



Tips for Brainstorming a Creative Work

Look for Writing Prompts Online:

There are many free writing prompts available online. The writing center at IWU follows a lot of writer's prompt pages on Instagram. You can also find prompts on Writer's Digest and by doing a quick Google search. Following a writing prompt can be a great way to begin a creative work or inspire another idea.

Try to Free Write:

Set a timer on your phone for two minutes and try to write for the whole time without stopping. Don't worry about grammatical corrections or spell check (if you feel these things will distract you, cover your screen with a blank sheet of paper as you type or write it out by hand). It does not need to be one continuous thought or memory, let ideas flow naturally. If you need a few seconds to think, try to keep moving by doodling.

Answer "What If" Scenarios:

Generate some random scenarios and respond to them. An example of a scenario is "what if I had to survive in the woods" or "what if I was stuck in an elevator with all of my friends." Answering these questions can create really interesting creative works. You can also try an "either or" scenario: like "either you're a werewolf or a werewolf hunter, which would you rather be?"

Observe and Describe:

Go outside and pay attention to what you see. A barking dog walking with their owner, a child riding a bike, or fresh spring flowers can all be great sources of inspiration. Write what you see, describing in as much detail as you can.

Decide On a Genre:

Deciding on the genre of your short story or poem can help give direction to your ideas. Do you want something sci-fi? Are you looking for creative nonfiction? Look up the different genre possibilities and think about what types of things you like to read!

Think about Your Favorite Writer:

What do you like about your favorite writer? What techniques do they use in order to be your favorite? Try to jot down some of your favorite passages and examine what interests you about them. Studying other people's writing and implementing their techniques can help grow your writing!

Develop Your Characters:

Create a clear idea of your main character. What are their motives? What are some of their fears? What does their past look like and how will that shape their future? Answering these questions can help guide your story.

A Resource for Further Development:

The Handbook of Creative Writing: Available through Ames Library—https://i-share-iwu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_IWU/15c9gln/alma995595686805847