

100 Invitations to Write

Writing Prompts for Grades 4–8

**WE ARE
TEACHERS**

Write about a place you hope to visit one day. Why do you want to go there?
What would you do on your trip? Would you take anyone with you?





A *limerick* is a type of rhyming poem that has 5 lines and is usually humorous. Read this poem by the famous writer Edward Lear and then try making your own limerick.

*There was an Old Man with a flute,
A serpent ran into his boot;
But he played day and night,
Till the serpent took flight,
And avoided that man with a flute.*

Imagine you must go on a quest to find a cure for your friend's mysterious disease. Who do you bring with you on this quest, and what will you do to succeed?





Choose an area of the room and examine it closely, using all of your senses. What details do you notice?

Write a description of this part of the room using as many details as you can.

On their first visit to the planet, aliens find your backpack. What would they discover inside your bag? What do you think they might guess was the purpose of each item? What might they guess about your life?



"When spiderwebs unite, they can tie up a lion."

—Ethiopian proverb

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. Do you think spiders can actually tie up a lion, or is there another meaning here? Does this quotation remind you of an experience in your own life? If not, make up a situation where this saying might fit.



What do you think? Do smartphones make life better or worse? What examples can you use to support your opinion?





Does anyone really slip on a banana peel?

Imagine a new, unusual way someone might slip on the sidewalk. Use your idea to create a short comic strip.

What's happening here?

Find inspiration for the beginning of a short story in this image.



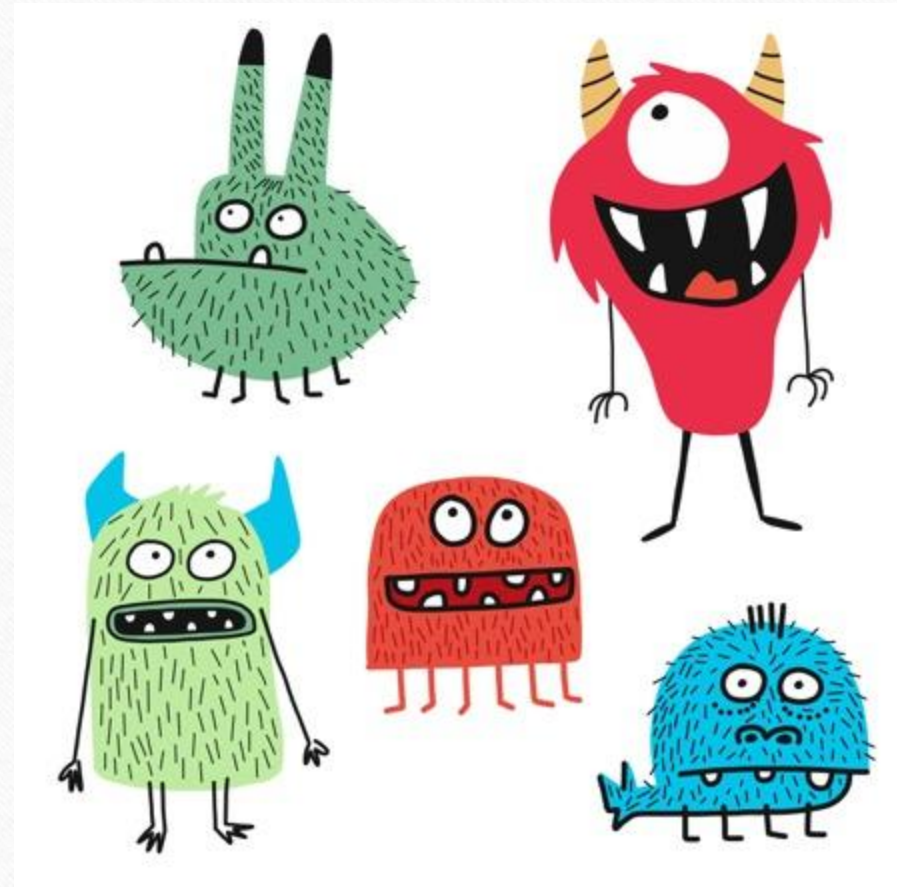


**YOU
ARE
THE
BEST**

Write about a time when you felt **awesome**. What happened? What do you think you learned about yourself in that moment?

Choose a monster to adopt and then write about your new pet. Where did you find your monster? What does it eat? What does it do every single time you walk through the door? What kind of special care does it need?

Share as many details about your unique monster as you can!





A *pun* is a joke that makes a play on words by using words that sound similar. It can also use different meanings of a word to make the saying funny.

