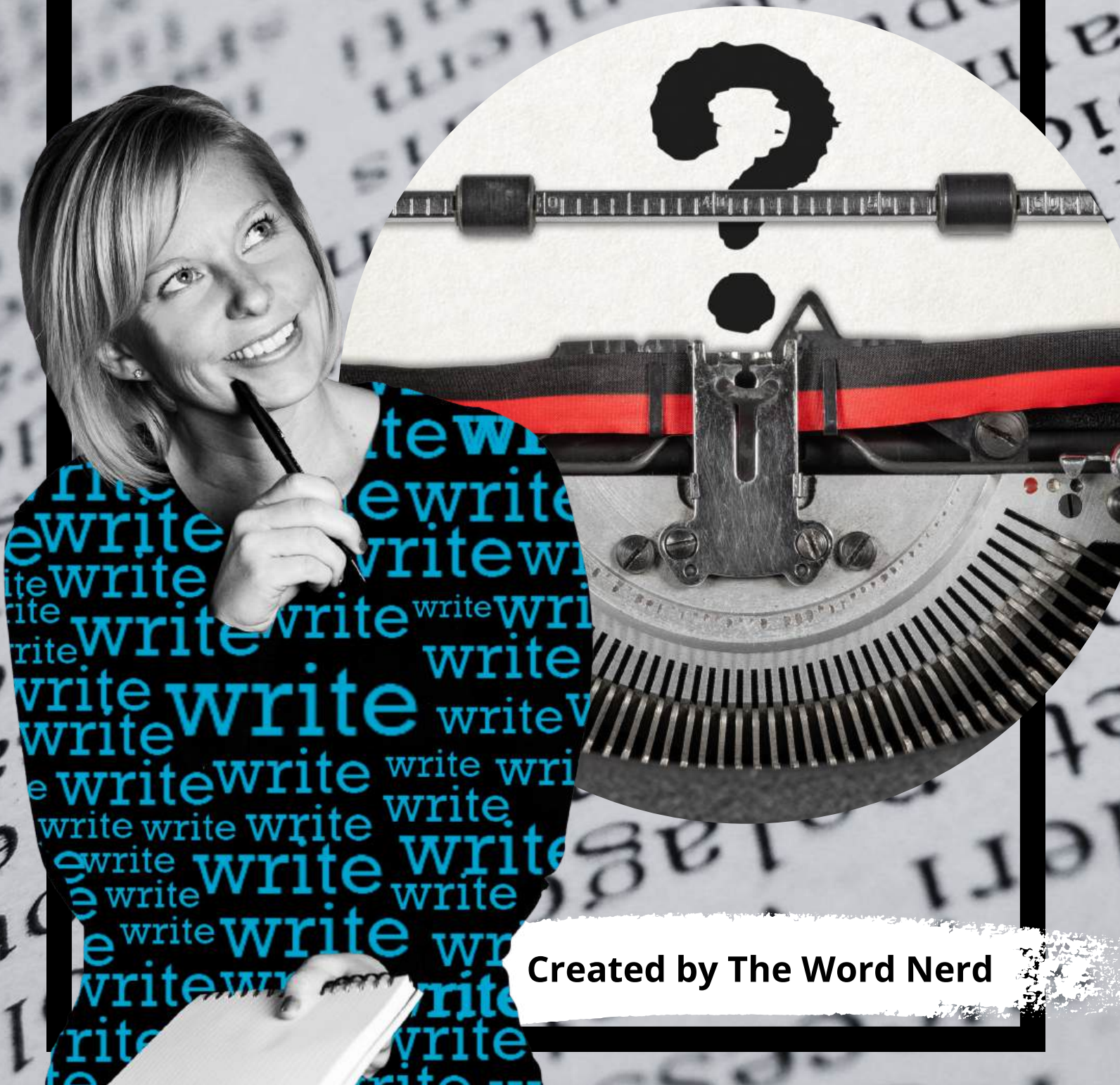


# Mystery

## Writing Prompts



Created by The Word Nerd

# ***LET'S WRITE A MYSTERY!***

May is MYSTERY MONTH!

In addition to being an educator, I'm an author. I LOVE writing. I know that isn't the case for everyone, but I truly hope that after spending time with me or one of my resources, people will come to like it just a little bit more!

