

Weekly Writing Challenges 2017-18

 youngwritersproject.org/prompts17-18

These weekly challenges are created by YWP's young writers, summer interns and staff to inspire YOU to write! They are scheduled each week with a Friday deadline and are sent to schools as part of our regular publication process in a dozen VT newspapers, on VPR.net & VtDigger.org. However, ANYONE from ANYWHERE can respond to these challenges and will be considered for publication, particularly in our digital magazines, [The Voice](http://TheVoice.org), and [The Crow](http://TheCrow.com) on medium.com, as well as our Anthology of best work, where there are no geographic restrictions. YWP also has daily writing challenges [here](#) and on the home page of this website. (See the PDF version of these challenges at bottom)

1 General. Write about anything in any genre. **Due anytime.**

2 First. Write about the first time you tried something new – a food, a sport, a language, an idea. What did you discover? *Alternate:* **Screenplay.** You have just been hired by a big-shot Hollywood producer to write the opening scene of a screenplay of your favorite book. (Remember to include the title of the book.) **Due Sept. 15**

3 Photo 1-Wake. Write a poem or a story based on this image, making the image the first scene. (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Desiree Holmes*). *Alternate:* **Apples.** If you can, visit an apple orchard. Take photos and breathe in the apple air! Post your photos as a slideshow. Write a poem about the experience. **Due Sept. 22**

4 Peace. Where do you see the greatest opportunity to create peace in your community or the world? Write an essay or poem about what *you* can do to promote peace. This challenge is part of Peace Day, Sept. 21. More info: <http://www.peaceoneday.org>. Also see what Vergennes Union High School is planning (<https://youngwritersproject.org/node/16856>) and think of ways you and your class can participate on Peace Day! *Alternate:* **Setting.** Take a photo or photos of a setting that you find inspiring. Post the photo(s) and write a short explanation of why this place touches you. **Due Sept. 29**

5 Ogdoad. Find out what this word means and how it was used in ancient Egypt. Create your own poem or story using the word ogdoad. *Alternates:* **Fear.** What is a fear you have that is sure to make people say, "That's weird." Write an example of how the fear has played out – or could play out – for you; *OR* **Dare.** Your friend dares you to enter the creepy house at the end of the street. You enter, and inside, you find something that you least expected. Tell the story. **Due Oct. 6**

6 Photo2-Friends. Write about the friendship between these two leaves, both fallen, but one wrinkled and crumpled, the other still vibrant and colorful. (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Tapan Nepal*). *Alternates:* **Sound1-Play.** Listen to the audio (click on the challenge title). Record your own sounds of a park, recess, a sporting event. Take photos to accompany your soundtrack. Post your slideshow and audio on your YWP blog; *OR:* **Go.** Today, your usual way to school is unavailable, and you really need to get there! It's up to you to find an alternative. Write about your experience traveling by foot, bicycle, school bus, city bus, pony, skateboard (anything other than a car). What and who do you see along the way? How is it different from your usual trip? Do you learn something cool or surprising? Real or imagined. *Bonus for Vermont writers:* Your stories will be considered for publication to tell the story of Vermont's Way To Go challenge Sept. 25-Oct. 6 in local media. Go to <https://waytogovt.org/> for more information. **Due Oct. 13**

7 Winter/17. Tell a story about your experience of winter in short descriptive poetry or prose. Be original. Avoid clichés, (please, no hot chocolate or sleigh bells). The best will be selected for presentation by the Vermont Stage Company at its annual Winter Tales production at FlynnSpace in Burlington in December. *Alternate:* **Color.** If you had to give up seeing one color, which color would it be and why? **Due Oct. 20**

8 Power. You have developed an odd but somewhat useful superpower. Maybe you have the superpower to never get bug bites, or you have the power to predict traffic jams, or the power to clean your room by blinking three times. What would your odd superpower be? *Alternate:* **Advice.** Share the single best piece of advice you've ever received – or figured out yourself – about performing. Describe a time when this advice helped you overcome stage fright or another challenge. **Due Oct. 27**

9 I am. Start or end a piece of writing with the line, "I am who I am." *Alternates:* **Sound 2-Bells.** Your character is walking, hands in pockets, when they hear this sound, or they are on a bike speeding past a field. Let this sound and setting inspire your story. Listen to this sound on the challenge on youngwritersproject.org and write. *OR* **Fractured.** Write a fractured fairytale, a reimagining of an established fairytale — aka, Peter Pan is a girl, Alice in Wonderland is set in 2017, Little Red Riding Hood is set in New York City, etc. **Due Nov. 3**

10 Photo3-Diner. Write a story based on this photo. (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Grace Safford*). *Alternate:* **Inspired.** Find a piece of writing you like on YWP. Create a piece of art — a drawing, a photo, a painting — based on that piece. Include a link to the piece that inspired you. (And send a comment to the author to let them know.) **Due Nov. 10**