Examples of puns:

- Why are fish so smart? Because they live in schools.
- Insect puns bug me.
- Pencils could be made with erasers at both ends, but what would be the point?

Try writing some puns of your own.

Hint: It can help to start by making a short list of words that sound alike or similar, like *see* and *sea*, and then think of common phrases that use these words. What happens when you trade one word for another?

Deep beneath the city, you discover an old sewer tunnel. Drawn in by the sound of low whispers (or is it the sound of machinery?), you decide to see what's around the bend. Where does the tunnel lead and what do you discover?





Write about a time you helped someone learn a new skill. What did you do? How did you feel? How did the person you helped respond?

What would you like your teacher to know about your day at school?

Write a letter that includes:

- your favorite parts of the school day—what makes these so great?
 - the things you wish you could change.
 - ideas for ways to make the school day even better.

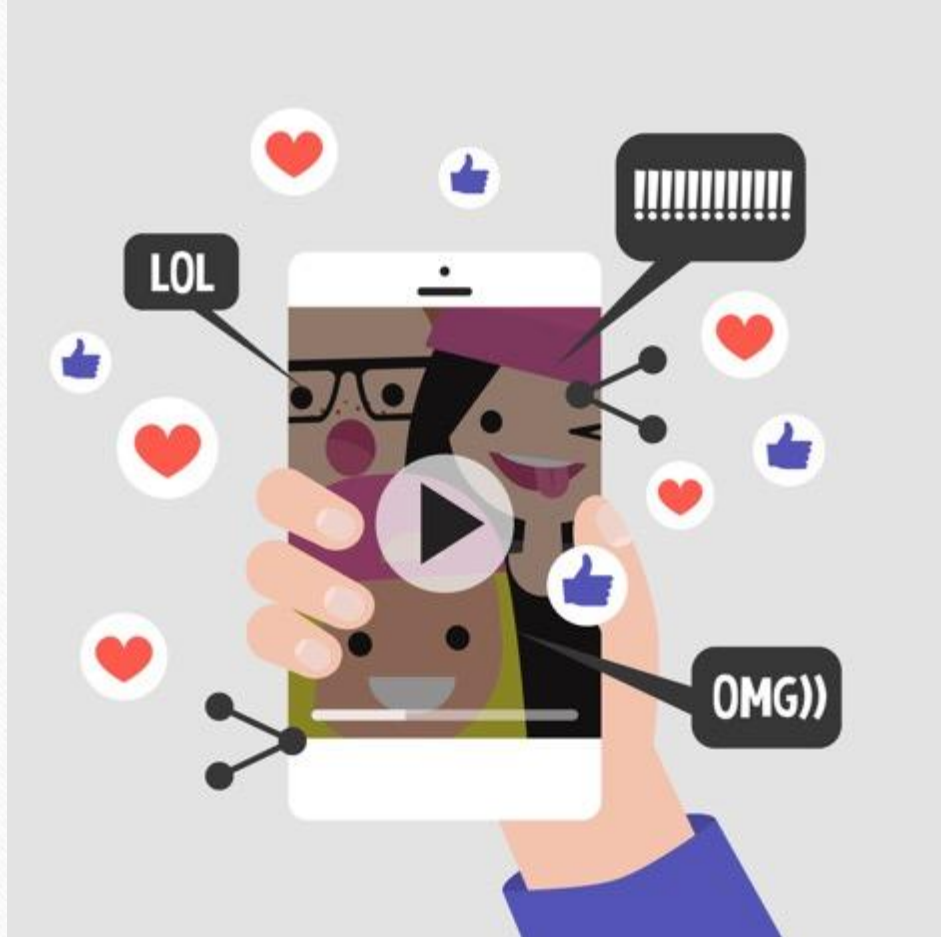


"We haven't failed. We now know a thousand things that won't work, so we are much closer to finding what will."

—Thomas Edison

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. Does this quotation remind you of an experience in your own life? If not, make up a situation where this saying might fit.





What do you think? Does social media make people more connected, or does it make people more isolated? What specific examples can you use to support your opinion?

You and a friend find a camera in the street. It looks old. Who could have lost it? Should you try to find its owner or keep it? What might be on the film inside the camera? Write the conversation you would have with your friend as you decide what to do next.





The egg **fell** on the floor. He **said**, “Oh no!”
The yolk **went** under the rug as he **tried** to
wipe it up. “My mom will never forgive me!” he
said. “I wonder if the vacuum cleaner will
work on this mess?” His sister **got** the
vacuum cleaner and turned it on. It ran over
his foot. “Ouch!” he **said**. “Be more careful!”

