

**COURSE TITLE:**           **WRITING PROMPTS: Inspiring Young Writers**

**WA CLOCK HRS:**           **30**

**NO. OF CREDITS:**       **3 QUARTER CREDITS**  
                                  **[semester equivalent = 2.00 credits]**

**OREGON PDUs:**           **30**

**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** **30**

**INSTRUCTOR:**           **Doug Larson**  
                                  **doug@freedrama.net**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course focuses on helping students generate ideas for writing. Writing prompts are an excellent tool for inspiring young writers and effective writing prompts help brainstorm ideas. A variety of methods are introduced including written, visual, and video prompts, as a way to examine which approach works best for different learning styles. The course primarily helps develop basic creative writing skills, but can be applied to other types of writing as well. The focus of the class is to develop an enjoyment of writing and to learn how to have fun with it.

You do not need to work alone on these assignments and I encourage you to work with a group of teachers or group of your students on the lessons.

Writing Prompts:

- Encourage creativity and the use of imagination
- Assist young writers with developing new ideas
- Promotes a fun approach to writing
- Develops basic creative writing skills
- Provides new teaching methods for writing lessons
- Promotes critical thinking and imagination

This course is appropriate for Language Arts teachers, grades 3-12, but may be adapted for other subjects as well such as Social Studies and Science. I will be happy to help teachers adapt the class for other subject areas, as well as for non-creative writing lessons.

The textbook for the course will be "1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" by Bryan Cohen ISBN-13: 978-1493664955 which sells for approximately \$8 on amazon.com.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

- Identified writing prompts that are age appropriate for their classroom
- Described how they will use writing prompts in their classroom
- Selected writing prompts to go with classroom lessons
- Created lesson plans that use writing prompts
- Tested writing prompts in their classroom
- Evaluated which writing prompts work best in their classroom

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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## UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

### REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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### CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

### REQUIRED TEXT

The textbook for the course will be "1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" by Bryan Cohen ISBN-13: 978-1493664955 which sells for approximately \$8 on amazon.com.

*Creative Writing Prompts* are short questions or situations that are meant to inspire you to write. Far beyond the typical, "It was a dark and stormy night..." story starters, this new collection of 1,000 prompts has been specifically formulated to dig deep into the creative process. The prompts employ thought-provoking questions, imaginative scenarios and humor to help writers of all ages defeat writer's block. Author Bryan Cohen's previous books of writing prompts have sold more than 20,000 copies and include multiple Amazon best-sellers. Through his books and his website Build Creative Writing Ideas, Cohen has helped countless writers, teachers and students to blast through the blank page and the blinking cursor to create blogs, scripts, stories and more!

It's time to stop thinking and start writing. Get this book on your physical or digital shelf today.

- ***1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More (Story Prompts for Journaling, Blogging and Beating Writer's Block)***  
ISBN# 1493664956  
by Cohen, Bryan, Jones, Jeremiah  
CREATESPACE

[Buy from Amazon](#)

### MATERIALS FEE

\$8 text fee to be paid to amazon.com. or another bookseller of your choice. The text may also be available at local and school libraries for free.

## ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

### A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

### Assignment #1: Introduction

Introduce yourself with a 250-500 word background statement that includes the following:

- A description of your current professional situation.
- A discussion of issues you've had with students who have difficulty writing
- A list of your anticipated outcomes from taking this course.

### **Assignment #2: Selecting Writing Prompts**

Using the book for this class ("1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" by Bryan Cohen), find 10 writing prompts that you feel you could write with and 10 writing prompts you think your students would like. From this list, select a few of the prompts you like and write some ideas about each prompt. For example, if you were to write a story using one of these prompts, what might you write about? You do not need to have a finished story, but at least have some ideas for writing one.

If you are working with other teachers on this class, then you can select writing prompts together and brainstorm an idea together. If you are working with a group of students, you can write a summary of what the students wrote about for ideas. Once again, don't worry about a finished story to start with. As a writer, I don't usually jump in and start writing immediately. I often have lists of ideas and notes collected before I start. The idea is to play around with ideas first and have fun creating before worrying about the actual writing.

Write approximately 500-750 words covering:

- 10 writing prompts from the book.
- Ideas on how you could use each prompt with lessons you currently teach (50-75 words per prompt).
- A short summary of the results if you work with a group.
- Any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

### **Assignment #3: Using a Writing Notebook or Journal**

Another approach to generating ideas is using a writing notebook or journal.

