80 SENSATIONAL HEADLINE WRITING PROMPTS

Hilarious, Ready-to-Go Prompts That Spark Kids' Imaginations and Motivate Them to Write, Write, Write!

by Andrew Kaplan
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Introduction

Why Use Writing Prompts?

How students develop writing skills has long been a topic of study and debate. Over the years, educators have provided different perspectives on how to teach and encourage writing. However, few would debate the premise of this book: that students will be more likely to write if writing is fun. To make writing enjoyable and to inspire students to write, *80 Sensational Headline Writing Prompts* provides fictional story starters that are modeled on those outrageous tabloid newspaper stories that have grabbed the attention of everybody who’s ever been on a supermarket checkout line. Among these story starters, which include sleepwalking marathoners, feline heiresses, and suspicious scientific studies, are ideas that will spark the imagination and sense of humor of any young writer.

How to Use This Book

Here are some tips from the author:

- When you introduce the concept of story starters, stress that there is no single “correct” story for each starter, and that students can complete these stories in any way that they wish.
- Suggest that students begin by jotting ideas and writing rough drafts on blank pieces of paper. When students are satisfied with what they have written, they can begin writing the final draft on the reproducible page and attach sheets to the page, as needed.
- Provide models for the students. You may wish to create and share your own version of one of the stories. You may also wish to show students stories from actual tabloid newspapers. Invite students to analyze each story and talk about whether the story is believable or unbelievable. Ask them to share how they drew their conclusions.
- As students write, remind them of the “five W’s” of newspaper writing: tell about who, what, where, when, and why.
- Give students an opportunity to share their work. You may wish to have each student choose a group of favorite stories and use these stories to create a “newspaper” that other students can read. Alternatively, groups of students can work cooperatively to create a newspaper from the stories they have written.
Meeting Standards

This book will help you meet the IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts listed below.

• Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

• Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

• Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

• Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

• Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).
Aliens Plant Thoughts in TV Star’s Brain

If you’ve been watching the hit TV show “Mornings With Matt,” you may have noticed that Matt’s questions—and outfits—have been getting a bit strange lately. And now, some scientists claim they know the reason why.

The Classroom Chronicle

Hold On to Your Hats!

Study finds that wearing hats helps performance in jobs and school.
Rich Gal Leaves $2,000,000 to Pet Poodle!
Millionairess’s Siamese cats have hissy fit, says their lawyer.

Sleepwalker Wins Marathon!
26.2-mile snooze was all part of plan, says runner when he wakes at the finish line.
Whistle While You Work?
Governor shocks state by singing her way through work days and speeches.

A Ghost of a Chance?
New research claims that the most successful people are getting help from friendly ghosts and spirits.
Dog Predicts Weather!
Sensitive beagle is cheaper than a meteorologist and twice as accurate, says the head of Channel 2’s WETV.

The School Chatter
“Chat away! We’ll print it!”

Your Computer?
It’s All Shook Up!
Computer hacker claims Elvis is alive and well but trapped inside World Wide Web.
So You Want to Be a Millionaire? So Does This Parrot!

Brainy bird calls up the new-contestant telephone line for “Strike It Rich.” “We have to take him,” sighs show’s producer. “He answered all the questions correctly.”

The Classroom Chronicle

Do You Want to Live Longer? Just Hang Out!

New study shows that hanging upside down from rings lengthens life.
Fish Is Brain Food? That Sounds Fishy!

Popcorn more likely to build smarts, says respected nutritionist.

Gazillion-Ton Ball of Swiss Cheese Circling Earth!

New research shows that the moon really is made of Swiss cheese. “Every bite was yummy,” claims former astronaut.
Canine Actors Cause Chaos!
Dogs on TV and movie sets refuse to perform. Strike is first of its kind, says TV producer.

That Turkey’s No Turkey!
Bold new ideas about farming and what farm animals can do save farm from failure.
George Washington Was Framed!

Historian’s new book suggests that Washington did not chop down cherry tree. “He took the rap for his no-good stepbrother,” according to professor.

Complaints? They’re Not Just Hot Air!

Engineers claim that they can harness “hot air” from complainers and use it to power refrigerators. “The crankier they are, the better,” says one inventor.
Work? It’s for the Birds!

Man trains flock of birds to perform household tasks. “Next stop is my office,” says man, as animal rights protesters surround house.