This resource will help you implement a daily writing routine in your classroom. I start small, asking students to write for 5 minutes, and then each week, add on another, until we are up to 10 minutes. I know that they won't create a finished product in that amount of time, but that's not the purpose of these journal writes. The purpose is to be creative, to put ideas on paper, to experiment, and mostly... just to WRITE. The only way we get better at a skill is to practice it. I give a few more implementation tips on page 4, but if you have more questions, feel free to email me at any time. ([wordnerd@amandazieba.com](mailto:wordnerd@amandazieba.com)).

*I hope these prompts spark both interest and ideas in your students.*

*Happy Writing!*

Amanda Zieba  
(AkA: The Word Nerd)

P.S. For more ideas on how to get reluctant writers going, watch [this video](#).

P.P.S. Check out the rest of the writing prompts I've got to offer [here](#).



([https://youtu.be/I7UWA-pw040?sub\\_confirmation=1](https://youtu.be/I7UWA-pw040?sub_confirmation=1))



# THIS PRODUCT INCLUDES

1

5 weeks of printable mystery writing prompts (prompt + writing space)

2

A Canva Presentation of the writing prompts to project on a big screen in your classroom. These are editable if you click (FILE - MAKE A COPY) once in Canva.

(Link: [https://www.canva.com/design/DAGkzuT8wA8/\\_A1RkJ\\_pftanD345rS7xJw/edit?utm\\_content=DAGkzuT8wA8&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGkzuT8wA8/_A1RkJ_pftanD345rS7xJw/edit?utm_content=DAGkzuT8wA8&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton))

3

A Gem and Opportunity Feedback form for students and teachers to use when giving a critique.

4

A rubric for teachers to use to evaluate the writing products created by their students with these prompts. Students can also use this rubric to self-score/evaluate their writing. I wouldn't "grade" every journal write. Maybe ask students to pick one a week they'd like you to score.

5

A list of journal writing tips for students. As well as a video full of ideas for teachers to engage reluctant writers.



- 1 Take a minute to think before you start writing. Review what makes a story a mystery. Print out page 5 and give it to students so they can reference comment mystery story components while they are writing.
- 2 Put your phone/chromebook/tablet away. Distractions can easily pull you out of the writing flow.
- 3 If you feel like you are stuck or have nothing else to say, but we still have writing time left, re-read what you have written. This might inspire more ideas. Or, you can go back and add in details to your response that you did not include the first time around.
- 4 You can always go back to the text/prompt/image for clues. reminders, ideas to add.
- 5 Before submitting your work, whisper read your work aloud to yourself. This will help you catch small, easy to fix errors.
- 6 Listen to an instrumental playlist to create a blanket of white noise that will help you focus on your task, rather than the distractions surrounding you. Try this video! (link: <https://youtu.be/aHVFKDZRC3g>)



# MYSTERY

## genre

The mystery genre is a type of fiction centered around solving a crime or puzzle, often involving a detective or amateur sleuth who uses clues, investigation, and deduction to uncover the truth. It typically features a suspenseful plot, a shocking crime, a crime solver, a villain, and a resolution to the mystery.



### KEY COMPONENTS

- A Puzzle to Solve: Every mystery has a problem or question that needs solving—like a stolen item, a missing person, or a secret no one can figure out.
- Clues and Red Herrings: Writers drop hints (clues) to help readers solve the mystery—but they may also include red herrings, or tricky details meant to distract or mislead the reader or characters.
- Rising Suspense: Mystery stories are all about building tension! The stakes get higher, the clues pile up, and readers feel like they have to know what happens next.
- A Smart (but Not Perfect) Sleuth: The main character (a detective, investigator, or curious kid) uses their brain, instincts, and sometimes help from friends to figure things out—but they may make mistakes or hit dead ends too!
- Suspects and Secrets: There's usually a small group of characters with motives, secrets, or strange behavior. Readers must decide who's hiding something—and why.
- A Twist or Big Reveal: Mystery endings often have a surprise twist, like uncovering the real culprit or discovering an unexpected reason behind the mystery.
- A Tight Timeline: Mystery stories usually happen over a short amount of time—sometimes hours or days—so the action stays fast and focused.
- One Clear Point of View: Readers usually follow just one character (the sleuth!) so they can solve the case alongside them.



