

# Ideas and prompts to start you writing

## Think about...

### You as a writer

- What is your culture and background? How will you bring your own voice into your poem or story?
- Who are the main characters and what are they doing in the story?
- Because we don't have long to get involved in your story – how do you make the reader interested in the characters or their situations?
- Make sure you've got a great middle and ending as well as a great start to your story!
- Does the story end with a twist, or a shock, or does it leave the reader wondering what happens next?

### You as a poet

- What sort of poem is it? Types of poem include rhymes, narrative poems, shape poems, acrostics, haikus.
- Is it meant to be read aloud or performed?
- How is the poem meant to make the reader feel?

### Illustrations and comic books

- Will the story be illustrated? If so, how will the pictures contribute to the storytelling?
- The winning entries will all be published in black and white.
- If you're drawing a comic book, make sure you leave enough space for speech bubbles

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## The theme: *Extraordinary!*

### What does 'Extraordinary' mean to you?

### What makes something extraordinary?

- Something unusual, strange and out of the ordinary
- Something amazing and wonderful
- Something unexpected
- Something new, exciting or awe-inspiring

## Extraordinary characters

### Extraordinary characters

#### Heroes (and villains!)

Heroes and villains stand out and are remembered long after you've finished reading their stories. What will your hero or villain do that is extraordinary?

- Doing something that no one else would dare to do  
Creating something incredible or unbelievable

#### Ordinary people who do extraordinary things

**Everyday Heroes** – An unsung hero (a person who performs small, unnoticed acts) changes lives in big ways. Write about how doing seemingly ordinary acts, can have an extraordinary impact on people's lives.

**Finding the extraordinary in the ordinary** – What is it about you or your family or the place that you're from that makes you extraordinary?

**The Extraordinary Days of Mr. Nobody** – A man who has lived an unremarkable life for years wakes up one day with extraordinary powers! What are his newfound powers? How will he use them? Why has this happened to him? Is he the only one to get these powers?

**Chronicles of a Forgotten Superpower** – A character has an extraordinary ability they've kept hidden for years, but one fateful day, they're forced to use it. What is their power, why have they hidden it, and what unfolds after they reveal it?

**A Portrait of the Extraordinary** – In a dystopian society, people are judged by their "Extraordinary Score." A low-scoring character begins to question the true meaning of value and worth. What does society consider extraordinary? Are there other ways to be extraordinary?

**The Last Ordinary Day** – At the age of 12, humans develop extraordinary powers! Sometimes these powers are good and sometimes they are bad. How do characters react on their final days before becoming extraordinary? What changes will occur once they have changed?

### **Can being ordinary be extraordinary?**

**The Extraordinary Club** – In a school where extraordinary skills are the norm, a group of “ordinary” students start an underground club to embrace their “mediocre” talents. Write about their adventures, friendships, and what they learn about themselves and each other.

**A World Without Ordinary** – Imagine a world where everything is extraordinary—no one has an „average“ skill or appearance, and everyone stands out. Create a story from the perspective of a character who becomes the first “ordinary” person born in centuries.

**The Extraordinary Within** – Your protagonist has no special powers, no supernatural abilities, and no unique talent, but they find themselves tasked with saving someone—or something—important. Write about their journey and the unexpected strength they discover.

### **Extraordinary places**

#### **Extraordinary Places**

Let your imagination run free! What do you think of when you imagine somewhere extraordinary?

**Discovering somewhere extraordinary** – Is there somewhere unusual or incredible behind a door on your street, or just around the corner, or a train or plane journey away? Is this place real or imaginary? What would you find there?

There’s a building in front of you, on your street, that was never there before. Behind the door is the place that everyone’s told you doesn’t exist...

You take a wrong turning and find yourself alone and unable to find your way home. You realise that you've arrived at the place where everything that's ever been lost can be found...

**Extraordinary imagination** – A child with a vivid imagination creates a portal to an extraordinary world with the power of their imagination. What would this world be like? How did this happen?

**Letters to an Extraordinary Stranger** – Your protagonist starts receiving letters from someone leading them to an extraordinary world. Who is sending these letters? Where do they lead?

## Extraordinary creatures and objects

### Extraordinary Creatures

**Fantastic Creatures** – A book of extraordinary creatures starts bringing them into the real world after it is read by the protagonist. What kind of creatures are brought to life? Can they exist in the real world?

### Extraordinary Objects

**The Extraordinary Artifact** – A collector discovers an ancient artifact with mysterious powers. Where did it come from? What powers does it possess? How will people use these powers?

**The Mirror of Extraordinary Truth** – A mirror shows people the most extraordinary version of themselves. How do they achieve this version of themselves? Do they want to achieve it? What makes someone extraordinary.

