

**Title of Session:** WriteTalk - Round Robin Blitz Writing Prompts

**Moderator:** Sandra Shattuck

**Title of File:** WriteTalk Blitz Prompts

**Date:** July 19, 2006

Room: WriteTalk Group

**BJB2** hopes everyone realizes what a treat they're in for!

**SandraS** chuckles

**SandraS:** BJ, are you getting us going?

**BJB2:** welcome to this festival session of WriteTalk

**BJB2:** Sandra Shattuck is the discussion leader and will take you on an exciting trip!

**BJB2:** we'll be doing blitz prompts.

**BJB2:** before we go further...

**BJB2:** if you're new to Tapped in go to the actions menu in the top right of the chat window and then detach

**SandraS:** usually we start with introductions all around, so why don't you tell us where your from, what you teach...I'll start ... I teach literature in Alabama

**BJB2:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a HUGE fan of Sandy's!

**KeikoSc:** I am Keiko Schneider, Japanese teacher in Texas. helpdesk volunteer. If you need help, please private chat with me.

**SandraS** shuffles her feet

**KeikoSc** bows

**JeannettLJ:** I teach Junior and Senior English in South Dakota.

**HeatherAB:** Technology in a Texas middle school

**AnnieD:** I teach Language Arts for 7th and 8th in Northridge, California

**HelenK:** ABE Quesnel, BC, Canada

**RogerMG:** I am from the SF Bay Area, California, USA. I am a professor at Notre Dame de Namur University, in Belmont CA.

**LeoL:** << musician/ k-8 teacher

**SandraS:** Sherry, did you want to introduce yourself?

**SherryC1:** Sorry...multitasking

**SandraS:** no problem...

**SherryC1:** Middle School Computer teacher

**SandraS:** and Susan is a great resource!

**SandraS:** ok, I'm going to do a very quick spiel on the National Writing Project

**SandraS:** and then we'll get writing

**SandraS:** Jeanette is from the Dakota Writing Project

**SandraS:** I'm from Alabama A&M University Writing Project

**SandraS:** so please jump in Jeannette if you want to add anything

**SandraS:** here's my quick spiel:

**SandraS:** The National Writing Project or NWP is

**SandraS:** Currently, NWP has 190 sites, all housed at universities and all working mainly with K-12 teachers. The primary project for each site is the Summer Invitational Institute (an intensive four-week seminar -- participants are usually paid a stipend to attend) where teachers work across disciplines and grade levels to improve their own writing and to share ideas on the teaching of writing.

**JeannettLJ:** DWP was a wonderful educational and professional experience that expanded my networking tremendously.

**KeikoSc:** wow

**SandraS:** I agree, Jeannette

**SandraS:** Once a teacher has attended a Summer Institute, that teacher can attend any NWP event, such as national writing retreats. Let's take a minute to look at the website. And you can see if there's a writing project near you by checking on the map linked at upper right corner of website

**SandraS:** which is at

**SandraS:** Here's the URL: <http://www.writingproject.org>

**JeannettLJ:** Beyond the course work, I have had opportunities to present workshops for \$. The money isn't nearly as important as the professional growth and development.

**SandraS:** go ahead and take a minute to check it out and then come back here...

**KeikoSc** follows the link

**SandraS:** I agree, Jeannette. But NWP is one of the few organizations that really treats teachers like professionals, eh?

**SandraS:** ok, is everybody back?

**SherryC1:** yes

**BJB2** nods

**LeoL:** yes

**HeatherAB** nods

**SandraS:** Yeah!

**SandraS:** there are oodles of resources on that site and we can talk about that if we have time at the end

**SusanR** nods

**SandraS:** any questions right now about NWP?

**SandraS:** sounds like y'all are READY TO WRITE!

**BJB2** cheers!

**SandraS:** Round-Robin Blitz Writing Prompts

**RogerMG:** Just sent a link for the NWP to the Dean of the Ed. School.

**SandraS:** oh, great Roger...thanks.

**SandraS:** lots of writing project sites are in education schools

**SandraS:** and English depts.

**SandraS:** "Blitz" in German means "lightning" and in blitz chess, each player has one or two minutes to make a move. This frees the players up from tortured analysis of each move. And that theory should apply to writing. Because we'll give several prompts and write on them in a short period of time, we should be able to keep that critical editor in our heads quiet.