Select a notebook or journal for your writing and carry it with you for a week. Set a goal to write throughout an entire week. Write about anything. Write about everything. Write about your day. Write about your dreams. Write, write and write some more. You can simply make a list of things that happen. Try to do something different during your day as a way to get inspiration. Go to a new store or restaurant, read a new book, watch a new show or movie. Also watch or read the news and make notes about interesting stories you see. Keep a notebook and write down your thoughts during the day. Write as much as possible and don't worry about it being good. Just do some writing and put some thoughts down on paper... as many as possible.

If you need extra help for yourself or your students, you can answer the following questions in your notebook or journal each day:

- What did you dream about?
- What is something that happened this morning?
- What is something new that you watched or read about today?
- What is something that happened in the middle of the day?
- What is something you ate today? Best thing? Worst thing?
- Who did you see?
- Where did you go?
- Why did you do the things you did today? Was there a purpose for what you were doing?

Look at your notebook or journal. Is there anything interesting you would like to write more about? Add ideas to your notes. You can write these additions in a difficult color ink as a way to keep track of new ideas. Be creative. Maybe you wrote a note about this great dessert you ate. Add more details about how good it was. Or be creative and write about how the dessert comes to life and tries to eat you! Or maybe the dessert gives you superpowers. Have fun with your notes. Be wacky. Be weird. Just have fun playing with new ideas.

If you are working with other teachers or a group of students on this class, then you can ask each person to select something from their notebook or journal to share. Have the group brainstorm ideas for a story from each person shares. Write a summary of what ideas are developed from the notebooks. Once again, don't worry about a finished story to start with.

Write approximately 500-750 words pages covering:

- Share what you learned from keeping a writing notebook or journal.
- Share something you would like to write more about.
- If you worked with a group, share a summary of what your group discussed.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

#### **Assignment #4: Writing Games**

Let's explore the gamification of writing. Select 20 prompts from the book ("1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" by Bryan Cohen). You can rewrite them and print them out or you can photocopy the pages. Cut out each prompt so that each is on a different little piece of paper. Put all the prompts in a hat or bag and then pull a prompt from the hat. Give yourself 5 minutes to write something. If you're working with a group, you can have one prompt drawn that everyone must work with or you can have the group brainstorm a group story together. Write down your best results from this activity.

Write approximately 250-500 words pages with the following:

- Share the results from playing a game with writing prompts (either something you wrote or what happened if you did a group activity).
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

#### **Assignment #5: Picture Prompts**

Using pictures is another way to develop writing ideas. Pictures can serve as visual prompts to stimulate ideas for writing. I have included several pictures you can work with (below). But you may search and find your own. Select 10 pictures you feel could be used for writing inspiration. Write a short note about each one. What do you think is happening in the picture? Who is in the picture? Where was the picture taken? (You can also explore ideas with some When? Why? And How? questions).

##### **Pictures**

[Birdman](#)

[Bubble Gum Cowgirls](#)

[Cat in Space](#)

[Chimp Games](#)

[Drive In Movie](#)

[Flying Baby](#)

[Hair Raising](#)

[Mr. Meow](#)

[Musical Robot](#)

[Mysterious Couple](#)

[On the Run](#)

[Pulling Teeth](#)

[Rain Cats](#)

[Steam Train](#)

[Super Ski](#)

[The Unicorn and the Cat](#)

[UFO](#)

[Weird Hat](#)

Write approximately 500-750 words covering:

- Create a Word document or PowerPoint and share 10 pictures with short notes about what you might write about with each picture.
- If you work in a group, share the results from the group activity.
- You may share your results with PowerPoint or Word.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

#### **Assignment #6: Video Prompts**

Watching videos can also inspire ideas for writing.

View the following videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMxdkLtjy0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIGqDx5yEOI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ow2ibWNzBg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhfvCSp7OIM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTimaykm2hY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jQnvLdXbGA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A6KVVMl3dY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBAQLofU1ag>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jm9Kt7coMaw>

Write a short story idea for each one (25-50 words). If working in group, brainstorm ideas together and have someone record the ideas for the group.

Search online (i.e. YouTube) for videos that your students could gain inspiration from related to writing topics you teach. What are some ways you can use these videos with your current lessons?

Write approximately 500-750 words pages in which you:

- Share short ideas you (or your group) came up with from each video.
- Suggest two videos that relate to subjects your teach, which would work as video writing prompts for your students. Share which of your current lessons these videos would work with.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

### **Assignment #7: Finding the Best Writing Method**

Go back through all the different prompt activities and review which ones were most helpful to you. Decide which ones will work best for the classes and lessons you teach.

- Which type of prompt was easier for you to write with? (book, notebook/journal, game, picture, video)
- Which would you try first with your students?
- Which prompts do you feel will work best with which learning styles? (visual, auditory, verbal, physical)
- Which of your current lesson plans will benefit from the prompts? How will you use the prompts?