How could you make this story starter more
exciting? Try swapping in more descriptive
verbs and adding more details about the egg,
rug, and vacuum cleaner. If time allows,
continue the story!

"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."

—Indira Gandhi

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. Write about a situation where it might be helpful to remember these words.



What's happening here?

Write about what you think might have happened just before this photo was taken and what might have happened afterward.





As the car sputters and slows to a stop, it hits you: The car is out of gas, and you're miles from a gas station. What do you do? What tools and supplies can you find in the car to help you? Who else is with you?



An illustration from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll.

What five books do you think everyone your age should read? Why did you choose each of these books?

You arrive home from school to find three boxes on your doorstep. Looking closely, you notice that your name is written on each box in perfect cursive letters. The cardboard is worn, and the tape is starting to peel at the edges. What happens next?





Write about your ideal classroom. What would it look like? How would it be different from your current classroom? How would it be the same? Why would your new classroom design be better?

What if dogs could drive?

Find inspiration in this image for a short newspaper article.





What do you think about selfies? Are there any times when taking selfies isn't a good idea? Can you ever take too many selfies?

Write about a skill you'd like to improve. Why did you choose this skill? What ideas do you have for how you'll go from good to better to best? Are there resources (people or things) that could help you meet your goal? What are they?



The verb *go* simply means “to move from one place to another,” but it doesn’t tell the reader how the person or thing moved. Was the person moving slowly or quickly? Were they leaping? Did they shuffle or slink away? The way a person moves can tell us a lot about their emotional state, personality, and history. Using descriptive verbs helps readers get to know the characters in a story while also creating a more vivid scene. Write a list of as many verbs that could be used instead of *go* or *went*.” How do animals move? How do humans move?



"Friendship with oneself is all important because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world."

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. What do you think it looks like to be a friend to yourself? Write a list of ideas.





Write about a time when you felt perfectly **happy**. What happened? Do you think you could ever recreate that moment?

What's happening here?

Find inspiration for the beginning of a short story in this image. How can you describe the heat of the oven, the smell of the meal, and the woman's emotions?



Do you think school meals should be free for all students? Why or why not?

If meals were free, do you think more students would eat school lunch instead of bringing a lunch? Why or why not?





Write about a time when you felt **angry**. What triggered this feeling? How would you describe what it feels like to be really angry? How did you eventually calm down?

What if the members of your family each had a superpower?

Write a character description for each family member that details their special skill, unique superhero outfit, and how they use their skill to benefit the world. Add a small sketch of each person.