**JeannettLJ:** Smile

**SandraS:** so before I tell you how this works, let me just remind you of Natalie Goldberg's guidelines for writing practice or freewriting

**SandraS:** keep these in mind as you write

**SandraS:** keep your hand moving!

**SandraS:** don't think!

**SandraS:** be specific!

**SandraS:** don't worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar!

**SandraS:** lose control!

**SandraS:** you're free to write the worst junk in the galaxy!

**SandraS:** go for the jugular!

**SandraS:** the last one simply means to follow your difficult feelings...keep writing through and with them

**SandraS:** all these guidelines are to help you just keep writing, to get that internal censor to go take a trip to the Bahamas

**SandraS:** here's how blitz prompts work

**SandraS:** I'll call out a prompt

**SandraS:** a word, a phrase

**SandraS:** then I'll yell TIME

**SandraS:** we all write for a minute

**SandraS:** don't enter your text, just write it in the chat box

**SandraS:** then I'll

**SandraS:** call TIME

**SandraS:** and everyone can enter text

**SandraS:** We read, no comments...

**SandraS:** then I yell to someone for the next prompt

**SandraS:** that person calls out a prompt

**SandraS:** don't agonize

**SandraS:** just choose first word or phrase

**SandraS:** we write

**SandraS:** I call TIME

**SandraS:** we enter text

**SandraS:** and the last person calls on someone else

**SandraS:** ok, how does that sound?

**JeannettLJ:** great

**RogerMG:** ok

**HelenK:** k

**AnnieD:** ok

**LeoL:** k

**HeatherAB:** k

**SusanR:** k

**SandraS:** ok, great...we may stop every three prompts just to see how it's going...

**SandraS:** ready for the first prompt?

**SandraS:** here we go

**SandraS:** GREEN

**SandraS:** young new fresh birth out of deadened trees greener on what other side i wonder. my brain feels green right now. maybe a bit of a jumpstart. should i water my brain? yes, definitely. green as frog noses. green as garden breath.

**SandraS:** TIME

**HelenK:** is the colour of spring and new growth it is my favourite colour i love all the shades of green although some make me feel better than others some people associate green with envy and jealousy i like to think of all the things that are green spinach frogs trees

**AnnieD:** When we walked into the dark forest we couldn't see a thing. Luckily, Erin remembered she had a flashlight in her backpack. As she was searching for it, we could feel something creepy at our feet and some odd sounds. We were panicking and when Erin pulled out the flashlight a

**LeoL:** traffic lights giving permission for what? for Transit? for the time being? exactly what does that mean. So we invite permission, nay demand it ... it is our right rainy streets with the lights reflecting in the puddles, cars going by like a cheesy film noir what about the evergreens, nah nature has NO place in this detectives world

**HeatherAB:** is the color of the grass, of going ahead with things, of life. Green is vitalizing and peaceful at the same time. Green is good, unless you are dealing with something you find in the back of the fridge. Green is a color I cannot wear. It means springtime and fresh foods and peace and I have no idea what else to write

**RogerMG:** the green man was constructed high on the highest hill overlooking the village and the people worshiped him until it came time for his demise

**JeannettLJ:** The green floral carpet tickled my feet as I ran. It was awesome to feel free, to feel young again. I squealed with delight as youth

**SandraS:** YEAH! ok, I pick Leo

**LeoL:** now I give a prompt yes?

**SandraS:** yup

**LeoL:** and you keep time?

**SandraS:** yup

**LeoL:** do I write?

**SandraS:** yup

**LeoL:** ok yez ready?

**SandraS:** yes

**HeatherAB:** k

**LeoL:** here goes

**SandraS** holds breath

**LeoL:** containers

**SandraS:** containers could be spiritual couldn't they? don't our bodies contain our souls? or maybe that's where i always get into trouble with metaphysics....separating out containers and the insides and outsides. tupperware. those are good containers, doncha think. we need completely biodegradable containers for everything.

**SandraS:** TIME

**RogerMG:** the ship was loaded with containers and no one knew what was in them. there was doubt in the eyes of the seasoned seamen if they should unload the ship as the last time they did a circus popped out of one of the containers and the circust was a wierd one made up of mostly fleas and and cockroaches and a few flys which had hitched a ride on the ship to escape the swatter

**AnnieD:** I keep an empty jar of coins when I have too much change in my purse. It has come in handy when I want to take a ride on the metrolink.

**JeannettLJ:** Wow. I've never seen so many containers lined up like soldiers. Why are they here? What is their purpose? The silence chilled me. Ping! What was that? I crouched behind the nearest can. Ping! It was getting closer.