Use this rubric to first communicate your writing expectations to students and then to evaluate the writing products they create. Students and/or peers can also use this rubric to self/peer score/evaluate the pieces of writing.

The rubric can be found at the bottom of each prompt for easy access for both you and your students. There is also a page with 3 rubrics to print and cut for use with this or other writing tasks.

I assign 2 points if the task was completed and done well, 1 if the task was attempted but not mastered, and 0 if the task was not attempted at all.

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

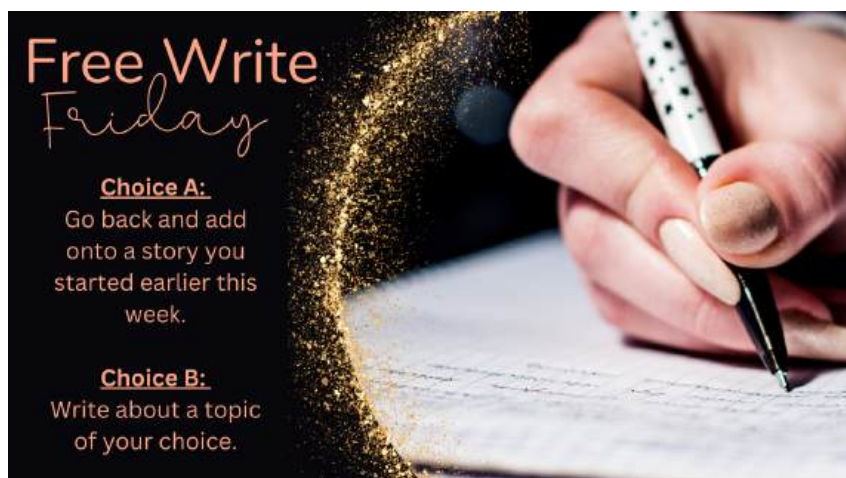
Total Points = \_\_\_/10




# MULTI-USE FORMS

The following pages will be used multiple times throughout the resources, but are included just once to save space in the file.

- Free Write Fridays
- Gem and Opportunity Feedback Sheets
- Writing Rubric Sheets



**GEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

My name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of classmate I am reviewing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Piece/Date Written: \_\_\_\_\_

**GEMS**

LIST SEVERAL THINGS THE WRITER DOES WELL.

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

**OPPORTUNITIES**

LIST OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WRITER TO IMPROVE

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

**FINAL COMMENTS**  
WRITE ANY FINAL COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK HERE:

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = \_\_\_/10

## WRITING PROMPTS

Write about a topic  
of your choice.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Total Points =     /10**

## Rubric





# GEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES



My Name:

Name of classmate I am reviewing:

Date:

---

Title of Piece/Date Written



## GEMS

LIST SEVERAL THINGS THE  
WRITERS DOES WELL

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

## OPPORTUNITIES



LIST OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE  
WRITER TO IMPROVE

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

## FINAL COMMENTS

WRITE ANY FINAL COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK HERE:

<b>Task</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

**Total Points = \_\_\_/10**

**Comments:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

**Total Points = \_\_\_/10**

**Comments:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

**Total Points = \_\_\_/10**

**Comments:**

## WEEK 1 PROMPTS

**Monday: Phony Phonebooth**

**Tuesday: Grandpa's Secret**

**Wednesday: A Mysterious Setting**

**Thursday: Atypical Typewriter**

**Friday: Free Write Friday**



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order,  
but are organized into weekly collections.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING PROMPTS

FROM THE WORD NERD

THE MYSTERY GENRE IS A TYPE OF FICTION CENTERED AROUND SOLVING A CRIME OR PUZZLE, OFTEN INVOLVING A DETECTIVE OR AMATEUR SLEUTH WHO USES CLUES, INVESTIGATION, AND DEDUCTION TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH. IT TYPICALLY FEATURES A SUSPENSEFUL PLOT, A SHOCKING CRIME, A CRIME SOLVER, A VILLAIN, AND A RESOLUTION TO THE MYSTERY.

DYSTOPIAN:



USE THIS PICTURE TO INSPIRE A MYSTERY STORY.