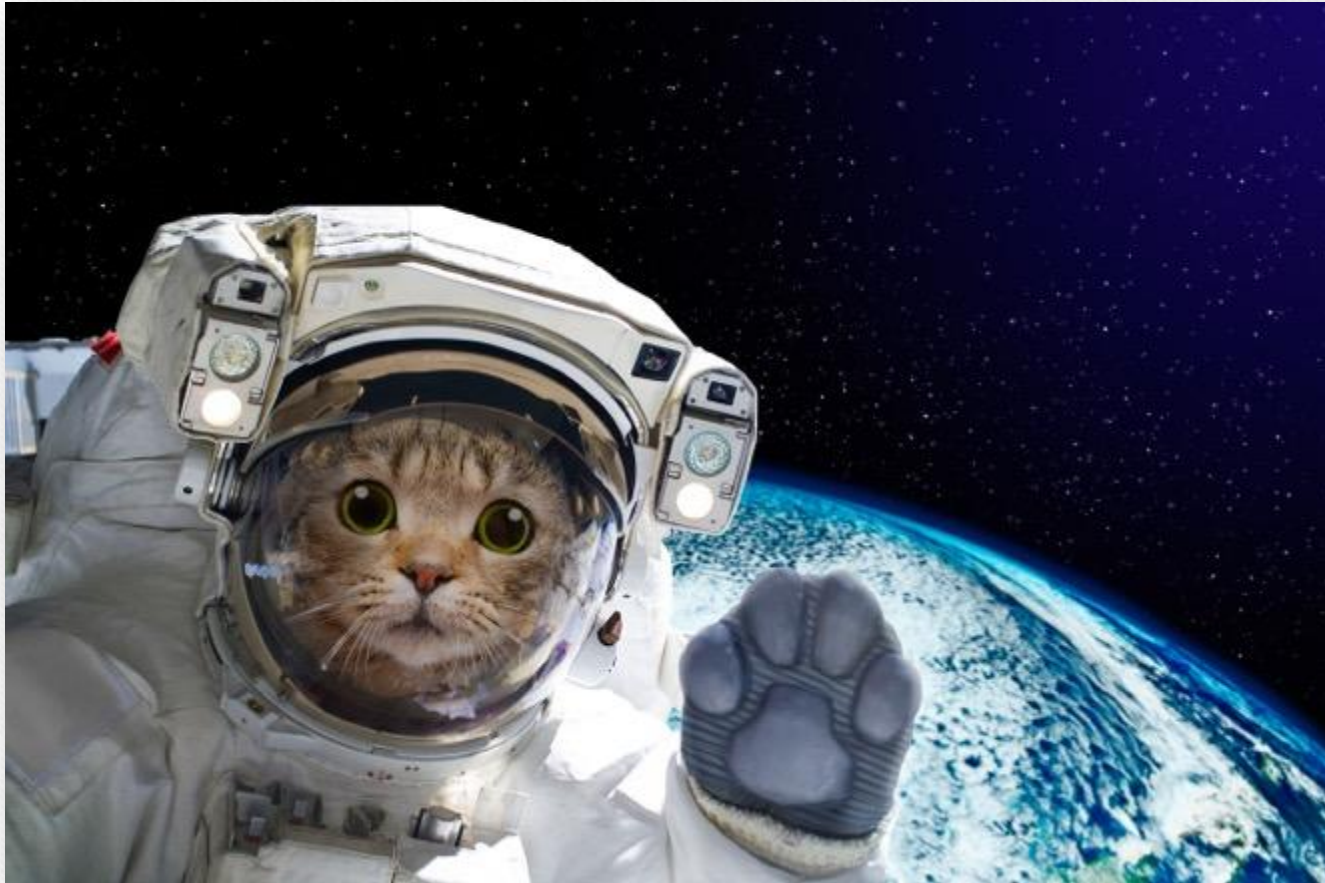




Working together as a team can be a challenge. Write a list of suggestions you think will help you and your classmates work together more easily.

Think about group projects you've done in the past. What worked, and what didn't?

Are there certain agreements all the members of the team could make to each other that would help prevent problems?



Find inspiration for the beginning of a short story in this image. Is this cat an astronaut? How did it get into space? Are there other cat astronauts? What is the mission?

Write about your favorite things to do outside at the park, in your yard, or on the playground. How often do you do these activities? Does anyone join you?



A *haiku* is a poem that has three lines and follows this pattern:

1st line: 5 syllables

2nd line: 7 syllables

3rd line: 5 syllables

Compose a haiku about what you see around you.

