

## Writing Activities

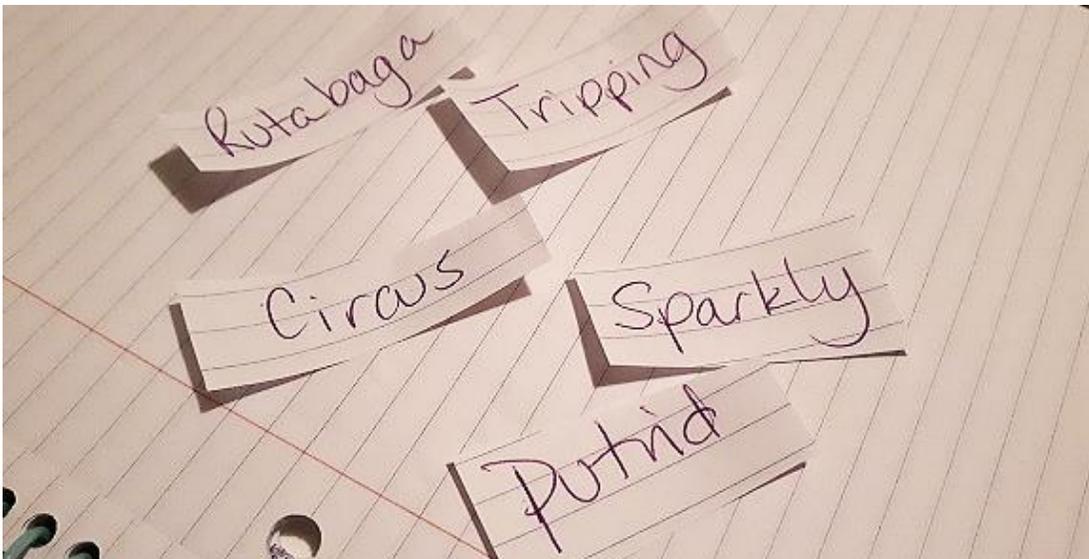
Sometimes you need to warm up your creative juices before diving into a new writing project. We play around with a few different activities in the writers' group at my library. Try them out and as the words start to flow, maybe invent some of your own! Have fun!

### 1. Five Words

This is an activity that can be done on your own or in a group. By beginning with a group of words that you have to incorporate into your work, you're giving yourself a starting point. Instead of staring at a blank page, you're now five words closer to a finished project! Here's what you do:

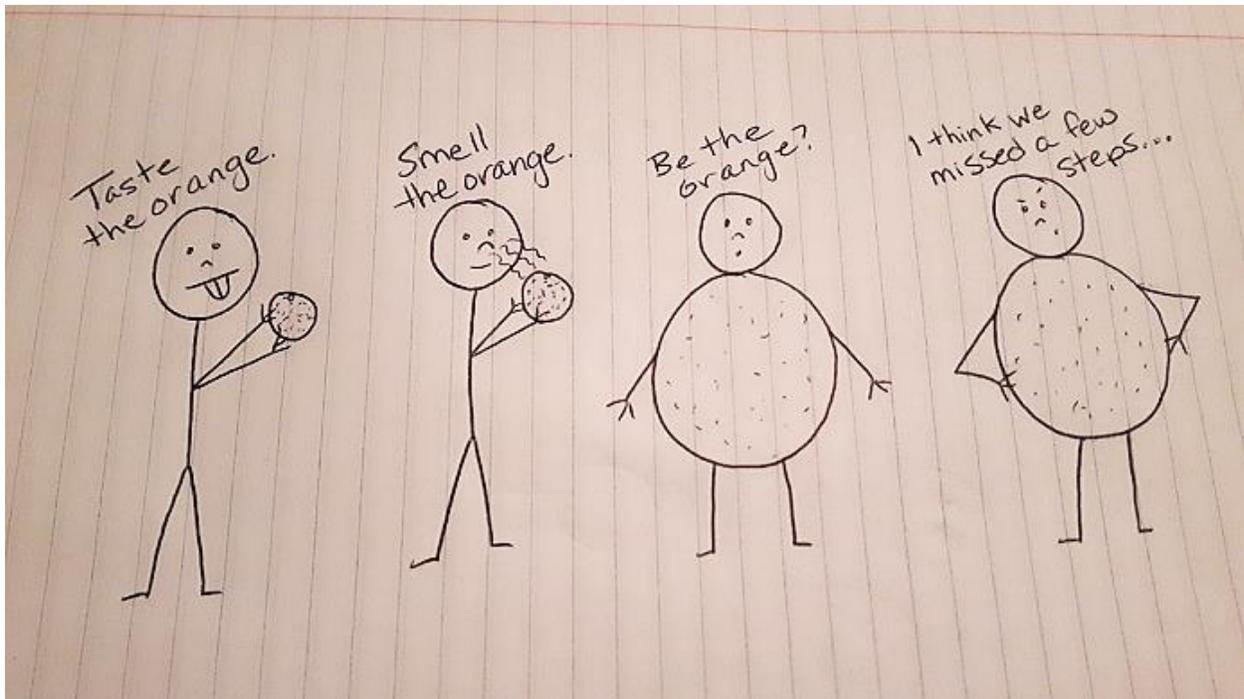
*On your own* – Pick five words at random. Make sure you have a mix of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Use them to write a short scene.

