important in the prewriting phase as the writer considers narrowing or expanding the writing focus and selects an organizational structure that will most effectively showcase the student's ideas.

Students having difficulties with **Pre-Writing** may benefit from:

- quick writes
 - free-writing and writing workshops (*narrative*)
 - keeping journals or learning logs
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2. **Drafting :** This stage involves the students in organizing ideas into a coherent structure. The goal of drafting is to translate ideas into written organization without being constrained by word choice, sentence structure, conventions, and presentation. Models of exemplar writing help students build a visual map in order to draft their ideas according to specifications. Informal conferences with teachers or peers can occur during this phase to provide feedback to the writer.

Students struggling with **Drafting** may benefit from

- storyboards, planning guides or other graphic organizers
 - collaborative drafting (teacher and student, small group)
 - chunking instruction time
 - audio recording software, such as Audacity
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3. **Revising:** This stage focuses on improving student writing. Students rethink, rework, and refine their writing. Students apply their knowledge of language skills and sentence structure in order to become better writers. The first five Traits are critical to effective revision of the content: Idea, Organization, Voice, & Word Choice.

Students having difficulties with **Revising** may benefit from

- Praise-Question-Polish (*narrative*)
 - **PRAISE:** Find at least one thing (and preferably more) that you think is good about the paper. Was it well-written? Was it logical and on subject? Did the writer use good word choices and vivid verbs?
 - **QUESTION:** Point out at least one thing in the paper about which you may have a question. Was there something you didn't understand? Were there places where the writer wandered off topic? Was there room to better explain an idea or give examples?
 - **POLISH:** Point out at least one thing that could make the paper better. Be positive and be sure to give some examples of how you think the paper could be improved.
 - text-mimicry
 - reformatting longer writings into separate pages/parts, cutting them up, and moving them around to reorganize (*informative/explanatory*)
 - peer-review color-coding activities (*green dot for understanding, yellow dot for questions, red dot for confusion/inaccuracies*)
 - teacher-created checklists
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4. **Editing:** This stage involves the beautification of the piece and should be undertaken when all revisions to the content are complete. The writing is revisited to correct errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage and made be done independently or by engaging in peer editing. The Conventions Trait is the most prominent at this phase of the writing process.

A strong foundation in the conventions of Standard English is important, but not essential to students working on **Editing** their own or a peer's writing. Students may benefit from

- mini-lessons
 - teacher-created checklists
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5. **Publishing:** This stage involves sharing the writing with an intended audience and may involve preparing a neatly handwritten or word processed copy of the final draft and the addition of illustrations or other graphic elements. Publication may extend to a multimedia presentation or lead to a public performance. In most cases, the teacher is a member of the audience and is encouraged to give credit for the process and the completed piece at this stage. The Presentation Trait is emphasized during this phase of the writing process as the writer works to make the piece appealing and inviting to the audience.

While sharing one's writing is an important goal of instruction focused on the **Publishing** stage, students may need assistance with document design and formatting, selecting illustrations and creating graphs, and adding other components to make it easier for an audience to approach the writing. Students may benefit from

- gallery walk
 - reading aloud the published work to an audience
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Helpful Resources

www.teacher.scholastic.com/writeit

- for both students & educators
- step-by-step help through the writing process
- can see how master writers craft their work
- features sections for journalism, poetry, essay, short fiction, memoir, & humor writing

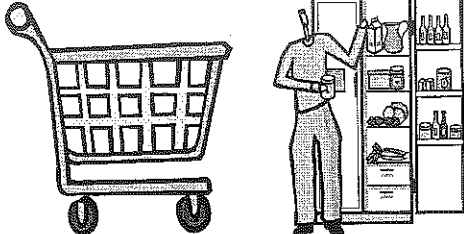

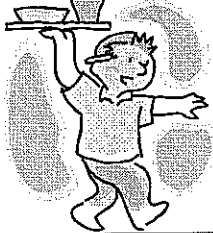
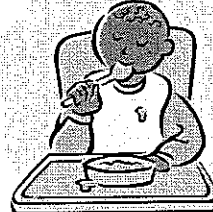


www.brainpop.com/english/writing

- animated videos
- activities

Illustrating the writing process

Making a Lunch: Students can relate to the difference between what is sometimes served in the cafeteria (nutritional but perhaps uninspiring), and a meal from their favorite restaurant.

When you are hungry, or when it is lunch time, you...