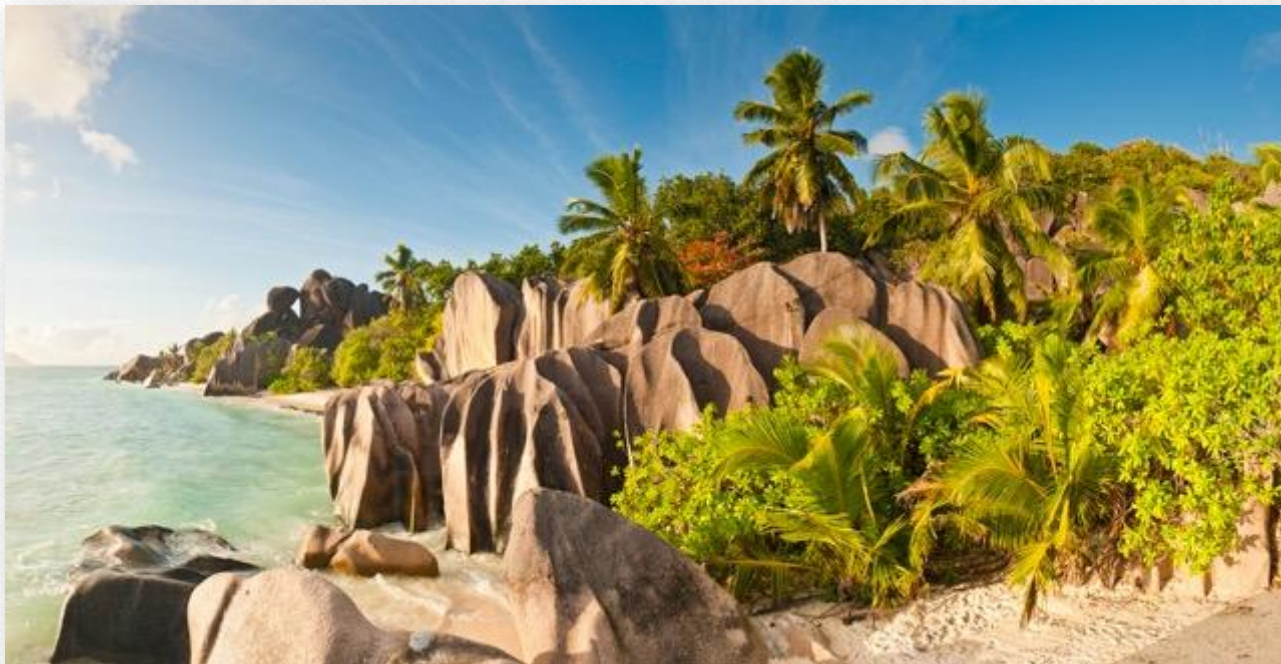


"The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer somebody else up."

—Mark Twain

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. Does this quotation remind you of an experience in your own life? How did you cheer someone up? How did it make you feel?





The setting in a story is the time and place of the action. Imagine this island in the Seychelles is the setting for your next book. Look carefully and describe as many details as you can to help your reader “see” what you’re seeing. What kind of plants do you see? What color is the ocean? What shape are the rocks?



Do you think the school day too short? Why or why not?

What do you think would be the best school day schedule for you? What time would you start school? When would you eat lunch? And when would the school day end? How would these changes help you?

What advice would you give your parent or guardian on how to be a better parent?





Write a letter to a friend telling them the many reasons why they are such a great friend.

What activities do you love to do together? How has your friendship made your life better? What else would you like your friend to know?

Write a letter to a person you admire.



... And then they saw IT!

Divide your page into 6 sections to create 6 panels for a graphic-novel page that picks up the story from here, describing what IT is and what happened next.

If you have time, create additional pages!



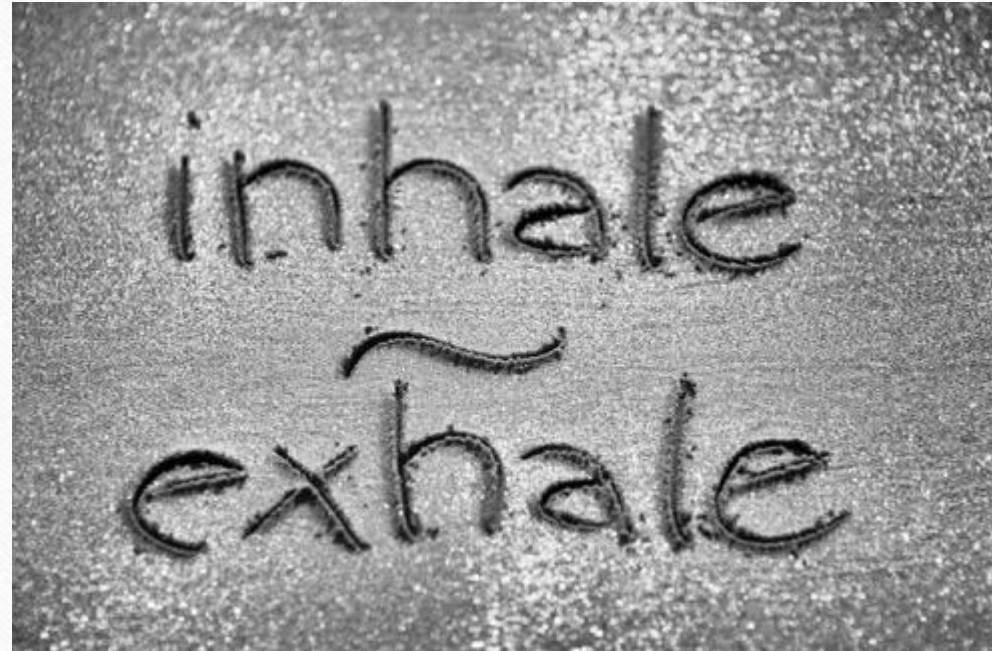


What do you think? Is more always better?
Is bigger always better?

Be sure to include specific examples to
support your opinion.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Inhale.
Exhale. What do you feel when you
breathe? What parts of your body
move? Where do you feel your breath?
What does your breath sound like?
Notice every small detail.

Write a poem about breathing.



An *ode* is a type of poem that honors a certain person or thing. For example, an ode to summer might include mention of the glistening swimming pools and sweet Popsicles that are common during that time of year.