Rubric



Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = \_\_\_/10

Teacher Comments:



WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

# POV

- Grandpa
- Grandchild
- Grandpa's Former Boss
- Grandpa's Pet (who has seen it all!)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

<div> <div></div> <div>Rubric</div> </div>	Task	0	1	2
	Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
	Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
	Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
	Length is appropriate			
	Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

**Teacher Comments:**



WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD



**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd



## WEEK 2 PROMPTS

Monday: The Cookie Caper

Tuesday: Sunken Secrets

Wednesday: Crafty Characters

Thursday: Mission Moonlight

Friday: Free Write Friday



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order,  
but are organized into weekly collections.



WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

**HOW ARE THESE ITEMS CONNECTED? HOW DO THEY PLAY TOGETHER AND PLAY OUT IN YOUR MYSTERY?**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Total Points =      /10**

Created by the Word Nerd

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING PROMPTS

FROM THE WORD NERD

## WRITE A STORY ABOUT A... **MYSTERIOUS SHIPWRECK**

ABYSS OF DECEPTIONS

There are all sorts of rumors about a mysterious shipwreck that lies beneath the waters of the harbor in town. Concealed truths and dangerous secrets are lying just below the surface. Is there a conspiracy sunken just off the shore or did mother nature just get angry?



### Rubric



Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = \_\_\_/10

Teacher Comments:

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

**WRITE A STORY THAT INCLUDES THESE**

YOU



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

GLOWING

ILLUMINATED

RURAL

PARANORMAL

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Total Points =     /10**

Created by the Word Nerd



## WEEK 3 PROMPTS

**Monday: Crack the Code**

**Tuesday: Destination Details**

**Wednesday: A Search for the Truth**

**Thursday: Phantom Fairgrounds**

**Friday: Free Write Friday**



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order,  
but are organized into weekly collections.

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

USE THIS PICTURE TO INSPIRE A MYSTERY STORY.

[illegible]

**Total Points =      /10**

Created by the Word Nerd

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

A photograph of a mountain range at night. The sky is dark blue and green, with a bright green aurora borealis visible. The mountains are dark and rugged, with some snow visible on the peaks. The sky is filled with stars.

A photograph taken from inside a cave, looking out through a large, irregular opening. The cave's interior is dark, with the jagged, silty edges of the opening visible at the top and bottom. Outside, a vibrant green landscape unfolds, featuring steep, forested mountainsides and a calm river that reflects the surrounding greenery. The scene is bathed in bright, natural light, creating a sharp contrast with the dark cave interior.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd



WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

Seek for the truth

USE THIS PICTURE TO INSPIRE A MYSTERY STORY.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd



WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

# POV

- Town Mayor
- Ghost Believer
- Ghost Non-Believer
- Carnival Owner

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

<div> <div></div> <div>Rubric</div> </div>	Task	0	1	2
	Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
	Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
	Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
	Length is appropriate			
	Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

**Teacher Comments:**

## WEEK 4 PROMPTS

**Monday: Series Screenwriter**

**Tuesday: I'm Gonna Take My Chances**

**Wednesday: Mystery at the Beach**

**Thursday: Skyscraper Secrets**

**Friday: Free Write Friday**



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order,  
but are organized into weekly collections.

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD



Will your series be a police drama?

Will your series be about paranormal activity?

Will your series be about something that has been lost?

Will your series take place in the past, present or future?

Which actors will you cast in your TV series?

[illegible]

**Total Points =      /10**

Created by the Word Nerd

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

[illegible]



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING PROMPTS

FROM THE WORD NERD

WRITE A MYSTERY STORY THAT TAKES PLACE ENTIRELY WITHIN THE FRAME OF THIS PHOTO:



**OPEN WATER  
BEACH  
BOARDWALK  
PARKING LOT**

**ROAD  
HOUSES  
BACKYARD/GARDEN**

Mystery.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

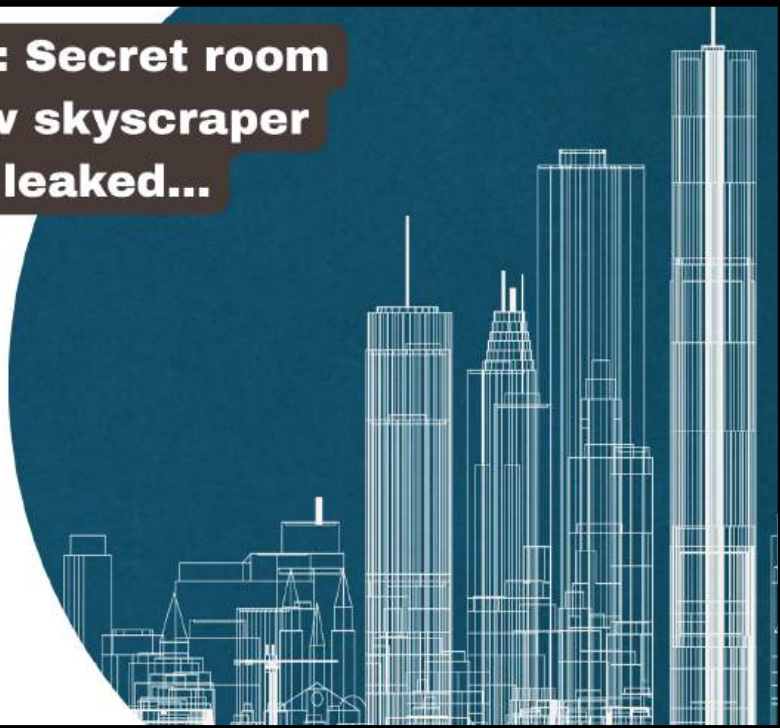
Total Points = \_\_\_/10

Teacher Comments:

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

# POV

- Architect
- Building Owner
- Builder
- Building Custodian

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

**Teacher Comments:**

## Rubric



## WEEK 5 PROMPTS

**Monday: Townhall Tall Tales**

**Tuesday: Character Conundrum**

**Wednesday: Pick a Color, Any Color**

**Thursday: The Dastardly Dentist**

**Friday: Free Write Friday**



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order,  
but are organized into weekly collections.

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

# TOWNHALL ARCHIVES

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching out to touch a small metal handle on a wooden cabinet door. The cabinet is made of light-colored wood and has several drawers with similar handles. The image is slightly blurred, emphasizing the hand and the handle it is touching.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd



WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

[illegible]

**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

## A paintbrush with a wooden handle and a red grip, lying diagonally across the page. The brush has a silver metal ferrule and a head of light-colored bristles. The handle is light brown wood, and the grip is a bright red plastic or rubber material with a circular hole at the end. The brush is positioned diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Teacher Comments:**

Created by the Word Nerd

WRITING PROMPTS  
FROM THE WORD NERD

# POV

- Dentist
- Dental Office Secretary
- News Reporter
- Kid Patient

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

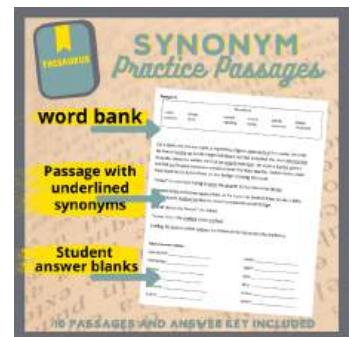
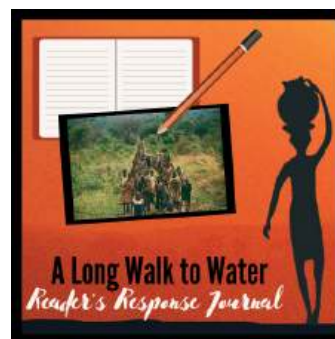
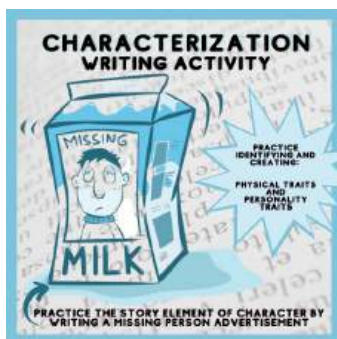
**Teacher Comments:**

# THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING!

## A FEW MORE THINGS...

Please leave a review and feedback! By doing this you help future teachers decide if this item is worth their \$\$ and a good fit for their students. You also earn credits to use toward FREE product! J

Check out other products in my store! I have more writing resources and activities ready and waiting for you!



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