<p>Pre-Writing</p>	<p>go to the refrigerator to see what's available (<i>sometimes you have to go grocery shopping</i>);</p>	
<p>Drafting</p>	<p>select food (<i>so you have a nutritionally appealing and palate-satisfying meal</i>);</p>	
<p>Revising</p>	<p>put the food together on a plate (<i>make a sandwich, cut up fruit or vegetables</i>); and finally</p>	
<p>Editing</p>		
<p>Publishing</p>	<p>eat the lunch.</p>	
<p>Revisiting</p>	<p>After lunch, you may return to the refrigerator for a snack or dessert if you are still hungry (or if you are being rewarded for exhibiting outstanding table manners)</p>	

Quick Write Procedure

What is it?

Quick writes are most often used to develop fluency. In quick writes, students write rapidly and without stopping in response to literature and for other types of impromptu writing. Quick writes provide students with a means of quickly representing their thinking. Rather than being concerned with correct spelling, punctuation, and word usage, the student is more interested in simply responding to the prompt in a personal way. Students reflect on what they know about a topic, ramble on paper, generate words and ideas, and make connections among the ideas. Young children often do quick writes in which they draw pictures and add labels. Some students do a mixture of writing and drawing. Students do quick writes for a variety of purposes:

• Learning logs:

Immediately following a particular lesson, engaging activity, or discussion, pause and allow students to reflect in their learning logs or journals. Share responses.

• Constructed response to literature:

- to activate prior knowledge
- to reflect on a theme of a story and how it relates to them personally
- to describe a favorite character

• Reflections on new learning:

- students write an explanation of what something means
- to define or explain a word on the word wall

How to do a quick write:

1. The teacher selects a purpose for the students. This prompt should be tied to a content area and elicit a personal response from the student.
2. After listening to the prompt, the student is instructed to write a response by jotting down whatever comes to mind. The time limit should be no longer than 5-10 minutes in length. When students are first doing quick writes, start with 2 minutes of writing and increase the time gradually. Students write until instructed to stop. They are allowed to only finish their thought when "time" is called.
3. Quick writes may be used several times in a day. They may provide a "nugget" for a more extended piece of writing.
4. When it is time to share, students read their writing to a small group of four or five students. Volunteers could also share with the whole group.

• Creative Writing

- poetry
- humor writing
- fable/fairy tale
- folk tale
- fictional story

• Non-fiction Writing

- biography
- autobiography
- persuasive text
- personal narrative

set a timer

write with your student while he/she is writing, following the same prompt

Sentence Starters for Metacognitive Memos

* Use for learning logs, constructed responses to literature, or reflections on new learning

- Remember: You must use the word "because" in your response!
- I felt confused when...
 - I was thinking about...
 - I got stuck when...
 - The time went quickly because...
 - A word / some words that I did not know...
 - I stopped because...
 - I was distracted by...
 - I figured out that...
 - I first thought that... but then I realized that...
 - I finally understood...
 - I remembered that earlier in the book...
 - I fixed up my understanding by...
 - I made a T-S/T-T/T-W connection when...
 - I visualized... ↪ text-to-self
 - I'm wondering... text-to-text
 - I'm predicting... text-to-world
 - I think the main idea is...
 - I think the theme is...
 - I wish...
 - If I were the author...
 - I'm a lot like (name of character) because...
 - If I were (name of character)...
 - The coolest fact I learned was...
 - I agree/disagree with...
 - This book reminds me of...
 - This book is similar to...
 - The best quote/line I read today was...
 - I would recommend this book to...

* I would not recommend these for creative writing or non-fiction writing

My Name

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing.

It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse—which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female—but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have

known her, a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

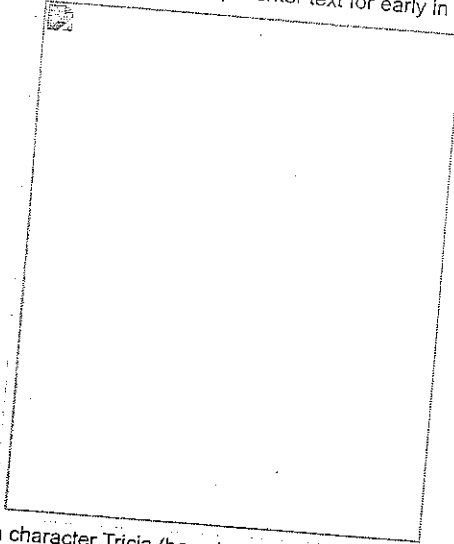
And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name—Magdalena—which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza.

I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

Mentor Text: Thank You, Mr. Falker

If you haven't read Patricia Polacco's *Thank You, Mr. Falker* yet, drop everything and get yourself to your nearest bookstore. You may need kleenex. This is seriously one of my all-time favorite books, and it makes a perfect writing workshop mentor text for early in the year.