*In a group* – Have everyone in the group write out five words on small slips of paper and then put them in a container. Choose five slips at random. Use them to write a short scene.



## 2. The Senses

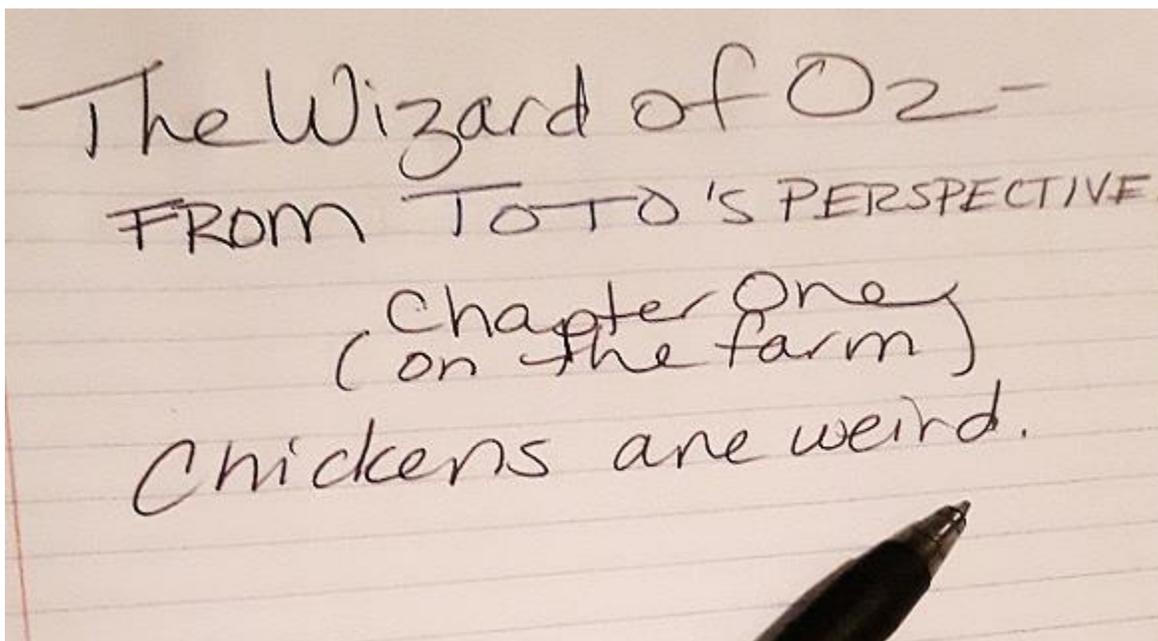
Pick an object. For each of the five senses (touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell), write a one sentence description. Then, read over what you have and write FIVE more sentences for each sense. Why all the sentences? To help you go beyond the obvious and think about description in different ways. Is an orange just orange or is it a little dimpled ball of sunshine? You tell me!