**HelenK:** are those things that keep us within bounaries. many containers create a feeling of safety and security while some restrict Containres within containers are the little boxes that may prevent full expression of what we abre able to accomplish

**LeoL:** is it an imposition of walls into a spce, or is it an invitation? It is a selection of schema, of organization, of fascist imposition sone one sez you HAVE to think THIS way can I stracth these baoboxes these walls what are they doinf next doo

**SandraS:** WOW! ok Leo you get to pick someone....then we'll write and take a quick break and then go on...

**LeoL:** I'm going to pick Jeannette

**JeannettLJ:** the chug-a-chugging train

**SandraS:** i sat next to the tracks feeling bumps in the ground, bumps that shifted steel. ka-chugga, ka-chugga. i wait for the 3.14 to come into view, silver bright and engineer loud. the chug-a-chugging train keeps me company every afternoon. then i ka-chugga ka-chugga back home....

**RogerMG:** it went around the track a break neck speed as only a chugachgging train can do. and all of the children on board laughed hysterically as the people beside the track cheered. And, that was just before the train suddenly left the tracks and headed up into the clouds disappearing behind one particular cloud that looked like a smiling face. in fact the cloud

**HelenK:** went from place to place along the tracks picking up and dropping off the people and supplies along the way. Why must I follow the same route day after day the little engine wondered? what is out there beyond my tracks, whay cant I go and see what else there is in this big shiny work

**SandraS:** TIME

**JeannettLJ:** The tracks divided the the haves and the have nots. On one side children lined up to see the chug-a-chugging train strain against the steep grade of the hill. On the other side people drummed their hands on their Beemers steering wheels talked on their cell phone

**LeoL:** ghost train flying therouth the clouds, wooo woooo where is it going the old hobo asleep or dead in the hown filth, so many stires so many lived touched or ignored leisten to the song, the wind echoling throught reh old hobos empty sould. souless eyes once full os

**AnnieD:** When we were travelling to the north on the train my mother told me I had to sleep or else I was going to be too tired the next day. I couldn't sleep. All I could hear was the chug-a-chugging of the train which wouldn't let me sleep

**SusanR:** The Chug\_chugging-train chugged cheerfully down the track chanting to himself..I think I can ...I think I can...I think I can

**SusanR:** TI thought I could

**SandraS:** Very cool! let's take a quick break and talk...then we can do more, if you want

**SandraS:** what did you notice about your own writing, others' writing in doing this practice?



**JeannettLJ:** The first prompt was difficult just because I wasn't warmed up. I felt more fluent with each writing.

**SandraS:** great insight

**LeoL:** still I'm self editing

**SandraS:** ahhh....

**HelenK:** I became more creative. I could easily follow other's writing despite errors etc.

**HeatherAB:** turn the control off, Leo

**LeoL:** NEVER!!

**SandraS** chuckles

**LeoL** laughs

**HeatherAB** smiles

**SandraS:** how does that self-editing work Leo?

**SandraS:** I mean, what do you see happening when you write?

**LeoL:** I think faster than I type

**JeannettLJ:** I love to see the various interpretations of the prompt.

**SandraS:** I agree, Jeannette

**LeoL:** <<concerned about publishing, even though I'm only publishing here

**RogerMG:** Just plain fun!

**SusanR:** a nice way to get warmed up

**SandraS:** aha!

**JeannettLJ:** This is the kind of fun we have at Dakota Writing Project.

**LeoL:** yeah I made sure my students had a place to write where NOBODY, not even me, would ever see

**SandraS:** ok, so that's one key, eh, Leo?

**SandraS:** no grade, no audience

**LeoL:** I think so

**LeoL:** no audience

**SandraS:** yeah, so students have to have a safe place to write in order to risk

**LeoL:** and I think if I'm to be graded , I get graded on craft, not content

**SandraS:** mmm...and that's what always trips me up, that is, my internal editor is always correcting craft

**SandraS:** revising...

**SandraS:** Anne Lamott says in \_Bird by Bird\_ that we all have permission to write "shi\*\*y first drafts"

**LeoL:** well.. the craft doesn't worry me here. CONTENT is what I ain't gonna let out

**SandraS:** ah...

**SandraS:** we had a local poet come talk to our summer institute

**SandraS:** and she said that she always tells her writing students the first class that she wants them to go out and write

