

Write Now

Creative Writing
Exercises
for ages 13+

by Nicole May

*for Manchester City
of Literature*

MANCHESTER

City of Literature

Information

This pack was created by writer Nicole May for Manchester City of Literature in 2020.

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Your Work

We would love to read and see the stories and pictures you have created! We want to publish and share a selection of them later this year.

Once it is safe to visit a Post Office, please post copies of your writing or pictures to:

Manchester City of Literature
First Floor Town Hall Extension
PO Box 532
Manchester
M60 2LA

Alternatively if you have access to email, you can send them to:
mrcityoflit@gmail.com

Please include your name and a phone number or email address we can contact you on. We may not be able to return your work so be sure to keep a copy.



Write Now

You may not think you can write but you would be surprised! Write Now is a mix of activities to get you writing. If writing really isn't your thing, you can draw pictures instead. Or you can simply enjoy having a read.

Anyone who writes will tell you that the way to improve is to write or draw a little each day. So plan to do one or two activities each day for a week. Or choose whatever pace works best for you. You can start, stop and pick up where you left off.

The idea is to have fun. So let's create...



Celebrating the Positive

Let's think about the positives in life and give gratitude to the people and experiences who make life what it is.

Writing About Friendship

Activity 1:

Draw or describe what a 'friend' means to you. Take as much time as you want. Write down one thing you're grateful for or happy about in your life e.g. "I am grateful for my friends" or "I am happy when I hear laughter."

Activity 2:

Freewrite (5 minutes)

Starting line: "This morning my friend..."

Wait, what is a freewrite?

A freewrite is a stream of consciousness, basically. Whatever comes to your mind you can write down. You don't have to worry about spelling or grammar. The main objective is to just write and not to take your pen off the paper. You're not writing a poem and it doesn't have to rhyme. Not all freewrites have a prompt or a starter line, but in this case, the starter line is "This morning my friend..." before you start writing, set a five minute timer, now write, even if your mind goes blank, just keep writing.

When you look at your freewriting again, you could either edit or tidy it up. You could even use it to create new writing. You could: Underline your favourite two or three lines and write them out on a clean piece of paper. How do they look and sound? Do they have a different meaning when written out?

Choose one of these favourite lines and use this as a starter line for a brand new free write.

Writing About Me



Activity 1:

Create a word and phrase bank

You will use this in the next activity.

Write a list of words describing your identity and your personal characteristics. It could include things you enjoy doing, your favourite colours, the music you like. Think as descriptively as possible.

Prompts to help:

- Think of your ideal day, living your 'best life'; how does that feel? What are you doing?
- Describe your unique characteristics. We all have eyes but everyone's are different.
- Try to use descriptive tools like similes or metaphors:

Simile: A simile is a descriptive tool, where one thing is described as something else using words 'like' or 'as e.g. 'My shoes were like angel wings'.

Metaphor: A metaphor is a descriptive tool, where one thing is described as something else e.g. 'His mouth was a foghorn'.

Rhyme: Words, syllables or lines that have or end with similar sounds e.g. nose and toes, shower and flower, oil and soil.

Personification: This is a way of giving something non-human, like an object, human characteristics, feelings, attributes or thoughts e.g. 'the tree waved at me', or, 'the walls spoke and shared happy memories'.



Activity 2: Read A Poem

When reading the poem 'more' think about the similes, metaphors, rhyme and descriptive language the poet Ari uses.

more

I am more than a pearl, my crown of curls
are jewels from west africa's realm. my skin of sun
glows bright honey bronze. I am born from gold and coal's union.
my silver tongue speaks poems of platinum origin.
my words are smooth like oil but infused with soil;
their wisdom grows heavier than oak. my language lingers
like the scent of smoke - a fusion of radiant revolution and hope,
my accent out glows the blaze of any cultural arson.
I handle more pressure than diamonds. my voice is priceless.

Ari Adegbite

Activity 3: Write A Short Poem

Now it's your turn to write a short poem about yourself. Try to include as many words and phrases from your word bank in Activity 1. See if you can incorporate similes, metaphors and rhymes if you can. You can use Ari's poem as inspiration. It can be tricky but just have a go and see how you get on - give yourself 20 minutes and see what you can write!

Writing About Home

You see the rooms and furniture in your house or flat every day. But sometimes when you write or draw about them, you see them differently.

Your Favourite Room and Object

Activity 1: Making a List

Think about your favourite space in your home, it could be your bedroom, the kitchen, the living room. Write it down. What happy memories do you have in the room? What smells do you remember? Who is in the room? Now think about your favourite object. It could be a book or a gift. Who purchased the object and how do they make you feel?

Activity 2: Freewrite (5 minutes)

Starter line: 'If the walls in this room could speak...'



Writing About Where I Live

Whether you love the place you live in or dislike it, your part of the world and what you do there can be ideas for writing.

Funny Place, Fun Times

Activity 1: Picture A Scene

Think about a place near where you live and a time when you laughed there. What made the situation funny? List all the things you could see and the people you were with or were around you.

Activity 2: Freewrite (5 minutes)

Starter line: 'My town is...'

Writing About Family



Family can be the people you are related to but there are many ways to describe family: a circle of friends, those closest to you, those like you. Use whatever family means to you for these activities.

Activity 1:

Read A Poem

Read the poem 'Are We?' and think about the different family members. Which ones do you recognise? Are there people in your family like this, however you describe family, or are they different?

