

75 Creative Writing Journal Prompts for Storytellers and Adults

Fiction & World Building: Fiction Journal Prompts

Use these journal prompts for creative writing to build worlds from scratch.

1. You find a key in an antique shop that labeled "Room 402." There is no Room 402 in your city. Where does it lead?
2. This year, a new law requires everyone to switch lives with a stranger for one week every year. Describe your "Trade Day."
3. Write a scene where two people are arguing about a secret while standing in a very quiet library.
4. You discover that your reflection in the mirror is lagging by three seconds. What is it doing that you aren't?
5. A character wakes up with the ability to hear the thoughts of only one specific object in their house. Which object is it?
6. Describe a city where it rains colors instead of water. How do the citizens prepare?
7. You receive a letter from your "Future Self" dated 2036, but it's written in a language you don't speak yet.
8. Two rivals are stuck in an elevator. One of them is carrying a box that is ticking.
9. Write a story about a world where "Time" is a physical currency you can earn or steal.
10. A character finds a "Do Not Open" box in their parents' attic. They open it. What's inside?
11. Describe a diner at 3:00 AM where every patron is there for a different, secret reason.
12. Your protagonist realizes they are a side character in someone else's epic fantasy.
13. Write a scene where magic exists, but it's considered a boring, everyday utility like electricity.
14. A person walks into a bar and orders "A glass of the year 1994."
15. What if trees could remember everything they've seen? Describe a forest's "memory."

Character & Dialogue: Creative Journal Writing Prompts

Focus on the "Who" behind the story with these character-driven exercises.

16. Write a dialogue between a person who believes in ghosts and a person who "sees" them.
17. Describe a character's "ideal" Sunday, and then describe the Sunday they are actually having.
18. Write a scene using no dialogue, only the way two people move around a kitchen.

19. A character is trying to apologize for something they haven't actually done yet.
20. Describe a person purely by the contents of their junk drawer.
21. Two people meet at a funeral for someone they both hated.
22. Write a character profile for someone who is incredibly charming but has no friends.
23. Your protagonist has a "superpower" that is actually quite inconvenient for their 9-to-5 job.
24. Write a conversation where both people are lying, and they both know it.
25. Describe the "villain" of your story doing something incredibly mundane, like grocery shopping.
26. A character finds a photo of themselves in a place they've never been.
27. Write about a character who has a different "personality" for every person they know.
28. Two people are watching a sunset, but they see completely different things.
29. Describe a character's hands and what they reveal about their past.
30. Write a monologue for a person who has just realized they are in love with their best friend's rival.

Poetry & Imagery: Poetry Journal Prompts

31. Write a haiku about the sound of a city waking up in 2026.
32. Use the word "translucent" in a poem about a secret.
33. Write a "list poem" of things you can't see but can feel.
34. Describe a heartbreak as if it were a physical landscape (cliffs, storms, etc.).
35. Write a poem using only one-syllable words.
36. Describe the moon as if you were explaining it to someone who has lived underground their whole life.
37. Write a poem about the "space between" two people sitting on a bench.
38. Use three of these five words: *Cinder, Velvet, Static, Hollow, Prism*.
39. Write a poem from the perspective of an old, abandoned house.
40. Describe "Longing" as a weather pattern.
41. Write a poem that starts and ends with the same word.
42. Describe a person you love using only mechanical or industrial terms.
43. Write about the silence that follows a loud argument.
44. A poem about a letter that was never mailed.
45. Describe a dream you had recently in the form of a sonnet.

Memoir & Life: Narrative Journal Prompts

Turn your real experiences into compelling stories with these narrative journal prompts.

46. Write about a "sliding doors" moment in your life where everything could have gone differently.
47. Describe your first memory of "adventure."
48. Write a narrative about a time you were the "villain" in someone else's story.
49. What is the most important thing you've ever lost? (Object or abstract).
50. Write about a person you met only once but still think about.
51. Describe a family dinner using the tone of a high-stakes spy novel.
52. Write about a time you changed your mind about something fundamental.
53. What is the "mythology" of your family? (The stories that get told every holiday).
54. Describe your current self from the perspective of your 10-year-old self.
55. Write about a secret you kept to "protect" someone else.
56. What is the "soundtrack" of your most significant year?
57. Describe the most "perfect" meal you've ever had and who was there.
58. Write about a place you can never go back to.
59. What is the bravest thing you've ever done that nobody saw?
60. Write a "letter to the editor" about a minor annoyance in your life, but make it epic.

Wildcard & Experimental

61. Write a story in exactly 50 words.
62. Describe a color to a blind person using only touch and sound.
63. Write a scene where the dialogue is just "Yes" and "No," but the subtext is huge.
64. Start a story with: "The day the birds stopped singing was the day I finally..."
65. Write a Yelp review for a haunted hotel.
66. Describe a person's life based only on their browser history.
67. Write a recipe for "A Sunday Afternoon."
68. A story told through text messages that were typed but never sent.
69. Write a set of instructions for "How to Fall Out of Love."
70. Describe a world where everyone's "Inner Critic" is a literal, visible pet.
71. Write a scene from the perspective of an AI trying to understand "Grief."
72. A story where the first sentence has one word, the second has two, and so on.
73. Describe a famous historical event, but change one tiny detail that ruins everything.
74. Write a "User Manual" for your own brain.
75. End a story with: "...and that was the last time anyone ever saw the blue umbrella."