

Writing Prompts

Hello! I'm Ali Luke, a freelance writer and writing coach. These prompts are taken from [Writers' Cafe](#), my online community for writers.

As well as weekly writing prompts, we have weekly check-ins for members to share their progress, plus live writing hours where we get together, briefly share what we'll be working on, then write.

Using the Writing Prompts

You can use these writing prompts in any way you like.

You may want to simply take the prompt word and brainstorm some ideas around it, you might like to focus on the image, or you may want to use my thoughts about the prompt to help spur your own ideas.

The prompts can be used to start you off on a new piece of writing, or they can help you bring a new element or fresh perspective to what you're working on.

They're a little more geared up to fiction writers than nonfiction writers, though you could certainly use these prompts for nonfiction too.

Prompt 1: Waves



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

You might want to think about:

- How could you use your senses to take in the image? Think of the sound of the crashing waves or the fresh sea-salt scent in the air.
- The blue colour in the centre of the image is unusually heightened and artificial. Do you like that or not? Why?
- Is there an emotion attached to the image for you? How could you use that in your writing?

Prompt 2: Money



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

You might want to think about:

- What words or images come to mind when you think about money? What meaning or significance could a wallet have in your piece?
- What might “money” represent in your story? Is there conflict or tension around money, or between characters with different access to (or values around) money?
- For non-fiction, how does your audience feel about money?
- What might money look like in the future: how will we store and spend it? How about in a historical society, within a niche community, or on a different planet?

Prompt 3: Dice



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

You might want to think about:

- What different meanings could be associated with dice? Board games and gambling are obvious ones ... but you might also think more broadly about ideas like chance, superstition (having a “lucky dice”) and fate.
- What chances are characters taking in your story? How do they feel about these risks?
- We don’t just gamble with money ... people can “gamble with” their reputation or their health too, for instance. Could this play into what you’re writing?

Prompt 4: Strawberries



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

You might want to think about:

- What associations do you have with “strawberries”? They could be a sign of summer arriving ... and they’re also often associated with romantic meals.
- Who picked these strawberries? Who grew them? Who’s going to eat them?
- The vibrant red of the fruit and green of the leaves provides a stark contrast. What contrasts or opposites are already present in your story? How could you bring those out even more?

Prompt 5: Storm



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

You might want to think about:

- What role might weather play in your story? It can be atmospheric ... but extreme weather could heighten tension or complicate the plot. Even an unseasonably hot, cold, or wet day might change things.
- The thunderstorm in the image above seems huge compared with the tiny buildings. Who in your story might be at the mercy of forces that are much bigger than they are?
- What thoughts or feelings do you associate with storms? Are they scary? Fascinating? Awe-inspiring? Cleansing? Oddly comforting? (Perhaps you're inside with a good book, listening to the rain hammering down.)

Prompt 6: Butterfly



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

You might want to think about:

- The evolution of the caterpillar into a butterfly, after a period of time in a cocoon. How are your characters changing and evolving? What kind of “cocooning” might they be doing? (Or, reflect on how a cocoon involves a caterpillar being broken down into a liquid before taking form as a butterfly... it’s not a gentle and nurturing process!)
- The “butterfly effect” — the idea that a tiny change in one place or time could have massive effects across the world (or far into the future). Could a small change in your story have a huge ripple effect?
- The symmetry of butterflies. How might you use some kind of symmetry in your story? Perhaps two characters reflect one another, or you’re using symmetry within your plot structure.

Prompt 7: Candle



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

Candles can mean all sorts of things. In your writing, a candle might be:

- A source of light in the darkness. Perhaps one of your characters needs a glimmer of light to see the way forward.
- A precarious and easily snuffed out light source. Candles can be extinguished with a breath or a pinch. Who in your story might be vulnerable?
- A focus for your attention. Whether you're writing fiction or non-fiction, you may want to spotlight a particular point or theme, drawing the reader's eye to it.

Prompt 8: Balloon



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

Balloons could carry a range of meanings:

- Balloons can easily pop or (if filled with helium) float away. Even when kept safe, they won't last for more than a few days. The image is bright in the foreground but very dark beyond the long grass at the back: is there a juxtaposition between joy or pleasure and a sense of loss or destruction?
- Some balloons float, filled with helium (or hot air!) ... but party balloons are often filled with people's breath. What are your characters giving their breath or life force to?
- If something *balloons*, it swells or expands rapidly. What might be ballooning — for good or bad — in your story?

Prompt 9: Ladder



Image source: [Pixabay](https://www.pixabay.com/)

Ladders are a useful tool ... and rich with symbolic meaning.

- Ladders help us reach somewhere high. What are your characters reaching for? What heights might they achieve (good or bad)?
- Often, someone will trust another person to hold the base of their ladder steady. How might trust and/or the need to rely on others come into your piece of writing?
- Ladders can be associated with success and progress: we talk about “climbing the rungs” of a career path, for instance. What kind of step-by-step progress could take place in your writing?

- Some people are frightened of heights or even phobic about them. What fears do your characters have? Will they overcome these in the course of your story or fall prey to them?
- Ladders are associated with superstition, too: perhaps you've been told it's unlucky to walk under a ladder. How could superstition play a role in your writing?

Prompt 10: Window



Image source: [Pixabay](#)

Windows let us peer through from one side to another. You might think about:

- Is your character on the inside looking out ... or outside looking in?
- The view through a window might be unclear or distorted (like the distortion in the bottom right pane of the window in the photo).
Where might your characters *think* they have a clear view ... only to get things subtly wrong?
- A window can be a liminal space, a threshold between two different worlds (figuratively or literally). What sort of liminal spaces might be present in your writing?
- The *lack* of windows can be unsettling and disorientating: casinos don't have windows, and most people prefer being in (e.g.) an office room with a window than one without. Could this play into some aspect of your story?

Get More Prompts (and Support!)

I hope you've enjoyed these writing prompts. If you'd like weekly prompts – along with weekly check-ins and support from fellow writers, regular live writing hours, and more – then take a look at Writers' Cafe.

Writers' Cafe

Writers' Cafe is my online community for writers of all kinds. Whether you're writing novels, blog posts, short stories, freelance articles, memoir, poetry, or something else entirely, we'd love to have you in the Cafe.

We're a friendly, supportive bunch of writers who'll cheer you on during the good weeks – and encourage you during the not-so-good ones.

In the Cafe, you'll find:

- Weekly writing prompts in case you need a little inspiration.
- Weekly check-ins to help you stay on track and accountable.
- Regular writing hours (3 per week) so you can make real progress.
- A dedicated Feedback space where you can share your work.
- Plenty of opportunities to ask me any writing questions you have.

We usually open up 3–4 times each year for new members.

You can find out all about the Cafe and join us (*or join the waiting list if we're not currently open*) here:

aliventures.com/writers-cafe