

Writing Prompts

Scenarios and Sentences

- You wake up one morning and find that you aren't in your bed; you aren't even in your room. You're in the middle of a giant maze. A sign is hanging from the ivy: "You have one hour. Don't touch the walls."
- Grab the book, magazine, or newspaper nearest you and open up to a random page. Start your story with the first line at the top of the page and end your story with the last line at the bottom of the page.
- Go to Google Images and do a search for "old Victoria BC photos." Browse through them until something catches your eye. Construct a story that goes with the photo you are referencing.
- What's bothering you right now? Anything? Why does it bother you? How could it be improved/eliminated/replaced in a way that would make things better? Be creative. Even whimsical.
- Perception is reality.
- "No dress rehearsal; this is our life." (Tragically Hip)
- "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."
(Carl Jung)

“What If” Prompts:

What if Germany had developed the atomic bomb before the US?

What if Superman was a bad guy?

What if we could all suddenly read each others’ thoughts? All of them.

What if someone could detect the feeling/emotions of others with perfect accuracy?

What if China decided to end Hong Kong’s status as “Special Administrative Region?”

What if we found a way to produce clean energy through nuclear fusion and no longer needed to extract fossil fuels? (economy, social impact, politics, environment, employment)

What if the US invaded Canada, occupying it so it could access its natural resources?

What if the Internet was broken permanently? What would be affected? What would we do?

Prediction Prompts:

A new popular genre of music is created. What is it called? What does it sound like? Where did it come from? Why is it popular? Why was it created? Who were the pioneers?

What will schools look like in 100 years? (will there even be schools?)

What forms of discrimination will Canadian society address over the next 20 or 30 years? How will it happen? Who will press for change? Why?

What will we be exploring in outer space in 2066? (If anything?)

What are the top 5 discoveries in health science that will be made over the next 20 years?

What will the world’s population be in 2100? What will that mean? What changes will likely take place as a result?

One-word/phrase prompts

Video games (literal or figurative)

Mind games

Dangerous games

Connectedness

Individual rights versus societal laws

Freedom of speech

Creators and destroyers

Social catalysts

Changing habits

Freedom versus security (personal or societal)

Language and identity

Momentum

First impression

Invention

Self-awareness

The real "me" versus the public "me"

Self-perception vs how I am seen by others

Real power

Privilege

The best combination

Strange bedfellows

Heavier Prompts: (great for formal essays)

1. Alice falls down the rabbit hole. Milo drives through the tollbooth. Dorothy is swept up in the tornado. Neo takes the red pill. Don't tell us about another world you've imagined, heard about, or created. Rather, tell us about its portal.
2. In French, there is no difference between "conscience" and "consciousness." In Japanese, there is a single word that specifically refers to the splittable wooden chopsticks you get at restaurants. The German word "fremdschämen" encapsulates the feeling you get when you're embarrassed on behalf of someone else. All of these require explanation in order to properly communicate their meaning, and are, to varying degrees, untranslatable. Choose a word, tell us what it means, and then explain why it cannot (or should not) be translated from its original language.
3. How did the art patronage system work during the Renaissance?
4. Why was the generation following World War I known as the "Lost Generation"? (You might want to read *All Quiet on the Western Front* to enrich your thoughts on this topic.) Or perhaps compare the lost generation of WW1 with that of the Vietnam War for Americans.
5. Compare the Salem Witch Trials era to another historical period in which there existed hysteria inspired by fear and paranoia. Consider events such as The Red Scare of the 1950's, Soviet spy paranoia in the 1960's, the Great Fear in France in the late 1700's, the Loudon Possessions in 1632, the McCarthy hearings in the US...
6. Impostors play a significant role throughout Russian history. Characterize the effect of imposture on Russia.
7. Explore the similarities, if any exist, between the reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire and the decline (or predicted decline) of any other empire.
8. Examine the nature of post-Apartheid squatter settlements in South Africa.
9. Outline the events that shaped the Chinese occupation of Tibet and highlight some of the social, religious, political, and/or economic effects.
10. Examine the viability of BC's Site C Dam project in the light of supply and demand principles.