



WRITING PROMPTS FOR NEWSPAPER SERIES 2012-13

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, K-12, ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT BY SUBMITTING BEST WORK DONE IN OR OUT OF SCHOOL, OR BY RESPONDING TO THESE WEEKLY PROMPTS. HERE'S HOW TO POST WORK ON YOUNGWRITERSPROJECT.ORG: LOG IN, CLICK "WRITE" TO CREATE A BLOG, FILL IN THE TITLE AND BODY OF THE WORK AND GIVE IT A GENRE TAG. FOR PUBLICATION IN THE NEWSPAPER SERIES – 21 NEWSPAPERS AND ON VPR.NET – CLICK "YES" JUST BELOW THE "SAVE" BUTTON. FILL OUT THE INFORMATION BOXES (PROMPT, AUTHOR NAME, SCHOOL, GRADE; AUTHOR NAME WILL NOT BE PUBLICLY VISIBLE). DON'T FORGET TO CLICK "SAVE"! STUDENTS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO UPLOAD PHOTOS, SCANNED ARTWORK OR AUDIO NARRATIONS. MORE INFORMATION ON YOUNGWRITERSPROJECT.ORG.

1 Remember. Write about your earliest memory. As a first step, make up a list of memories and then choose the most vivid. Use all of your senses to tell the story. *Alternates: General writing.* Share your best writing from the summer – in any genre; *or* **Photo 1.** Write a poem based on this photo. **Due Sept. 21**



Photo 1 © Caitria Sands/Essex High School 2011

2 Elevator. You're stuck in an elevator with a stranger. Create a short story, shaped primarily with dialogue, about your interaction with this person who is either annoying, funny or terrified. *Alternate: Habit.* What's the worst habit you're willing to admit to? Write about the great lengths you go to, to break this habit. **Due Sept. 28**

3 Awesome. Write a mini-story (maximum three paragraphs) without adjectives. Find the perfect noun for everything in the story. *Alternates: Observer.* You witness something frightening or wrong. Don't describe the scene; focus on your own response; *or* **Photo 2.** Write about this photo. **Due Oct. 5**



Photo 2 © Becca LeBlanc/Essex High School 2011

4 Haunted. You and your friends are exploring an old, abandoned house when things suddenly turn scary. What happens? *Alternates: Candidate.* Write a short, catchy political ad for yourself. Whether you're running for President of the United States or local office, convince voters to vote for you!; *or* **General writing** in any genre. **Due Oct. 12**

5 Flying. You are flying blissfully and effortlessly over the countryside. What do you see and feel? *Alternates: Fan.* Write a fan letter to someone. It can be a celebrity, a loved one, an 18th century poet – anyone; *or* **Photo 3.** What happened here? Or what is about to happen? **Due Oct. 19**



Photo 3 © Karlo Fresl/Essex High School 2011

6 Alone. Write a piece that begins with the following line: *I stood at the window, watching the red tail lights disappear...* *Alternate: Listen.* Pick a moment – in the hall at school, in the general store, anywhere – and listen. Choose the most interesting conversation you hear and base a story on it. **Due Oct. 26**

7 Winter Tales. Tell a narrative about winter in short, descriptive poetry or prose. The best will be selected for presentation by the Vermont Stage Company at its annual Winter Tales production at

FlynnSpace in Burlington (Dec. 5-9, 2012). *Alternate: Favorite place.* What is the special place where you really like to be, where you feel most alive? Imagine yourself there and tell a story about it. **Due Nov. 2**

8 Family. Write about a moment or experience with a family member that changed you. *Alternate: Photo 4.* This boy has something to say. What is it? **Due Nov. 9**



Photo 4 Dummerston, VT. August 1941. © Jack Delano (Library of Congress)

9 Light/Darkness. Use the idea of extreme contrast in any way you'd like, such as day vs. night, good vs. evil. Create a story or poem that centers on extreme contrast. *Alternate: Superpower.* You are granted superpowers: What superpower would you pick and why? Imagine an anecdote of you using that superpower. **Due Nov. 16**

10 Ideal being. What do you think makes someone the "ideal" person? What is the most important characteristic that a person must have? *Alternates: Change.* Write to the president of a company about a product that you think must be changed. It can be real or fictional; *or*

Photo 5. Write about this photo. **Due Nov. 23**



Photo 5 © Anna Mechler/Essex High School 2011

11 If only... Write about a situation in which you wish you had done things differently. *Alternates: Dialogue day.* Tell a story using only dialogue; *or* **General writing** in any genre. **Due Nov. 30**

12 Object. An inanimate object comes alive and tells you how it *really* feels. *Alternate: Excuse.* Create the wildest excuse you can think of for why you didn't do something, why you were so late, why you can't go. It must stretch the imagination yet still remain credible. **Due Dec. 7**

13 Reflection. What is something you wish you'd been told when you were five years old? *Alternate: Photo 6.* Write about this photo. **Due Dec. 14**



Photo 6. Title: Tower 22, Mad River Glen, VT 2006 © Jet Lowe (Library of Congress)

Did the person know? Tell the story. *Alternates: Unsafe.* Describe a place or circumstance where you felt unsafe; or **General writing.** **Due Dec. 21**