## Extraordinary situations

### Extraordinary situations

**Were you just having an ordinary day when the most unexpected thing happened?**

**The day everything Became Strange** – An ordinary town that experiences a day of extraordinary events. Strange animals appear, colours change,

people's abilities shift. What caused these extraordinary things to occur? How will people react? When will they stop?

How did that happen?! – Something you thought was impossible just happened! Dinosaurs return to life. A wanted criminal becomes the president of the USA. A vampire is given a job as your new headteacher. Your uncle arrives with a new pet mammoth. A giant doughnut falls from the sky. Everyone in the world can suddenly only speak in a strange new language. A new colour is discovered... What else could happen unexpectedly?

It's a miracle! – Something unexpected happened and the hero of the story has everything they thought they wanted. What is this, and is it really as good as it seems?

## Genres

### **Pick a genre or style**

What style of story are you writing? A genre is a type of story. You may have a favourite – like funny stories or ghost stories.

#### **Realistic Fiction**

These are stories that are made up but could really happen in real life. They can be set anywhere in the world today. Use this genre to write about things that are personal to you – this can be serious or humorous.

#### **Mystery**

These stories feature crimes, mysteries or puzzles to be solved. They're usually resolved at the end of the story. Sometimes the reader is aware of the solution to the mystery from the start and sometimes the reader discovers the secret along with the characters.

#### **Historical Fiction**

These stories are based on real events in the past and usually feature characters who are real figures from history. The story usually ends as it did in real life, but perhaps shows the events from a different viewpoint. Sometimes stories present alternative histories where the writer can explore what could have happened if things happened differently.

### **Fairy Tale/Folktale**

These are stories featuring imaginary and often magical characters and creatures that are based on stories that may have been told for hundreds of years and passed down through word-of-mouth. Often the stories have moral messages or warnings to the reader and they can be retold in lots of different ways.

### **Fantasy**

These are stories set in universes that can be very different from ours — places where magic is common and the typical laws of nature don't apply. Some fantasy stories are set in worlds like ours but where certain fantasy elements can exist — for example magic or super powers.

### **Science Fiction**

Sci-fi or science fiction stories usually include elements of advanced technologies can take place in the future or even in space. There are some variations on science fiction that are about possible futures for particular cultural groups — for example Afrofuturism. Others are about how things won't improve in the future or may get a lot worse, for example dystopian fiction or cyberpunk.

### **Horror**

These stories are written to scare the reader! They can feature ghosts and other supernatural or fantastical creatures, or be set in the real world and feature scary things that could really happen or have happened.

## **Build a story**

### **It's important to plan your story before you start writing.**

Most stories have a beginning, middle and end. Before you start writing, make sure you know what will happen at these three points.

### **Things to do to help you plan your story**

- Quickly write down your ideas before you forget them!
- Draw pictures of what will happen in the story
- Create your characters
- Write down where the story will take place

### **Writing the story**

**In the beginning of the story, establish your setting and characters.**

- Write an amazing opening line!
- Introduce your hero and set their story in motion
- Explain when the story is taking place and set the scene.
- Write about what's happening and make sure the reader is interested!

**In the middle of the story, add conflict and a problem to solve. Our character(s) will come across a major problem, obstacle or dilemma.**

- Introduce new characters (this could include a villain) and perhaps new settings  
Make sure the reader wants the hero to succeed  
Make things difficult for your hero!

**At the end of the story your character has to solve or resolve the problem to reach their goal. This is the resolution. The ending could be happy or sad.**

- Don't just end the story in one or two lines. Make sure you have enough words left to write a proper ending!



- If the hero succeeds, make sure it's believable. Could the hero you've written actually have done this?
- Is there a twist?

### ○ **Build a character**

- Things to think about when creating a character:
- Make sure this is a character that you're interested in writing about. Is the character similar to you or someone you know?
- Name : Give your character a name that people can remember. Choose a name that fits their background, culture and identity.
- Setting : Where would your character live or spend time? Make sure that the character fits into the world in your story!
- What does your character want? How will they react to what happens in the story? If they're the hero, what they want will shape the whole story.
- Appearance : What does your character look like? Do they have any unusual features or act in a certain way? Use adjectives (describing words) to bring your characters to life.
- Job : What does your character do? Do they go to school? Are they a ballerina? A vampire hunter? A supervillain? Choose something that fits with the story you want to write
- Clothing : What does your character wear? This can help people get to know the character better.
- Likes and dislikes : What does your character like and dislike? Do they love football? Do they hate Brussels sprouts?
- Important! If you're writing a short story, don't spend lots of words on descriptions that the reader (and the story) doesn't need! Only write that your hero hates sprouts if they're eating Christmas dinner or fighting a 20 ft high Brussels sprout monster.