**SandraS:** reallllly BAD

**SandraS:** she urges them to write horrible stuff

**SandraS:** there's something very freeing about that

**HeatherAB .** o O ( "sloppy copy" )

**SandraS** nods at Heather

**SandraS:** Everybody's voice is soooo different

**SandraS:** and with each prompt, I wanted to hear more from each writer

**SandraS:** ok, let's do 3 more prompts. Jeannette, you get to pick.

**JeannettLJ:** Ok. I choose, Annie.

**AnnieD:** ok

**AnnieD:** ready everyone?

**SandraS** nods

**HeatherAB** nods

**RogerMG:** k

**JeannettLJ:** k

**LeoL:** k

**AnnieD:** CAPTURED

**LeoL:** indians and a plover at night the captive screamed into the darkness. bound, with firelight

**SandraS:** not again! the third time the evil bubble bath duckie opened its bill full of blackened teeth, i thought i was a goner. i'd brought my deadly duck-ray to freeze the fowl villain, but the soap was too slippery...i dropped the duck-ray! the nasty teeth were coming towards me.....

**RogerMG:** the man was captured by the pygmies before he had a chance to find out where it was that the damn thing was aking the world he had lived in and the pygmies did not really know who he was or why he was there at the same time the man found that he himself as was the grand g'treat p'pooobah of the the grand canyon of the jungle in which the pygmies resided and that was different from his earlier experience on planet x

**HelenK:** by a group of silly clowns the natronly woman did not believe what was happening to her. She was astounded at the antics of this active group What did they want with someone like her? She had b

**HeatherAB:** the screenshot was captured even though the computer knew it wasn't the right thing to do. Where was the information going to go, who was going to use it? The information had been captured but not the spirit of the writer. That spirit was forever free, not to be trapped by the screen

**JeannettLJ:** the dancers graceful movements captured my heart. Their fluid movements told the bitter sweet story of an unrequited love. When they ached with heartbreak, I ached with heartbreak. When they leapt for joy

**SandraS:** cool!

**SandraS:** Annie, you get to pick someone.

**SusanR:** One could see the destruction such as looting, destruction, and capture of citizens that were inflicted upon in the present conflict

**AnnieD:** I pick Roger

**RogerMG:** ok

**RogerMG:** ready ?

**SandraS** nods

**AnnieD:** yes

**LeoL:** k

**RogerMG:** SLUMBER

**SandraS:** my cats slumber. they teach me how to power nap, short nap, dream nap, teleported nap. my cats are wiser than the ages, calmer than any ancient monk, zen-ish in their slumber. they know sleep. i envy my cats. but i try to learn.

**RogerMG:** the party had begin as a slumber party but before anyoneknew it the joint had become a place where all hell broke loose and this was mostly because of the moon which caused just about everyone there to fall down and go to sleep while the music played out of the woods and lulled even the cats and dogs and mice in the neighborhood in a somnamubusent mood

**HelenK:** is an ability to be desired when energy was low being able to take advantqage of an opportunity to slumber through a boring...

**HeatherAB:** quiet, peaceful rest, that moves slowly up from the toes, peace, quiet peace. Slumber of the innocent, the faces of my children, my grandschildren, unharmed by life as they rest and prepare for the coming day. The quiet love on my husband's face as I watch him in slumber

**JeannettLJ:** I could use some slumber right now. the humidity is overtaking my will to stay awake but I have mound of "stuff" to conquer yet today before it conquers me. Anyway, slumber is highly overated, isn't it? When I want to slumber I can't. When I can't slumber, I want to.

**AnnieD:** I long for the opportunity to sleep all night as I suffer from this phrase of insomnia. I long to close my eyes and not open them until the sun is up. I want to be like all the other people who sleep without interruption. Just one night would be lovely

**LeoL:** sheets arwy, english mansion with breakfast derved eggs, but dreams first, train and gossamer

**SusanR:** Slumber, perchance to dream. Sue recalls her first and only slumber party as a child. I was as calm as a baby in a dreamless slumber.