Write approximately 250-500 words pages covering:

- Responses to the questions in the assignment.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

### **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

#### **B. LEARNING APPLICATION**

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

## Assignment #8: Creating and Implementing a Lesson Plan

In this section you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you are a classroom teacher and start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning) or with students in another teacher's summer classroom.

Assignment #8-A:

- Create two lessons reflecting what you've learned in this course about effective writing prompts
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback or noteworthy student products.
- Submit your lesson to your instructor via the lesson tab below.
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by checking the lesson library box when you submit your lesson.

OR

Assignment #8-B:

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Adapt/create a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Write a 500+ word article concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- Please refer to the [guidelines](https://www.hol.edu/blog) for our blog [What Works: Teaching at its Best](https://www.hol.edu/blog) prior to writing your article. (<https://www.hol.edu/blog>)
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to Renee Leon, [renee@hol.edu](mailto:renee@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your article to your instructor via Response field and the modified lesson via Submit Lesson.
- As you submit your lesson, consider sharing it with other teachers taking our courses by checking the lesson library box.

## Assignment #9: Writing Prompts in Other Subjects

Use the book "1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" by Bryan Cohen and find writing prompts that will work with the following subjects: Math, Science and Social Studies. For example, in Math prompts might be used to help student write word problems. In Science or Social Studies, a writing prompt could be adapted and changed to include an upcoming topic that will be studied. Try teaching writing prompts in a different subject other than Language Arts. You can write a summary of how the lesson went or have the students write an evaluation with suggestions to improve the lesson.

Write approximately 500-750 words in which you:

- Summarize your results or write up student feedback and suggestions.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

## Assignment #10: Music Prompts

Music Prompts:

Music can also be an excellent writing prompt. Begin a collection of writing prompts related to what you teach. Ideally, find songs that relate to topics you cover in your classes.

Songs such as Coldplay's Viva La Vida have interesting lyrics that tell a story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvgZkm1xWPE>

Selecting popular songs that kids will connect with is helpful:

Counting Stars - One Republic [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hT\\_nvWrelhg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hT_nvWrelhg)

Hall of Fame - The Script with will.i.am <https://youtu.be/mk48xRzuNvA>

Monster - Imagine Dragon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0Ctbkv8lQs>

A variation on this assignment would be to try using music in the background during lessons. Some teachers have used classical music during math class. You could try a writing activity where students write with music playing and a similar activity where students don't listen to music. Then compare the results. Were students more productive when music was played? Or was it too distracting?

Instrumental music might have different results than music with lyrics as well. Feel free to experiment.

Write approximately 250-500 words in which you:

- Write a description of the songs you find that you would like to try with your students as writing inspiration.
- Summarize the results from using songs/music with your students or write up student feedback and suggestions.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

### **Assignment #11: (500 Level ONLY)**

In addition to the 400 level assignments complete one of the following:

Option A) Why do students struggle with writing and what are some strategies that can help them?

Read and watch the following:

“Evidence-based practices for teaching writing” Johns Hopkins School of Education, Steve Graham and Amy Gillespie, <http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/Better/articles/Winter2011.html>

“Use of Assistive Technology in Inclusive Education: Making Room for Diverse Learning Needs,” Fouzia Khursheed Ahmad, *Transcience* (2015) Vol. 6, Issue 2  
[http://www2.hu-berlin.de/transcience/Vol6\\_No2\\_62\\_77.pdf](http://www2.hu-berlin.de/transcience/Vol6_No2_62_77.pdf)

“If not the brain, then what?” Mary T. Cameron, *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2011, (pp. 8-10) <http://josotl.indiana.edu/article/viewFile/1814/1811>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMfl5kqSWmk>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/WMfl5kqSWmk?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>

Develop a theory on why you feel students struggle with writing that is based on your own teaching experiences. Complete some research to support your theory and explore reasons for students who struggle with writing, such as dysgraphia, dyslexia, expressive language issues, ADHD, visual processing issues, and dyspraxia. Also, research helpful solutions to the problem, including ideas that you might implement in your classroom.

Write approximately 750-1,000 words covering:

- Your theories on why students struggle with writing.
- A summary of research to support your theories (include at least three credible sources).
- Include possible solutions to the problem.
- Bibliography of your research.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

OR

Option B) Technology and Writing

Is technology a helpful tool for writing, or is it creating delays in student development? Does technology help students be creative or hinder their creativity?

Watch the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSmE1YPhA8>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/wSmE1YPhA8?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>

What ages are appropriate for using technology with writing? Should students master writing before using technology or can technology help students who struggle with writing?

