

Word Box: Making a Game out of Writing with Layla Josephine

Even reluctant writers will find their voice using this playful exercise.



Summary:

This game of random choice, devised by our Citizen Schools Writer in Residence, helps writers jump right into writing.

This resource is great for:

anyone who struggles getting started writing!

Introduction

This is the third in a series of activities exploring self-reflection and identity, created by Leyla Josephine, poet, performer, facilitator, theatre-maker, and one of our Citizen writers in residence.

Leyla says: “This is a great exercise for anyone that is struggling to get writing. Treat the exercise as a game. Its aim is to get you started writing rather than to

have a polished and perfect piece. The game aspect of it lowers expectations and you'll find yourselves writing something self-reflective before you know it!"

All of Leyla's activities can be made simpler or more complex depending on or ability.

You will need

- two containers of some sort (hat, pot, cardboard box, tupperware)
- bits of paper with words written on them
- bits of paper with personal questions written on them
- paper
- pens/pencils

Preparation

Sample words

It's best to pick words according to the level you are working with. I like picking words that provoke feeling but their definition is simple.

heat, branch, purple, closer, forever, breath, song, deep, path, current, journey, explosion, riot, fierce, soft, pour, sway, mirror, tough, trouble, vines, wave, hidden, volcano, fever, brush, rich, forgotten, quick, spice, home, bored, trust, taste, dip, hurricane, jungle, protested, sting.

Sample questions

It's best to pick questions in which the participants can choose how much they want to disclose. Your questions dictate what the group writes about. As this series is looking at self-reflection we've given you a sample of questions that relate to that theme.

Write about a time you felt free, describe someone you know's face, write about your favourite meal, describe a funny memory you have, write about a time you didn't know what to say, describe a conversation you wish you could have, write about a special occasion you attended, write about a time you felt listened to, describe a time you felt important, describe an important item you own, write about something that makes you angry.

Step 1

Ask a volunteer to pick a word out of the box. Ask another volunteer to pick a question out of the box. Both must read this to the rest of the group.

Step 2

The participants then have a time limit (I usually start with 1min) to answer the question using the word picked. Remember this is a game and keep a playful attitude while facilitating - some people don't work well under strict time limits!

Step 3

It's your choice whether you ask participants to share what they've written or not - it depends on how comfortable the group are with each other. I usually ask for volunteers to share first then when everyone is a bit more confident ask certain individuals until everyone is shared.

Step 4

Once you've done this about 5 times. Ask the group to individually choose one of the questions to expand on.

Step 5

Give the participants 10/20 mins to free write around their chosen subject. If they're feeling stuck they can pick some more random words to help them.

Step 6

Offer an opportunity to share.

Further information

Find out more about Leyla's work in schools, part of our year-round programme of community events, [here](#).