Compose a short ode to your favorite possession. What makes it so great?



"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."

—Henry Ford

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words.

What kind of reputation do you hope to have? Write a list of adjectives you would like people to associate with you.

What choices can you make in order to help build the reputation you'd like to have?



A Ford Model A from 1928.



While cleaning under your bed, a place your cat loves to hide, you discover this snapshot. Imagine the secret vacation your pet has taken.

Do you think raising your hand in class is the fairest way to take turns talking or answering a question? Why or why not?

Do you think a different system would work better? If so, what would you suggest?



What happened?

Imagine the phone conversation between the woman in the photo and the person on the other end of the line. Who is she calling, and what is she saying?



Write about monsters.





True or false?

Write about an event or experience that actually happened in your life. Then, write about one that didn't.

If you have time, challenge a friend to figure out which is the true story.

If a land “far, far away” really existed,
what do you think it would be like?





When you're having a rough day, what activities help improve your mood? Do you go for a walk? Chat with friends? Take some solo time?

Make a list of your favorite mood-boosting activities.

At the back of your closet, buried behind the winter coats and old brooms, you discover a keyhole. Your parents explain that no one knows where the key to the lock is and they doubt the small door could possibly serve any purpose. The next morning, you awake to find a small silver key in your shoe. How did it get there? What will happen next?





An *idiom* is a group of words whose meaning isn't obvious from looking at the individual words. Idioms have developed over time and often rely on analogies and metaphors.

Choose an idiom from this list below or another favorite idiom. Draw a picture of what it literally means and then create a short comic strip showing how to use the idiom in a situation.

To hit the books (to study)

To spill the beans (to accidentally tell a secret)

To be under the weather (to feel a bit sick)

To pay an arm and a leg (to pay a lot of money)

To break the bank (to be expensive)

To keep your chin up (to stay strong)

To be a piece of cake (to be task that's easy to do)

To be in hot water (to be in trouble)

"Great oaks from little acorns grow."

—Latin proverb

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. How might it relate to your life? Why do you think this proverb has been passed down for centuries?



Write about a time you volunteered in your community. What did you do? Have you continued to volunteer since then?

If you have yet to volunteer, write about a way you would like to serve your community. What skills do you think you could offer? Who would you want to serve? Do you have a specific project in mind already?





Write a letter to a teacher who has made a positive impact on your life. How did this teacher help you get to where you are today?

People expect snails to be slow. But do they have to be? Choose an animal and imagine how the addition of a little technology and some accessories could change it in an unexpected way. Write about your animal's modifications and how these changes improve its life.





What does rain sound like when it falls on the roof? What does it smell like and feel like? How do rainy days make you feel? Write a poem about rain.

The Power of Persuasion

Choose an environmental issue that's important to you and write a short persuasive article to convince others to care about this issue too. How can you use facts, word choice, and the power of personal connection to make a strong argument?





What things make you feel **sad**?
What does sadness feel like to you?
Do you think it's okay to feel sad
sometimes? Why or why not?



Invent a new holiday. What is it called? When and how do you celebrate it? What special clothes, songs, decorations, foods, and traditions are associated with your new holiday?
What makes your holiday unique?

Write a character description for the woman in the photo. Include details about where she lives and works, plus her favorite activities, TV shows, books, and food.

Next, create the text conversation she's having. What text message made her so happy?



Onomatopoeia is the creation of a word that sounds like the sound it describes. Examples:

- boom
- crunch
- click
- animal sounds, like moo

Think about all the sounds you hear during the average morning, from your alarm clock, to milk splashing onto your cereal, to the sound of the door closing behind you. Using onomatopoeia, make a sound log of all of that you hear and do your best to capture each sound.



"Statistically, 100 percent of the shots you don't take don't go in."

—Wayne Gretsky

Explain what you think this quotation might mean, using your own words. How might it relate to your life?





How do you **relax**? Write about your favorite ways to chill out, calm down, and let worries float away.

As an adult, do you want to live in a city? Why or why not?

If so, where would you want to live? What attracts you to this city?

If not, where would you want to live? What attracts you to this place?





Write about something great that happened recently in your life.

When have you felt **strong**? Was it while playing sports? Or standing up for what's right? Or helping a friend in need? Write about this moment.





What's the best way to make someone feel cared for?

Find inspiration for the beginning of a short story in this image.



Biosphere in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.



Write about a time when you took a risk. What did you learn about yourself from that experience?

100





“Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.”

—Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*

How have fairy tales played a role in your life? Which stories stand out most in your mind? What do you think you’ve learned from these tales?