Write approximately 750-1,000 words covering:

- Your theories on using technology with students (specifically with writing)
- A summary of research to support your theories (include at least three credible sources).
- Bibliography of your research.
- Please include any questions or thoughts you had while working on this assignment, especially for any specific feedback or help I can provide.

OR

Option C)

Another assignment of your own design with the instructor's prior approval.

### **C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### **SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

#### **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Doug Larson, M.S., received his teaching degree from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington and taught third grade and middle school in Dubois, Idaho. He was also the drama director for both the elementary and high school creating original productions for the school as well as directing well known shows such as the Wizard of Oz. He also taught 2nd graders English in South America for a year and used drama and puppets as a way to teach conversational English.

Doug is also a published playwright. In 1988, his first play "Nicolas Brooks" had instant success by winning the Youth Division at the Spokane Civic Theatre Forum Festival. He then formed his own theatre group in 1989 called Tailors of the Imagination.

In 1990, his play "A Man and His Plant" was produced at the Spokane Civic Theatre Forum Festival in the adult division. The play went on to win third place in a national contest and then was published by the Dramatic Publishing Company as a part of an anthology "Short Stuff for Mature Actors." When relocating to New Mexico, he taught drama at New Mexico State University and taught theatre game workshops to local schools. He started a theatre group called the Poco Loco Players, which won state level awards for acting.

Doug also started the successful website called freedrama.com which has provided free plays to schools and community groups around the world. His 2002 victory as a writer was being included in the Love Creek Production's play festival in New York City.

His monologue "Pearls of Wisdom" is the true story of the struggles young women face growing up in rural Idaho. Another success was a 2004 mid-west tour of his play "The Redneck" (renamed Operation Redneck) by the professional theatre group Retroact Productions. During this time, freedrama.com became very popular receiving thousands of visitors a day.

The plays on freedrama.com (now freedrama.net) have been performed on every continent including Antarctica. He also got involved in developing film projects as a writer and producer. In 2008, he started a new series about War Veterans. The series has been featured by Apple iTunes and YouTube. The most successful episode has been "Saving Lives in World War II" which won an Emmy Award in 2009 for best Advanced Media Historical Documentary (Rocky Mountain Region).

In 2010, he won a Telly Award for his full length documentary about a wildlife park in Arizona. And in 2011, he won a second Emmy Award for his short documentary about an organization called Paws and Stripes that helps veterans with PTSD by using service dogs.

Here is a video made by my wife and I for a 48 hour film project where we had to write a short movie based on film prompts (character named Kelly, prop [measuring tape], and line of dialog: "You only live once"). See the wacky results -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXMgYV0sN4Q>



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### WRITING PROMPTS: Inspiring Young Writers

**Cohen, Bryan**, "1,000 Creative Writing Prompts, Volume 2: More Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" ISBN-13: 978-1493664955  
From Amazon.com: "Creative writing prompts are short questions or situations that are meant to inspire you to write. Far beyond the typical, "It was a dark and stormy night..." story starters, this new collection of 1,000 prompts has been specifically formulated to dig deep into the creative process."

**Cohen, Bryan**, "1,000 Creative Writing Prompts: Ideas for Blogs, Scripts, Stories and More" ISBN-13: 978-1461089421  
From Amazon.com: "When you finally have the opportunity to sit down and write, you want absolutely nothing to get in your way. In an ideal world, the ideas would flow from head to pen quickly and easily. You would have thousands of ideas at your fingertips. This new idea-generating book makes that dream a reality."

**Kinder, Ryan Andrew**, "1,000 Awesome Writing Prompts" ISBN-13: 978-1500910662  
From Amazon.com: "Have you ever wanted to write a story, but you didn't know how? Or are you good at writing stories, but stuck for ideas? Are you currently writing a story, but you have writers block? This is a book chock full of writing prompts. These are little things that will help you along to writing some amazing stuff that spills out of your mind."

**Donovan, Melissa**, "1200 Creative Writing Prompts (Adventures in Writing)" ISBN-13: 978-0615911618  
From Amazon.com: "Perfect for writers who are feeling uninspired or who simply want to tackle a new writing challenge, 1200 Creative Writing Prompts has something for everyone. Whether you write fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction, you'll find plenty of fresh ideas inside this book."

**San Francisco Writers' Grotto** "642 Things to Write About Diary – April 11, 2012" ISBN-13: 978-1452105444  
From Amazon.com: "This collection of 642 outrageous and witty writing prompts will get the creative juices flowing in no time. From crafting your own obituary to penning an ode to an onion, each page of this playful journal invites inspiration and provides plenty of space to write. Brimming with entertaining exercises from the literary minds of the San Francisco Writers' Grotto, this is the ultimate gift for scribes of every stripe."