Move Over, Tooth Fairy!

New research shows that putting books under your pillow each night works the same way as reading them. “It’s worth the stiff neck that you wake up with,” says one student.
Want a Fortune? Try a Fortune Cookie!
Billionaire admits that advice from fortune cookies enabled him to get rich.

Identical Twins Forget Which Twin Is Which!
“We’re not just doing this to bug out teachers,” claim confused 10-year-olds.
Crime Doesn’t Pay!
Tight job market and shortage of qualified crooks forces mob to advertise for new criminals. “We may even have to offer medical and dental benefits,” sighs thug.

Better Safe Than Sorry?
Family found living in closed bank’s giant underground safe. “We like the security,” says Dad.
Money DOES Grow on Trees!
Money tree with $100 bills for leaves is cause of farmer’s mysterious and sudden wealth.

So That’s Where All the Socks Go!
Archaeologists discover layer of lost socks 30 feet beneath Earth’s surface.
Bigfoot Comes out of Hiding to Do Commercials for Shoe Store!

Legendary creature is a natural spokesperson for footwear chain.

Order in the Court?

Judge surprises court by ordering out for pizza. “I needed strength to get through this trial,” says hungry judge.
Man Landed on Saturn in 1872!
New photographs from Saturn space probe show old newspapers on Saturn’s surface.

Sleeping Spells Ruin Career of Mind Reader!
“It wasn’t my fault,” says the Amazing Pupkin. “Everything they were thinking was incredibly boring.”
Answering Machine Answers Back!

Texas woman loses friends after answering machine replies to phone calls on its own.

Potholes Are Communications From Other Planets!

Astronomer says that holes in roads contain coded messages from space aliens.
Face-Lift Gives Man Permanent Smile

“I’m not smiling on the inside,” says angry patient.

The School Chatter

“Chat away! We’ll print it!”

Bubble-Blowing Boy Floats Across Country!

First documented instance of bubble-gum bubble being used for flight, says aviation expert.
Talking to Plants DOES Help Them Grow!

"But be careful what you say," warns gardener who has a 16-foot daisy.

Wall Street? It’s Just Monkey Business!

Monkey’s stock picks beat the performances of expert money managers and make millions. “No, I’m not embarrassed,” says famous investor who was beaten by clever chimp.
Can’t Afford to Fly? Try Faxing Yourself Instead!
Woman claims that she faxed herself to Mexico.

Talk ISN’T Cheap: TV Talk Shows Lead to Deafness—and Lawsuits
Camerawoman and production assistants claim that high volume and low quality of host’s chatter led to hearing loss.
Asleep on the Job?  
We’re Giving You a Raise!

Drowsy company president forces employees to take at least one nap per day. “My researchers indicate that it improves performance,” says groggy boss.

If You Win, It’ll Probably Be by a Nose!

Study shows that strong sense of smell can ensure success. “You can smell fear, intelligence, nervousness—all sorts of things,” says scientist. “Your sense of smell can help you make decisions.”
Soon, Cellular Phones Might Be Really Cellular

Phone company unveils plan to have phone chips planted in brain cells. “You’ll ALWAYS be connected,” says excited phone company executive.

The School Chatter

Caveman Found in Melted Glacier Demands to Be Refrozen

Man frozen for 4,000 years would rather wait for a better time to come back to life, claims his spokesperson.
Buddy Lists: They Aren’t Just for Buddies
Teenager sues schoolmate for leaving her off buddy list.

Want Good Luck? Forget About Rabbit’s Feet!
“Think about it,” says researcher. “It wasn’t very good luck for the rabbit.”
Dog Barks up Wrong Tree!

Fed-up cat jumps from branch, causing concussion for crabby canine. “It’s not the first time Fido’s gone too far,” says worried owner.

Lost Couple Turns Up After 27 Years

Husband always refused to ask for directions, according to frustrated wife.
Four-Year-Old Elected Mayor!

Popular tot is only person in town that everyone likes.

Elephant Stages Sit-in to Protest Zoo Closing

Local officials don’t see much hope for swift solution.
You Big Baby!
60-pound infant shocks mom and doctors.

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The School Chatter

“Chat away! We’ll print it!”

It’s Raining Cats and Dogs!
Rich owners pamper pets by sending them to skydiving school.

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Home Sweet Home? You Better Believe It!