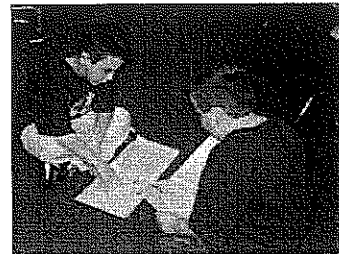
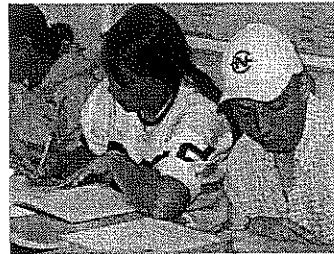
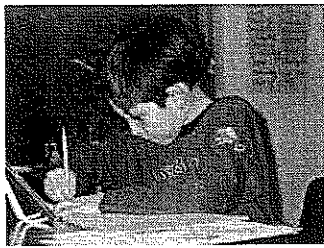


In this beautiful book, main character Tricia (based on the author's own experiences!) struggles her entire childhood with reading and math. Every year in school she watches the other kids advance in their readers and yet she still cannot make sense of the letters and numbers on the page. Tricia is terribly bullied and just plain miserable. I get choked up every time I read it aloud.

Don't worry, the story has a happy ending, but as part of a mini-lesson, I pause on a particularly intense page that shows Tricia crying with the cruel words of bullies hanging in the air around her. I get really serious and talk with the kids about how they think Tricia feels and how this page makes them feel. Then I tell them about how when I was young math was really hard for me. I tell them that sometimes I even thought I was dumb or that I could never learn math. Then I talk about how we all have had times where we felt like Tricia. Maybe we struggled in school and were embarrassed. Maybe we weren't good at something in sports and were teased. Maybe we didn't fit in because of our clothes. I ask them to write about a time *they* felt like Tricia. Some of the stories they tell are beautiful.

Favorite Quick Writes

Writing notebooks are reassuring because it is easier to start from something rather than nothing. In notebooks, writers feel free to be awkward or polished, silky or sullen. To try opinions without commitment: without anyone watching. Notebooks are dedicated to perpetual sketchiness, and that's their charm. ~ Alice Fulton



A poem a day builds vocabulary and figurative language

“Days” by Billy Collins... if you could go back to one day, one moment, which would you choose?

“When I Was Young in the Mountains” by Cynthia Rylant... when I was young on Belmont Street...

“On Turning Ten” by Billy Collins... you might write about a favorite birthday or memories of age 10

Sketches, letters, responses, or thinking on paper... but always in response to a piece of literature or a poem. I never ask students to write from a prompt or ‘story starter.’

Trace around your hand, fill it with memories of what you’ve touched, held, loved

Fill a heart shape with the music that lives in your heart, songs connected to moments you love

Choose an article from the newspaper, read aloud and respond with your thinking

A letter to someone you treasure; a letter to someone who annoys you; a letter to ask for something

Capture a conversation you overheard this week; capture the sounds of your house

Sketch your room, your backyard, your neighborhood, your classroom, your favorite hiding place

Things you wonder about; questions you’d like to ask the principal, your parents, your best friend...

Slow down time, show every detail you can recall; compressed time, like 100 moments on the school bus

Think of a favorite photograph and tell the story of that picture and why it matters to you