### 3. Rewriting a Scene

When people talk about writing, they often talk about ‘voice’ and it can be hard to know what that means. Voice is how the main character or narrator sounds to the reader – how they talk, how they describe things, how they see and react to the world around them.

If you want to experiment with voice, a great exercise is to take a scene or a chapter from one of your favourite books and rewrite it from a different character’s perspective. Try writing it from their point of view. Do they have a different opinion about what’s happening? Are they more serious or are they making jokes? Think about what words they would use to describe what’s happening. How would they talk about it? Do they use long, descriptive sentences or are they more abrupt and to the point. If you really want to stretch your imagination, choose an inanimate object from the scene and write from their perspective. Who knows – maybe that lamp holds all the secrets!

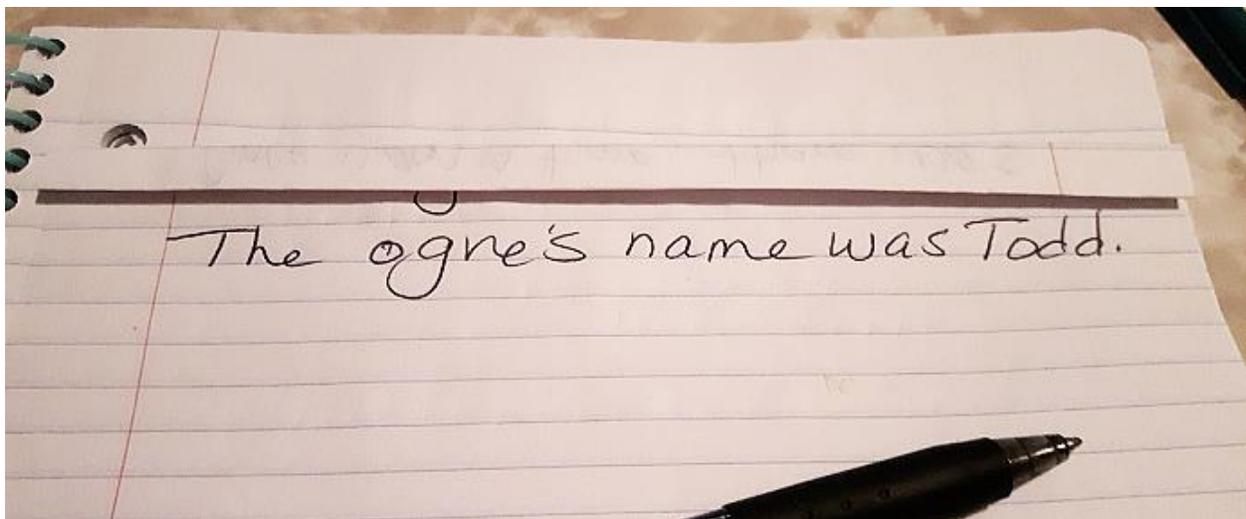


#### 4. Travelling Story

This is a really fun game, but it requires three or more people. Give it a try because the results are always hilarious. Here's what you do:

The first person starts the story by writing two lines. Before handing it over to the next person, Person 1 folds the paper over to cover up the first line they wrote. Person 2 writes one line and folds the top of the paper over to cover up the line above it before passing it along to Person 3.

The idea is that you will only ever see the line written by the person who wrote immediately before you. You'll have no idea what the rest of the story says. Keep passing the story around until everyone has had a chance to write a line and you have a full story. Unfold the paper and read the story out loud. See what kind of shenanigans you've come up with.



## 5. When in Doubt, Add a Catastrophe or Two

Sometimes when I get stuck with a story, it's because nothing is really happening. Your characters need an obstacle to overcome – usually more than one! Think about how you've set up your story:

Is it “The characters start here **and then** they go here **and then** this thing happens **and then** they end up here.”? The characters in this story are travelling along one straight path. There's nothing in their way to trip them up.

It will always be more interesting if you add something to the story that forces a character to change directions. “The characters start here and they **want** this, **but then** that gets in the way so they go here, **except this** other thing happens so they end up there.” If they want to go on a quest – sink their ship! If they need to go somewhere after school – give them detention! If they need to go left – make them turn right! Sometimes you'll surprise yourself with where you end up.