New 90-story building is constructed using mass hypnosis. “For this building to remain standing, everyone has to BELIEVE in it,” says architect, who is also a famous hypnotist.

All It Takes Is a Dream!

Daydreamers earn more money, according to one researcher.
Basketball Players Are Hot Dogs, Even When They Don’t Show Off!

Players use mustard to cure muscle aches. “Another benefit is that hot dog sales are up,” says team owner.

Woman Sues Rock Band Over Unforgettable Song

Woman claims that song has been stuck in her head for more than one month, preventing her from doing her job and living a normal life.
4000-Year-Old Computers Found in Pyramid

Did pharaohs spend time on ancient version of Internet?

Game Show Contestants Refuse to Leave Island!

“It’s too much fun here,” explain remaining people on Who Will Survive?
New Car Runs on Human Hair!

Car can travel 200 miles from the hair on an average person's head.

The School Chatter

Speed-Readers Banned From Bookstore Chain

“One cheapskate read our whole selection of books in two days,” fumes bookstore executive.
Police Investigate Sleeping Suspects

“When they talk in their sleep, they tell the truth,” claims researcher.

Takeout Food Cartons Discovered on Mars!

“We don’t know who ordered it, or who delivered it,” says puzzled NASA scientist.
Want a Fat Wallet?
Try a Flat Head!

Scientist claims that standing on head leads to increased IQ, better job performance, and higher earnings.

Stop Snoring, Before It’s Too Late!

New study shows that snoring decreases intelligence.
Wrestler Quits Ring in Order to Be Poet!

“I want to wrestle with words instead of with people,” says Irving the Terrible.

Spicy Sandwich Shop Causes Sadness
Shop’s overuse of chopped onions makes for weepy workers and diners.
Computer Says: “No More Fun and Games!”

“I wasn’t made for this junk,” says computer in written message to owner, as it refuses to download new Ice Adventure 3 computer game.

The School Chatter

“Chat away! We’ll print it!”

Exploding Ketchup Containers Hurt Business at Fast-Food Chain!

Chain refuses to pay bills for dry cleaning.
Five-Year-Old Girl Lifts Jeep With Bare Hands
Burst of superhuman strength saves brother, 13, who was trapped under jeep.

High-School Sweethearts Meet 70 Years Later, at Retirement Home
Reunited lovebirds planning to wed.
Street Musician Makes $300,000 per Year!
“You just have to pick the right corner,” says wealthy guitarist.

Burglar Breaks Into Jail by Mistake, and Has to Stay There!
“The tunnel was supposed to lead to bank vault,” says confused thief.
Key to Long Life—Stop Worrying About It!
New study finds that the more you worry, the earlier you’ll die.

Brown Bear Sues for Right to Play in Pro Football League
“He was a great player in college,” says bear’s agent.
Weight Lifting Makes People Shorter!
Doctor claims that force of gravity compresses spine.

A Clean House Is a Rich House!
Cleaning crew finds $36,000 in pennies beneath sofa cushions.
Horse Becomes CEO and President of Major Company

Will of eccentric tycoon leaves control of company to favorite horse.

Lawn Mower Racers Fight to Be Included in Olympics

“Driving a riding lawnmower takes great skill and coordination,” according to one enthusiast.
Labrador Retriever Wins Beauty Contest, Enraging Human Contestants!
“She was a really foxy dog,” gushes one judge.

The School Chatter
“Chat away! We’ll print it!”

Space Aliens Plan to Use Earth as Garbage Dump!
Friendly alien from Saturn warns officials of plan.
Squeaking Chalk Drives Students Nuts!

Students bring lawsuit to stop teacher from using chalkboard to torture them.

Dogs Smarter Than Humans!

“It’s obvious,” says veterinarian. “Think about who’s picking up after whom!”

The Classroom Chronicle

“All the classroom news that’s fit to print!”

The Tell-All Tribune

“If you say it, we tell it!”

Daytime Edition
Vol. XVI

Volume XIX

Daily 50¢
Toenails Show if You Are Telling the Truth!
Cops seek permission to take off suspect’s socks.

Going Bananas? You Will, if You Eat Too Many!
Study finds that eating bananas can cause insanity. “A banana now and then makes you feel more creative,” says scientist. “But more than that can put you completely over the edge.”
The Zany Daily

“If it’s zany, we cover it!”

The School Chatter

“Chat away! We’ll print it!”