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BLOCKED, STUMPED AND STUCK: 12 PROMPTS TO GET YOU WRITING!

By Shery Ma Belle Arrieta

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Beginning writers often wonder how to start writing. It's the worry they get themselves into right away that mostly hinders them from getting anything written down.

Experienced writers often get stuck in the middle of their novels, stories or articles. They sometimes agonize and worry about what to write next and that's how they are delayed.

Beginning and experienced writers and the writers in between can sometimes fall into the trap of getting themselves "blocked."

So here are 12 writing prompts you, the beginning writer or the experienced one, can use to start off your writing.

PROMPT # 1 "I write because..." Think of as many reasons as you can. Any reasons you know and feel you should and could write, and why you write. Then from your list, see if you can turn your reasons into an essay, a story or a poem.

PROMPT # 2 Sit still for five minutes. Close your eyes and listen. Don't think, just listen. What sounds do you hear? Is there music? Rustling leaves? Is your TV on? After five minutes, write down all the sounds on a piece of paper. If you can't think of the correct words for the sounds, write how they sounded (example: "bbbzzztttt" for something you heard). Now use the sounds on your list to create "sound poetry."

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PROMPT # 3: Use this prompt to start off your story: "When the dust settled, he saw..."

PROMPT # 4: Quotes are powerful writing starters. They evoke emotions, insights and inspirations for any writer. What's your favorite quote? It may be something a famous dead person said, or a line in a song, or a passage in the Bible. Write the quote on top of your page and write your interpretation of your favorite quote. You can inspire, motivate or even impart a lesson.

PROMPT # 5: When was the last time you received a letter? Or a postcard? Who sent it? What did it say? Did you reply to the letter? Write yourself a letter. Pretend that you are somebody

else. Put yourself in your neighbor's shoes, or your old friend's shoes. If you were them, what would you want to tell yourself, or want to know about yourself?

PROMPT # 6: When you ride a bus or a car in one of your trips, what do you do? Do you sleep during the trip? Do you stare out the window and watch unseeingly the view? Or do you take it all in — the greenery, the buildings, the people, the colors, the hues, the clouds? Recall the most recent trip you've had. Where did you come from and where were you going? Why were you going there? How long was the trip? What did you see on the way? This short exercise will help you with your power of recalling details. The more you recall, the more detailed your writing will be. Do this exercise on a regular basis and you will be able to write with good use of details.

PROMPT # 7: Watch your favorite movie. Afterwards, experiment on giving it different endings. If it's a romantic movie with a mushy happy-ending, why not re-write the ending and say, have the guy end up with the other woman? Or if it's an action film, ask yourself what would happen if the hero got killed. The thing here is you have to think of a different version for the movie's ending.

Prompt # 8. Imagine you're walking in a mall and all of a sudden, a woman grabs you by the hair and starts a catfight with you. What would you do? Would you fight back? If you're a man, think of what you'll do if another guy punched you on the nose for no reason at all. Would you punch back? Describe the "fight scene."

Prompt # 9. Recall the last dream (or nightmare) you had. Describe

the dream in detail.

Prompt # 10. If you were an animal, what would you be? Why?

Prompt # 11. When you were in gradeschool, what was your most hated subject? Why did you hate it? Do you still hate it? Why or why not? Did the teacher have anything to do with it?

Prompt # 12. Put on your favorite CD or tape. What music comes out of it? When you listen to it, what do you feel? What comes into your mind?

I hope the prompts I have created for you will help you get those words out of your head and onto the paper.

Drop me a line and share with me your writing if you are inclined. Until then, great writing to you!

Shery Ma Belle Arrietamailto:publisher@ewritersplace.com Shery is the creator and author of the exciting new series of ebooks for writers, SEEDS: Ideas for the Everyday (Non-Fiction) Writer. You can download a FREE sampler at <http://ewritersplace.com/seeds.html>. The July SEEDS ebook contains 82 idea seeds, all based on historical events. Visit <http://www.thepublishedwriter.com/report1002.html>.

Have You Plotted Your Story Before Writing It?

By Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips -

The writer, who doesn't have the time to plot, always finds the time to rewrite.

Sound familiar?

I've been guilty of this too, back in the early days of my writing apprenticeship. I was so eager to get stuck into writing my story that I wouldn't bother with plotting.

Plotting gives you a sense of direction. It's your map, which will lead you to write your story. Leaping into the unknown rarely works. Without a plot several things can happen.... Our stories aren't focused

We lose our way Our characters don't come to life because we don't take the time to develop them

We get stuck The story strays from us

And all this happens when we haven't figured everything out first.

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Your plot is the foundation of your story. It's the skeleton, which will hold your story together. Your plot is there to work everything out first - to see if it can be worked out, and then flesh out that skeleton with other elements that make a story.

Plotting is the difference between writing a story for yourself and writing one for an audience. Writing for ourselves doesn't require too much strain because we only have ourselves to please. It's when we have to please our readers that the hard work begins.

If you are aiming to sell your stories, plotting is a must.

Have you plotted your story before writing it?

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories. Visit

Have You Plotted Your Story Before Writing It?

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