

Harrellland Short, Fun Writings for Wizards and Wonderers

(inspired by Ted Hipple, Jane Yarbrough, Bruce Bartholomew,
and Bob Wright)



1. Someone, believe it or not, actually writes the stuff that goes on cereal boxes. You can too. Invent a new cereal (for example, Soggies which don't snap, crackle or pop, but simply sink to the bottom of the bowl and sulk...what copy could you then write for the box that would make it sell?) You can challenge yourself by trying to sell problem cereal as in the sample or create and sell something amazing.
2. Write obituaries for famous or favorite literary characters. Model on some of the most complete obit samples from newspapers. You can see these on-line too.
3. Model on Judith Viorst's *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* and write your own such book and day. And/or write the opposite *Marvelous, Beautiful, Awesome, Very Fine Day*...
4. Become an object in some area of the school...a locker, red pen, grammar book, basketball, lunch tray, printer, etc and write a page describing a day in the life of your object.
5. Read some horoscope entries from the newspaper and then write your own week of horoscopes as you'd like to see them play out. Then invent and describe a new horoscope sign with all the paraphernalia about the sign, e.g. the characteristics of people born under it, the ways in which these people mesh with those born under other signs, what to watch out for, etc.
6. Make a list of things that need names such as a baby girl, a new tree, a motel that changed owners, a new hamburger chain, another model of a car, a newly discovered planet, etc. After you have around 25 or so make a fabulous name for each.
7. Pick a challenging paragraph from a challenging textbook or advanced novel or story and rewrite the paragraph so it could be understood by a third grader.
8. Make up several book titles and then in two or three sentences summarize or describe each book.

9. After looking at Sniglets or playing one of the word bluff games, you make up a word: squix or dorf or whatever sounds cool to you. Then supply the dictionary entry using all the information usually contained about the word (origin, part of speech, examples of use, other forms, synonyms and antonyms, etc)
10. In this age of email, texting, etc get back to the basics. Write letters to friends, parents, teachers, pen pals, service people, people who are old, lonely, etc...and send them. Use note cards that you can make and decorate if you're not able to buy them.
11. An alphabet challenge. You may have already tried Alphabet Poetry. Let's try prose. Kudos for the longest sentence in which all or almost all of the words begin with the same letter. For example: At An Arbor's annual affair Aunt Abigail's atrocious apple and avocado appetizer abundantly attracted awesome attention among all anxious attendees. Or write a twenty-six word sentence in alphabetical order, as in this review of the 70s TV show, "All in the Family": Archie Bunker cuts down Edith; finds great happiness in just kidding Lionel; makes nasty, outrageous petty quips regarding son-in-law; teases us viewers with extraordinary yelling zeal.
12. Or reverse the alphabet as in this conversation between the music teacher and the pupil, Zelda:
"Zelda, your xylophone was very untuneful today. Sloppy. Rather quick practice? Or not many lessons?"
"Kitchen job interfered. Homework got fairly exhausting."
" Don't complain; better act."
13. Become a holidayologist. Come up with, describe and defend a new holiday. Select the date, the reason, color or object(s) associated with it. See if you and your friends can actually begin celebrating. Seinfeld (the mega popular 80s TV show) came up with Festivus at Christmas time. Have you heard of it?
14. Imagine the ten or twelve people, living or dead; real or fictional, whom you'd invite to a dinner party. Tell why. Also suggest how the guests might interact with each other and how you would like for them to thank you for inviting them.
15. Describe in writing a piece of music so that a totally deaf person can "hear" it though reading. Or describe a scene so that a blind person can "see" it through listening.
16. If you won the lottery what would you do?
17. Begin five to ten sentences with "I predict..." They can be outrageous or serious...or both.

18. Create a course or courses that you think should be added to the curriculum...Advanced Bubblegum Blowing or Poetry for PE majors perhaps...Along with the course title, write a description of content, objectives, requirements, sample activities, etc. If you are convincing enough, perhaps Mrs. Harrell will teach it as a 9-week wheel 😊
19. Create a new singing group or band, their name, their latest hit, and then at least 100 words of a DJ or promoter's monologue or a blog post or announcement to put your group "on the map."
You can also design an album cover or poster with a brief bio...how the group formed, what they're like...and some critiques of their sound.
20. Find an outrageous picture or painting that is open to many interpretations. Write a beginning sentence for a story that the picture suggests.
21. Make a greeting card (or at least a message if you aren't an artist) for those odd occasions for which a card is not marketed: "Good Luck to the Recent Drop Out," or "Hats Off to Your New Hair Piece," or "Sorry to Hear About Your Allergy to Electronics"
22. Write at least six "What if" questions: What if each week had three Mondays? What if football was abolished in the U. S.? What if people began keeping elephants for pets? What if everyone began walking backwards? Share the questions and everyone must answer at least one question...your own or a class mate's. Creativity and whimsy are what we're going for...not realism.
23. Film makers must decide what type of music will best complement the mood of their pictures. We will reverse the process. Listen to the music (sans lyrics...only instrumental) and write a paragraph or two describing the film scene that could accompany this selection. Be sure to write the name of the music on which you based your scene.
24. Surrealistic Sentences. This is a short form of Mad Libs. Half the class writes a question that begins "What if..." and the other half writes answers that begin with "It is..." One person reads the question and another answers trying for the most hysterical (or philosophical) combination. Do the same thing with "If..." "Then..."
25. Magazine or on-line image photo essay: We can't travel everywhere we wish (especially while sitting in a classroom). So, select and cut out 8-10 pictures centered on one theme or idea of your choice. Then from these pictures, create a photo essay or story complete with captions. How you arrange the pictures will be as important as the words you choose.
26. Create a slogan or bumper sticker or T-shirt logo to promote the essence of yourself.
27. Imagine that you are part of an australopithecine tribe that has just invented language. What is your basic vocabulary of 25 to 30 words? Using just these words, describe your day. What are the limitations of a small vocabulary? What did you feel the need to do?

28. **Write a RAFT** Role of the Writer: Who are you as the writer? A movie star? The President? A plant?
Audience: To whom are you writing? A senator? Yourself? A company?
Format: In what format are you writing? A diary entry? A newspaper? A love letter?
Topic: What are you writing about?
29. Make up several absurd records that might appear in the *Guinness Book of Records*: PKY girl rides 12 foot alligator for 11 minutes or Eighth grade boy writes six 1500 word essays in five minutes. Choose one of your records and write the sports page report for it along with the headline. Remember the 5 W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why and the strong verbs and images used by sports writers).
30. Think of a famous person or character that nearly everyone would recognize and write their description without saying the name. If everyone can guess your person, you've written a passable description.