**SandraS:** i love reading all this! ok, Roger gets to pick someone...last prompt!

**RogerMG:** I pick Keiko

**SandraS:** Keiko might be helping someone out...

**HeatherAB** nods

**RogerMG:** OK Heather

**HeatherAB:** Ready?

**SandraS** nods

**LeoL:** k

**HeatherAB:** craftsmanship

**HeatherAB:** craftsmanship and art go hand in hand, whether you are reaching in to your mind to write, or reaching for a tool to create something

**RogerMG:** the craftsmen working on my porch are not demonstrating a lot of craftsmanship. they are your basic slobs and not only do they drink beer as they work but they toss the can out the window without bothering to open it and that really does piss me off a great deal

**HelenK:** is the ability to produce quality material from raw. it can be the fruits of your labour a concrete entity or the ability to create an artistic rendition of an idea.

**LeoL:** Frank Lloyd Wright and his levels, his use of natural light and timber... the water carving a niche for itself after the manner of rocks

**SandraS:** This dream table, centered in the dining room, mahogany and teak, cherry and maple, quilted together special woods. This table. A place..

**AnnieD:** The quilt she found in her grandmother's attic was dusty and filled with spider webs but as she began to

**JeannettLJ:** It was stunningly beautiful. I couldn't take my eyes off the smooth wood, lovingly carved by a master. the craftsmanship outshone anything I had ever seen. We

**SandraS:** excellent! thank you sooo much wonderful writers! does anyone have any thoughts how they might apply this in their class? revise it? adapt it?

**JeannettLJ:** I think this would work for a writing marathon. At least for part of it.

**SandraS** nods

**RogerMG:** A great warm up exercise before discussing more in depth aspects of an idea, thought or theory.

**AnnieD:** I could use this in my writing class

**AnnieD:** I think the students would enjoy it very much

**RogerMG:** (I did:-)

**SandraS:** i've tried it with students and they did like it

**SusanR:** warmups to begin each class..breaks the ice

**LeoL:** use this as "raw material" for a writing piece

**SandraS** agrees with Susan

**HeatherAB:** Great fun, Sandra!

**HelenK:** round robin brainstorming - pick one of the entries and use it for the prompt

**JeannettLJ:** I could enforce parts of speech by asking students to choose prompts that deal with a certain part of speech.

**SandraS:** cool!

**SandraS:** I was just thinking of that Jeannette, when Roger talked about ideas and theory

**SandraS:** if you wanted to use writing to discuss a piece of reading

**RogerMG:** <---has yet to learn parts of speech

**SusanR:** loosens up the class..creates a bit of laughter..and now they are ready to begin

**SandraS:** prompts could be restricted to reading terms

**SandraS** agrees Susan

**HeatherAB:** Thank you, Sandra

**SandraS:** sure Heather

**RogerMG:** Great exercise.

**LeoL:** I'd like to see this as part of a personal journal

**RogerMG:** Thanks.

**SandraS:** We've got 5 minutes, so let me show you one great resource!

**AnnieD:** Yes, thank you Sandra. This was fun

**SandraS:** It's on the NWP website

**LeoL:** give the prompts daily, then they free write

**SandraS** nods at Leo

**JeannettLJ:** It would help students get rid of their editors and focus on content.

**HeatherAB** nods

**SandraS:** Thanks to everyone who attended and who risked showing their writing!

**SandraS:** Check out

**JeannettLJ:** Thanks, Sandra. This was fun.

**SusanR:** Thanks Sandra

**HelenK:** thank-you

**SandraS:** Enjoy the Festival!

**SandraS:** Thanks to all of you!

**KeikoSc** bows to Sandra

**SandraS:** 30 Ideas for Teaching Writing

**SandraS:** great pamphlet on NWP site

**SandraS:** quick ideas

**SandraS:** and at bottom there's a link to the full article fully explaining idea

**LeoL:** cool. That site is a great resource

**SandraS:** yeah, there's lots of wonderful stuff

**SandraS:** if you can get to a Summer Institute, they are fantastic

**BJB2:** don't miss the August WriteTalk discussion!

**SandraS:** you can often get grad. credit

**RogerMG** left the room.

**SandraS** applauds BJ's graceful facilitation

**LeoL:** Sandra. I'll send you the document in a couple of minutes

**SandraS:** Thank you Leo

**LeoL:** thank you

**SandraS:** I'm really looking into writing and visual art and would love to do more with music

**SandraS:** so I'm really interested in what you've done

**BJB2:** Sandy, Leo leads the music across the curriculum discussion in TI

**LeoL:** that document is only a set of musical form... containers I guess lol

**SandraS:** Very cool...I'm going to have to attend that

**SandraS** chuckles

**BJB2** waves bye. Thanks again, Sandy

**SandraS:** Bye!

**SandraS** jumps on hoverboard and whooshes off