Are We?

we are the generation of women
whose fathers were around but
whose mothers ran houses raised children fed armies cleaned up your
messes and your
messes and your
messes and never seemed to get into any messes herself.
we are the generation that holds each other in silence, across
the internet and in every single cliché
we are talked about but never allowed to live in.
we are the generation of radical
honesty, the kind that doesn't let a friend
leave the house with their skirt tucked
into their knickers, but the kind
that lies with kindness and discretion.
we are the resistance, the ones
that grew up on twitter
and protested regimes across borders.
we use memes to politicise and get quotes
by academics theorising about our lives
we are the ones that build houses
using youtube, we fix lamps and boilers that leak underneath the tap.
we google and facebook and ask
the neighbourhood group
if anyone has a spare pot of paint to
do up the garden and one-up the annoying neighbour.
we are the children
of those that inherited books as gifts.
we pride ourselves in packed
bookcases of books we've never read.
we use our time wisely, to write poetry, to
sing loudly in the kitchen while making the buns
our mothers used to bake for us as kids
we buy flour and eggs and forget to buy
yeast but facetime with home will save us and the buns.
we are-
and we will be-
it's just a matter of how.

Afshan D'souza-Lodhi

Activity 2:

Write a poem or a story

Using Afshan's poem as inspiration, write a poem about family, however you describe family. Either think of one particular person or include as many as possible. When writing, try and include your favourite space in your home and your object. See if you can include a metaphor.

Writing About Moments That Make Us

Activity 1: Read a Poem

When reading 'Stabilisers Taken' think about the story of the poem, think about the beginning, middle and end. Is there a conflict in the poem? How is this conflict making the person feel and act?

Stabilisers Taken

Boys love bikes.
I hate mine.
Stabilisers taken,
Mum and her cuddles are inside as
my clumsy new Step Dad holds the back of my saddle,
runs close as I pedal.
Don't - let - go - !

Down a back alley street, so far from my pillow,
handle bars jiggle under sweat wet palms.
Spokes growl grumble. Belly drum rumbles.
Feet cartwheel like bumblin' clowns
on Big Top's opening night.
Propelled by fright, I glance back to see him
laugh at me.
He's let go.

I fumble. Teeter.
Clumsy me!
No safety net beneath trapeze.
He laughs

then I laugh too.
Ha!
I let go.
Woah!
Crack through the air like ring master's whip.
Phased.
Amazed.
Shot free of my cannon. Rocket and fly!
Tear through skies whose horizons had fallen
down the back of a hug.

Mum might be cooking.
I'm feasting on the speed.
My tummy, a circus.

Dominic Berry

Activity 2: Write A Short Story

Write a short story about achievement. Use Dominic's poem as inspiration. Think about the beginning, the middle, some conflict and how to conflict is overcome or resolves at the end. Try including the location from the Picture A Scene activity and the advice you would share with someone.

Writing About Travels and Places

Travel is very limited at the moment. However, with memory and imagination, we can visit places we have been to before or imagine places we want to visit. Here are activities to get you thinking about travelling.

It is Different Here

Activity 1:

Making A List

Think about a place you have visited that is very different to where you live now. It could be somebody else's house, a different town or city in the UK or somewhere overseas. Write down all the characteristics of this particular place: what made it different? How did it smell and look? What made the buildings, the landscape and the rooms and furniture different to what you know?

Activity 2:

Freewrite (5 minutes)

Starter line: 'At sunset I remember...'

Somewhere Far Away

Activity 1:

Read A Poem

When reading Palma to Port de Pollença think about the journey of the poem and the place it describes.

Palma to Port de Pollença

we sit at the back of the bus
sun drunk, connected by smiles
and the electric wire of headphones
we air drum through the Spanish countryside
the crescendos blurring our hands
spilling clouds of icing sugar
from our bag of breakfast onto our feet
we rock and roll past flat dusty towns
past landscapes glimpsed in each other's eyes
and onward to the place where you
teach me to do handstands in the sea

Steph Pike



Activity 2:

A Dream Holiday

Think about a dream holiday you would like to go on. Draw a picture of this place, or make a list of all the things you would find there or make a mood board to represent what it would be like. Now write a poem about that place, taking us on a journey. Remember you can use similes, metaphors, rhymes or personification in your poem.

Activity 3:

Write A Lune

A lune is a short poem, sometimes known as the American Haiku. A lune is a three line poem, made up of three words in the first line, then five words in the next line and three words in the final line.

For example:

Match of the day

Missing the match (three words)
Avoiding the results all day (five words)
They lose anyway (three words)
Nicole May

Using your mood board from Activity 2, try to have a go at writing a holiday themed lune.

Word Games

Congratulations, you've finished all the writing exercises! We hope you enjoyed them and are very proud of what you've written. Take some time to have fun with words as a reward with these games:

1. Is there someone in your house you can compete against? Or a friend you could phone? Set a timer for three minutes. Now each make up as many new words as you can from the words **GREATER MANCHESTER**. Share your list, did you each have the same or different words?
2. With two people, set a timer for two minutes. Think of the top 15 best locations in your local area. Share your list, did you have the same or different places? Which ones are you going to visit after the lockdown?
3. Set a timer for three minutes. Between two of you or more, make up as many words as you can from the word **DIFFERENTLY**. Share your list, did you have the same or different words?
4. Is there someone in your house you can compete against? Or a friend you can phone? Set a timer for three minutes. Now make up as many words as you can from the word **CELEBRATING**. Share your list, did you have the same or different words?



ABOUT US

Manchester has been recognised by UNESCO, part of the United Nations, as a City of Literature since 2017 as part of the Creative Cities Network. This means it is a place that values people who read and write, and is a place where stories and songs are very important to people.

You can follow us and find out more about Manchester City of Literature on the details below.



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