15 Puns. Have fun with a play on words (i.e. cereal number, sell phone, etc.). Try to fit in as many puns as you can. Be creative! *Alternates: Essential.* What's one thing you absolutely could not live without? Why?; or **I believe...** Start a piece with the words, I believe. **Due Jan. 11**

16 Invisible. Imagine that you are invisible for a day and could be anywhere at any time in history, witnessing without participating. What do you see? *Alternates: General writing; or Photo 7.* Write a poem based on this picture. **Due Jan. 18**



Photo 7 © Brady Bessette/Essex High School 2011

17 I like... Create a list of things you like. They can be random and unrelated or they can have a progression and tell a story within a story. *Alternate: Relief.* Describe the moment when you felt the greatest sensation of relief from thirst, hunger, sadness, pain or fear. **Due Jan. 25**

18 Three letters. Choose three letters. You can write a poem or a short story, but all words must either start or end with these letters. *Alternate: Bottle.* You're walking along the beach and a bottle

14 Kindness. You have performed an act of kindness. What is it? How does it make you feel? What happens?

with a message inside washes up on the shore. What is the message? What do you do? **Due Feb. 1**

19 Surprising. Interview someone you know and ask the person to tell you a story you'd never heard. *Alternate: Photo 8.* Write a story or poem based on this photo. **Due Feb. 8**

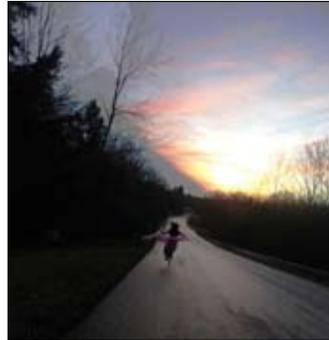


Photo 8. © Kayla Rideout/Essex High School 2011

20 Package. The UPS truck arrives with a huge box addressed to you. What's inside? Who's it from? *Alternate: General writing* in any genre. **Due Feb. 15**

21 Eternal night. You wake up one morning and the sun doesn't rise. It doesn't rise the next day either. What do you do? *Alternate: Silver lining.* When bad things happen, how do you recover? **Due Feb. 22**

22 Egg. You go outside one day and find a big, purple egg in your backyard. You keep the egg for a few days and then it hatches. What happens? *Alternates: General writing; or Photo 9.* What's the story? **Due March 1**



Photo 9. Hyde Park, VT, Aug. 1936 © Carl Mydans (Library of Congress)

23 Lesson. You are sitting in a park and an old man sits down beside you. At first you are annoyed, but he teaches you something that you had no idea you could do. What is it? *Alternate: Rhyming poetry.* Write a poem that follows any strict rhyming scheme. **Due March 8**

24 Outrageous. Write a story that begins, This is the funniest story I've ever heard... *Alternate: Thirty-five.* You wake up and you are suddenly 35 years old. What is your life like now? **Due March 15**

25 Six words. Create as many six-word stories as you can. *Alternates: News story.* Write an opinion piece based on a current news story. Take a side and make a persuasive argument – in a maximum of three paragraphs; or **General writing.** **Due March 22**

26 Promise. Write about a promise you made but couldn't keep. *Alternate: Strength.* Write about a time when you had to be strong, physically or mentally. **Due March 29**

27 Mystery. Something very strange just happened, and you don't know how or why. Write a story. Be succinct. *Alternate: Photo 10.* Write about this photo – from any angle. **Due April 5**

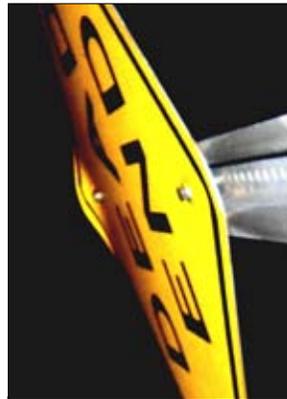


Photo 10. © Katy Trahan/Essex High School, 2011

28 Dislike. Write about something that disgusts you, no matter how wrong, distasteful, or awkward it is. *Alternate: Fairy tale.* Write a fairy tale that includes the phrase, "one thousand peas." **Due April 12**

29 Scared. What really scares you? Why? Tell a story about when you confronted it. *Alternate: White lie.* Write about a little white lie that grows and turns into a bigger lie until you can't keep up. **Due April 19**

30 Technology. Your cell phone is broken and you can't get a new one. It's your first day without it. What happens? *Alternate: Photo 11.* Write about this photo. **Due April 26**



Photo 11 Falling to Earth © Li Wei

31 Long ago. Write a journal/diary entry of someone from a different time period – past or future. What was everyday life like? What's important about this specific entry? *Alternate: Being right.* Describe a time when you were sure that you were right, but someone else refused to see your view. How was it resolved? **Due May 3**

32 Music. Choose a piece of music and write a story that flows from it. Tell us what music you were listening to. *Alternate: Three wishes.* What would you wish for – in three sentences? **Due May 10**

33 Vacation. Recall a specific moment on a favorite vacation and describe it. Or imagine your perfect vacation. *Alternate: General writing* in any genre. **Due May 17**