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

—Eleanor Roosevelt

What does this quotation tell us about who gets to make the choice about how we feel? Can you think of a time when you let someone else decide how you felt about yourself? Was it someone who called you names or embarrassed you in front of your classmates?

How did you feel in that moment? Looking back, how might you have handled things differently?





Do you think people should keep pets? Why or why not?

Do you think some animals are okay to keep as pets, while others are not? What makes a difference in your mind?

Little did she know that she was actually feeding the chicken magic seeds that would change their family farm forever. ...

Continue the story and challenge yourself to make it as wild, magical, and strange as possible!



Have you ever been left out? What happened? How did it feel?

What should you do if you see someone sitting alone while everyone else is off with friends?





If you hosted a radio show or podcast, what would it be called? What would you talk about? What guests would you interview? What music would you play?

What do you think about tests?





Should all students learn a foreign language? Why or why not?

Which language(s) do you already speak? Which language(s) would you like to learn? Why?

The mist was thick that morning as Pascal pushed his small rowboat into the calm waters of the lake. It was just after dawn, and he hoped to catch a glimpse of the very rare [INSERT fantasy beast name here], which he had been seeking for months. Suddenly, [CONTINUE the story from here]





When people communicate, it's not only what they say, but how they say it. Certainly, words can take on a different meaning if they're whispered or if they're shouted.

Brainstorm a list of verbs that could be used instead of *said*.

Write about the ways you've grown over the past year. Think about how you've grown:

- academically
- socially
- emotionally
- physically





With a tap of her finger, the message was sent. And now, across the city, her friends were finding out the truth she had wanted to share with them for so long. She smiled as she gazed at the words on the screen. They read:

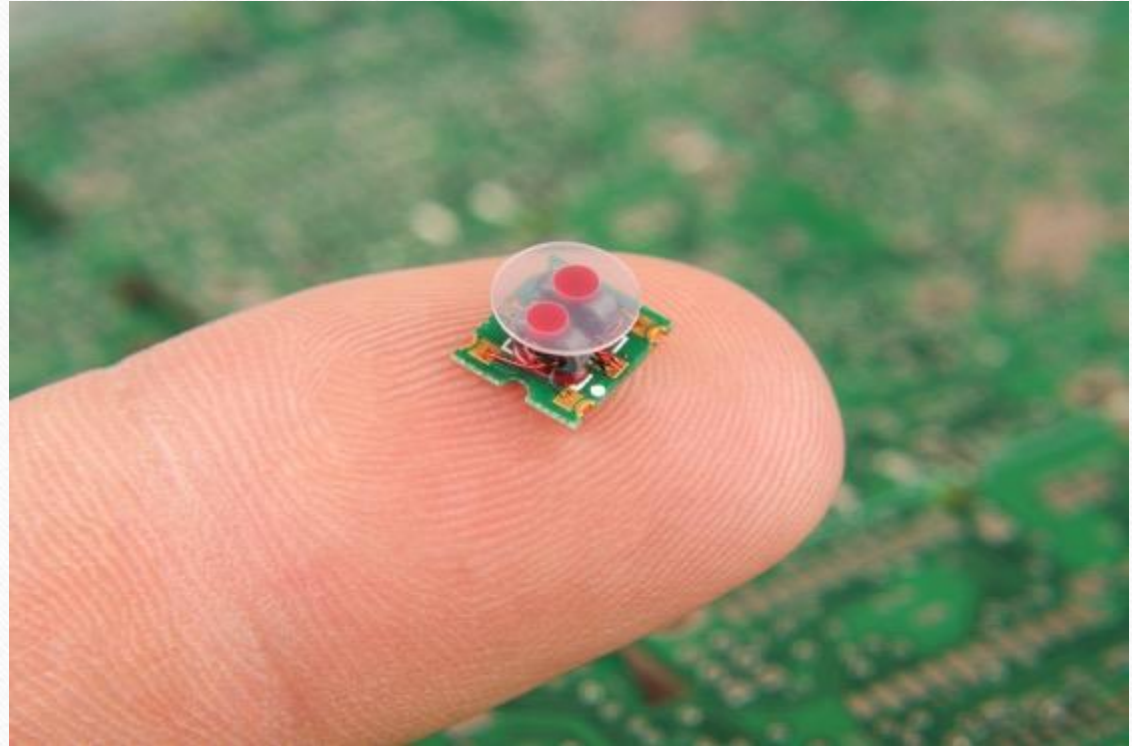
Editing is an important part of writing. Read the story starter below and make changes to it as you copy it onto your own paper. Can you find the spelling and grammatical errors? Do you see a run-on sentence you can fix? How can you add more details? How can you make the first line more exciting?

