

Summer Writing Prompts

Grades 9–12

As soon as the bell rings on the last day of the academic year, most students turn their attention toward all the fun things they are going to do during their summer break. This enthusiasm for summer can actually be used as a source of motivation for writing that will keep their literacy skills sharp!

Practicing responding to creative writing prompts at home can help students strengthen skills such as crafting a narrative, establishing a clear sequence of events, developing an argument, and more. Creative writing can also help young students develop stronger reading skills, especially when they are encouraged to read their written responses aloud.

This guide includes summer-themed creative fiction and nonfiction writing prompts for teens in Grades 9-12. While originally intended for use in the home during summer, these prompts would also be appropriate for classroom use. The prompts were written to encourage responders to draw from various literacy skills included in the [Common Core ELA Writing Standards](#).

Reflection and Feedback—Suggestions for Caregivers and Educators

When administering these prompts, provide teens with ample time to respond thoroughly and carefully. After writing, there are a few different feedback methods that may be helpful.

Independent Reflection

- Encourage writers to go back over what they have written to check for spelling, grammar, or logical errors.
- Encourage writers to read their written responses aloud. Some may have an easier time hearing mistakes than seeing them on the page.

Peer Feedback

- If multiple teens are participating in this activity, encourage them to read one another's responses. Then, have them share what they liked about the other writers' responses, and any questions they have about them.

Caregiver/Educator Feedback

- Read over the responses. Check for the following elements:
 - Do their responses effectively address the question of the prompt?

- Did they structure their narratives with a clear progression of events and/or ideas?
- Did they successfully implement narrative techniques such as dialogue, descriptive language, and sensory details?
- Do they back up any argumentative claims with logical supporting details?
- Do their responses include clear and effective conclusions?
- Did they demonstrate repeated or consistent mechanical errors, such as issues with spelling, sentence structure, or punctuation? If so, provide corrective feedback.
- Pick one or two areas of feedback to highlight for your writers and take time to discuss them together. You may be able to find additional resources on the web to provide practice opportunities in particular areas where improvement is needed. Be sure to also point out a few things that they are doing well in their writing.

Lastly, celebrate the writing process! Encourage writers to share their responses with friends, family members, and other loved ones. Perhaps they could send a handwritten copy of their response to a grandparent or call up a cousin and read what they wrote over the phone. And if a writer seems passionate about a specific prompt or topic, encourage them to keep writing about it, either via more guided practice or as something to do in their free time!

Additional Resources

- For more information on writing prompts, read our [Understanding and Responding to Writing Prompts Guide](#).

Grades 9-12 Writing Prompts

The writing prompts that are listed below are also included on the pages that follow with fillable fields where teens can write their responses via typing.

Fiction

The Summer Olympics takes place every four years. Develop a fictional narrative that takes place during this special event. Focus on a specific sport, and tell a story about a character who participates in that event. How do they feel before, during, and after the event? Do they do well? Do they win? Use narrative techniques such as character development, dialogue, and description to show the reader what happens. Imagine that you are a lifeguard working at a pool for the summer.

Develop a fictional narrative describing a day at work. What happens on this day? Try to use dialogue where possible and include multiple characters in your story.

Some teens like to spend their summers reading beachy summer romcoms. Use your imagination to write a fictional story about a dreamy summer meet-cute. Be sure to use descriptive language and dialogue to make the story of how the characters met come to life.

Have you ever taken a summer road trip? Develop a fictional narrative about a group of friends who take an exciting road trip together. Be sure to use dialogue and descriptive language to create unique characters and clear events.

Summer is a great time to jump in the pool and cool off. Develop a fictional narrative that takes place at a summer pool party. What kind of people attend the party? What do they do? What do they say? Use descriptive language and dialogue to show what happens next.

Nonfiction

Do you have a summer job? Write a nonfiction narrative using descriptive details to tell what happens during an average day in your job. If you don't have a summer job, develop a narrative explaining what kind of job you wish you had and why.

Not everyone likes to spend their summer outdoors. What kinds of indoor activities do you like to do in the summer? Do you do things indoors at home? Or, do you go to other indoor venues? Write a nonfiction narrative telling about your favorite indoor summer activity. Be sure to use descriptive details and to organize your thoughts in a logical manner.

A playlist with the hottest songs of the summer is a key element of any summer trip. What kinds of music do you like to listen to? Do you have any favorite artists, bands, or genres? Write a nonfiction narrative describing your favorite types of music and explaining why you think they are the best. Be sure to use convincing details to back up your arguments and to organize your thoughts in a logical order.

Some students use summer break as a time to look ahead to the future. They may use this time to tour colleges, research trade schools, or apply for jobs. Write a nonfiction narrative telling what you would like to do after you graduate from high school. Be sure to give supporting details to explain your plans.

Would you ever want to spend a whole summer abroad? Write a nonfiction narrative telling where you would want to go and what you would want to do there. Be sure to explain your reasoning using clear and descriptive details.

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