

Some Tips for Developing and Presenting Effective Writing Prompts

- Whenever possible, propose prompts based on themes, issues, problems, situations that have been discussed that day.
- Writing themes should direct the writers to concrete stories or descriptions.
- Examples of good story prompts
 - A time I defended myself (or my family, or community)
 - A turning point in my life
 - When I first came to Chicago
 - Making something out of nothing
 - Biting my tongue
 - What happened when I took a risk
 - Breaking with a tradition
 - Finding a silver lining; or a time when something difficult happened, but there was a positive outcome
- Examples of good descriptive prompts that can also lead to a story:
 - A place of refuge
 - A person I admire
 - An object that I treasure
 - A family tradition in my home
 - The biography of my hair (or my handwriting)
- Avoid writing themes that lead to abstract writing.
Examples of abstract prompts:
 - My dreams for the future
 - Respecting our elders
 - The importance of loving our children
- Introduce the prompt in ways that encourage concrete writing and lots of detail.
For example:
 - "As you think about your refuge, think about what it feels like, sounds like, describe it using all your senses...."