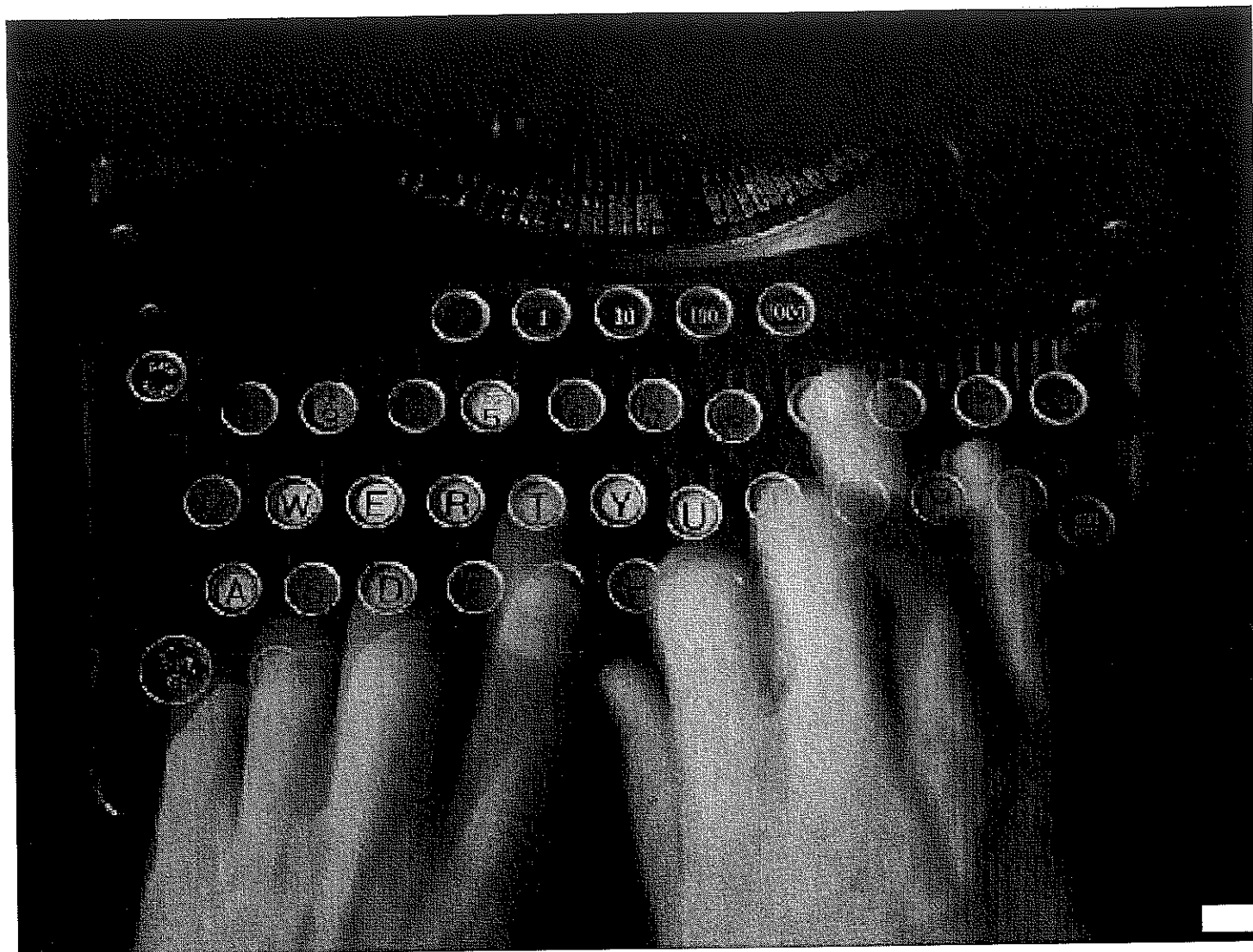
Humanities › Languages

50 Quick Writing Prompts for Journals, Blogs, and Essays

SHARE

PIN

EMAIL



Getty Images

by Richard Nordquist

Updated June 21, 2017

Are you stuck for something to write about? Maybe you're scratching your head trying to come up with a fresh idea for a personal essay—a narrative or an extended description. Or perhaps you're in the habit of keeping a journal or a blog, but today, for some reason, you can't think of a blessed thing to say.

Here's something that may help: a list of 50 brief writing prompts. Not full-blown essay topics, just hints, snippets, cues, and clues to prod your memory, kick the writer's block, and get you started.

Take a minute or two to look over the list. Then pick one prompt that brings to mind a particular image, experience, or idea. Start writing (or freewriting) and see where it takes you. If after a few minutes you hit a dead end, don't panic: simply return to the list, pick another prompt, and try again.

1. Everyone else was laughing.
2. On the other side of that door
3. Late again
4. What I've always wanted
5. A sound I'd never heard before
6. What if . . .
7. The last time I saw him

10. I knew how it felt to be an outsider.
11. Hidden away in the back of a drawer
12. What I should have said
13. Waking up in a strange room
14. There were signs of trouble.
15. Keeping a secret
16. All I have left is this photo.
17. It wasn't really stealing.
18. A place I pass by every day
19. Nobody can explain what happened next.
20. Staring at my reflection
21. I should have lied.
22. Then the lights went out.
23. Some might say it's a weakness.
24. Not again!
25. Where I'd go to hide out from everyone
26. But that's not my real name.
27. Her side of the story
28. Nobody believed us.
29. It was time to change schools again.
30. We climbed to the top.
31. The one thing I'll never forget
32. Follow these rules and we'll get along fine.
33. It may not be worth anything.
34. Never again
35. On the other side of the street

36. My father used to tell me
37. When nobody was looking
38. If I could do it over again
39. Of course it was illegal.
40. It wasn't my idea.
41. Everyone was staring at me.
42. It was a stupid thing to say.
43. Hiding under my bed
44. If I tell you the truth
45. My secret collection
46. Footsteps in the dark
47. The first cut is the deepest.
48. Trouble, big trouble
49. Laughing uncontrollably
50. It was just a game to them.