One day their was an owl that came to the window. It was white. In it's beak was a letter addressed to George Marmalade, but I didn't know anyone named George, so I just put the letter on the table and then got some orange juice and some cookies and then I went to the backyard and the owl was sitting they're just waiting for me. I said, Shoo! But it didn't leave.

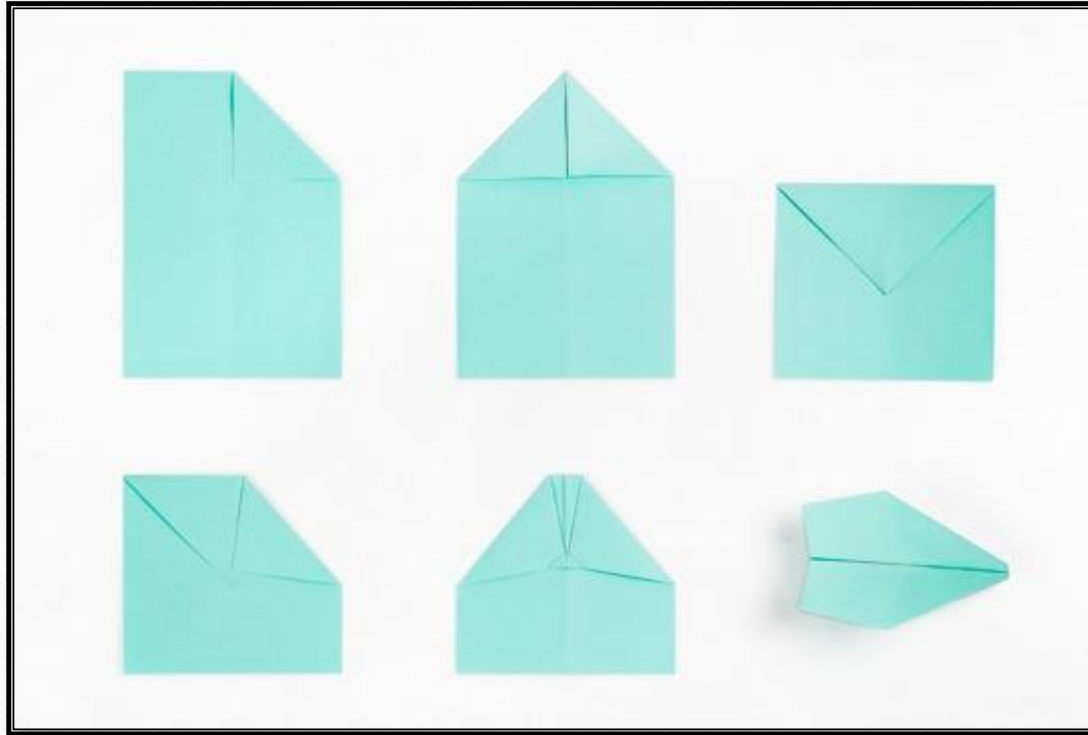
Continue the story after you edit it.



Create an advertisement for the world's first wearable mini computer. Be sure to include its name, features (so many useful features!), the different ways it can be worn, and where to buy one.



What is this actually? It's an RF transformer.



Write a detailed tutorial explaining how to do a certain task (like tying one's shoe) or make a certain item (like a sandwich). Imagine the person reading your tutorial has no previous experience and will need to know every single step, no matter how small or simple.



Plastic waste is everywhere, including our oceans, rivers, and lakes. How can you reduce, reuse, or recycle to minimize your impact on our environment? Write a list of your ideas.

What have you learned from
older people?



WE ARE
TEACHERS



Are there mysteries you'd like to explore? What are the people, places, or things that have left you wondering? Write about the questions that keep your brain spinning.

“When given the choice between being right or being kind ... choose to be kind.”

—Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

Reflect on this quotation. What might be a situation where a person is forced to choose between being kind and being right? What does this quotation tell us about the importance of kindness? What does kindness mean to you?



Compliments feel great! Write a compliment for as many classmates as possible. Be as specific as you can about what you noticed.





When you think about your future,
what do you see?

Try to include as much detail as
possible.



Imagine that you're a scientist who studies wildlife. While walking through the Amazon, you and your group notice vultures hovering over something large. As you get closer, you discover that that something is a humpback whale. How did it get there, so far away from the ocean?