Still having trouble coming up with something to write about? Take a look at these **400 Writing Topic Suggestions for Paragraphs, Essays, and Speeches** or these **250 Topics for Familiar Essays**.

Resources > For Educators

50 Writing Prompts for Elementary School Children

SHARE

FLIP

EMAIL



Photo Tim Platt/Getty Images

by Janelle Cox

Updated June 21, 2017

Children tend to get stuck when it comes to thinking of writing ideas on their own. We have all had writers block at one point in our lives, so we can understand the frustration students may have. Just like athletes need to warm up their muscles, writer's need to warm up too. By giving students a writing prompt or idea for writing, it will ease their anxiety and allow them to write freely. Encourage students to choose one of the following writing ideas each day.

Challenge them to write without stopping for at least five minutes. Remind students that there is no wrong way to respond, and to just let their creative minds wonder.

Here is a collection of 50 creative writing prompts and ideas for your elementary school classroom. Use these to help spark your students' imagination.

1. This person I admire the most is...
2. My biggest goal in life is...
3. The best book I ever read...
4. The happiest moment in my life was when...
5. When I grow up...
6. The most interesting place I have ever been was...
7. Tell three things you do not like about school and why.
8. The strangest dream I ever had was...
9. When I turn 16 I will...

11. I get scared when...
12. Five things I would do if I was rich are...
13. What is your favorite sport and why?
14. If I could change the world I would by...
15. Dear teacher, I would like to know...
16. Dear President...
17. I am happy when...
18. I am sad when...
19. If I had three wishes...
20. All about my best friend.
21. Describe your favorite animal and why.
22. My pet elephant...
23. The time a bat was in my house...
24. When I become an adult I want to...
25. My best vacation was when I wen to ...
26. Top 5 reasons why people argue are...
27. Describe 5 reasons why school is important.
28. My favorite television show is...

29 The time I found a dinosaur in my backyard... **ThoughtCo.**



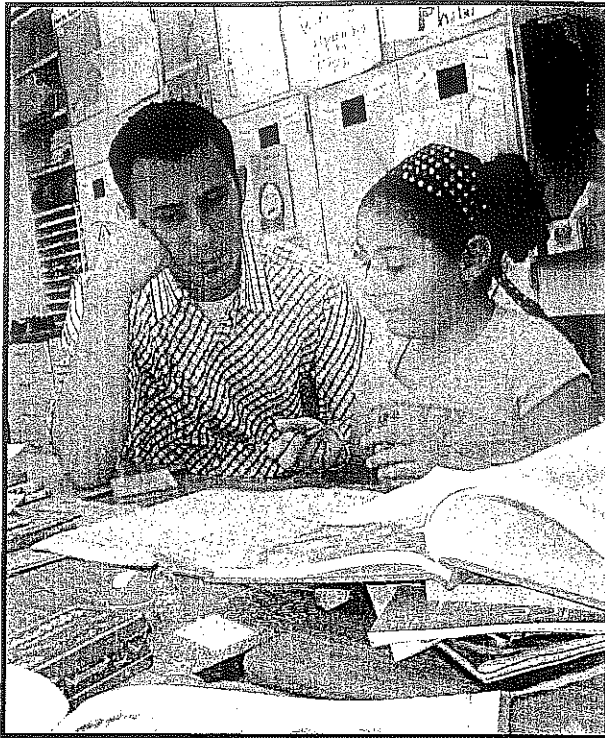
30. Describe the best present that you ever received.
31. Why is it that...
32. My most embarrassed moment was when...
33. Describe your favorite food and why.
34. 34. Describe your least favorite food and why.
35. The top 3 qualities of a friend are...
36. Write about what you would cook for an enemy.
37. Use these words in a short story: *scared, angry, Sunday, bugs*
38. What's your idea of a perfect vacation?
39. Write about why someone might be afraid of snakes.
40. List ten rules that you have broken and why you broke them.
41. I'd walk a mile for...
42. I wish someone told me that...
43. Describe the hottest day...
44. Write about the best decision that you have ever made.
45. You opened the door and then...
46. The time the power went out I...

48. If I were President I would...

49. Create a poem using the word: *love, happy, smart, and sunny.*

50. The time my teacher forgot to wear shoes...

Looking for more writing ideas? Try these journal prompts or these real writing ideas for elementary school.



3

Building Content

Without sufficient detail, my students tend to write paragraphs that may have an impressively relaxed tone, but that lack force, or memorability, because there's nothing to sink one's teeth into as a reader.

—Laura Robb, *Nonfiction Writing: From the Inside Out*