11 Once. What is the one thing you think everyone should do at least once in their life? Write from your own experience or research. *Alternate:*

Don't. Don't run with scissors. Don't chew with your mouth open. Don't talk to strangers. What is another 'don't' tip that you learned – and maybe you learned it the hard way? Describe. **Due Nov. 17**

12 Wonder. I wonder why ... Finish the sentence. Use it at the beginning or end of a story. *Alternates:* **Nature.** Make a sculpture out of natural things on the ground in the woods or in your backyard — sticks, rocks, leaves, etc. Don't harm or disturb the habitat. Take a picture and post it. *OR:* **Sound3-Glass.** Listen to the audio clip (click on challenge title) of someone walking on broken glass. Write about what you are hearing. Maybe the glass can be a metaphor in a poem. **Due Nov. 24**

13 Invention. What is something you wish had never been invented? How would your life and/or the world be different without this invention? *Alternate:* **Squirrel.** Write the interior dialogue of a squirrel trying to find the nuts she buried for the winter. **Due Dec. 1**

14 Sports. Describe a memorable moment playing your favorite sport. Use detail to help your readers feel like they're right there with you. *Alternate:* **Ask.** Ask someone for a writing prompt. You could ask a parent, a teacher, a friend, a waiter — anyone. Write based on the prompt they gave you, even if you don't like it at first. **Due Dec. 8**

15 Window. Look out your window. Describe what you see. Now include a person or an animal wandering through the scene. How does the landscape shift? What do you see and sense? *Alternates:* **Fad.** Write a rant about the weirdest fad of 2017. *OR* **Phone.** Go without your phone for 24 hours. Reflect on your experience. **Dec. 15**

16 Photo 4-Married. These two frogs have been married for years. They're having a small disagreement today. What's the conversation they're having? (*Photo by Kuhnmi, Creative Commons*) *Alternate:* **Mundane.** Write about something seemingly ordinary — a chair, a wall, a tack — and make it extraordinary. **Due Dec. 22**

17 Kid. If you could be a kid forever, who would you be? What would it be like to be in "kid-ville" forever? Describe. *Alternate:* **Like.** Starting with the sentence, "I like..." write a list or a run-on sentence of things, people, places you like. Load on the description. Instead of "I like movies," expand on it — "I like watching scary movies late at night with a bowl of salty popcorn and my buddy Chump at my side." **Due Jan. 12**

18 Snowman. Make a snowman and take a photo of it. The most creative snowman-builder will receive YWP chocolate! *Alternate:* **Slam.** What gets you really angry? What makes your blood boil? Write a slam poem about it. Record yourself performing it, and post the audio and the writing. **Due Jan. 19**

19 Photo 5-Collage. Create a collage like this one of you or a friend doing an activity involving your hands, such as knitting, drawing, playing catch, etc. (YWP Photo Library, photo by Mya Dusablon) *Alternate:* **Ancestor.** Who is one of your most interesting relatives? Famous or infamous? Well-known or unknown? Go digging for a good family story. **Due Jan. 26**

20 Morning. Start your story with the line, "It was a beautiful morning and nothing was wrong." *Alternate:* **Loss.** Write about what it's like to lose a friend. How does it happen? Where do you go from here? Real or imagined. No names, please. **Due Feb. 2**

21 Forest. Write a poem using a forest as a metaphor for either confusion or indecision; *Alternates:* **Valentine.** Write a Valentine's Day poem to a pet. Let the little critter know how much they mean to you. Post a picture of the pet with your poem. *OR:* **Love.** Write a love poem without mentioning the word "love." **Due Feb. 9**

22 Photo 6-Recurring. A character keeps seeing this image in their dreams. Why? Does this place exist somewhere? Does it have special meaning to this character? Does your character have to go and find it? What happens? (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Harlie Johnson*). *Alternates:* **Puns.** Make a list of words that could be turned into puns (words with several meanings or words that sound similar but have different meanings.) For instance, 'olive' becomes 'all of,' or 'I love.' Put your best puns together in a poem. *OR* **Footprints.** You see mysterious footprints leading from the woods behind your house and down the street. You follow them. What happens? **Due Feb. 16**

23 Photo 7-Crowd. How do you stand out from the crowd? Write from the perspective of the red-headed pin in this photo. (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Grace Safford*). *Alternate:* **History.** Research historical events that happened on your birthday, or in your birth year. Write from the perspective of someone who experienced the event. **Due Feb. 23**

24 Say. Say what you have always wanted to say to that one person. No names, please. *Alternate:* **Haiku.** Find a poem you like on *youngwritersproject.org*. Click 'sprout' and write a haiku based on the poem. (*A haiku has three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, often capturing an image, feeling, moment.*) **Due March 2**

25 Realize. Finish this phrase, "In that moment, I realized ..." and start or end a story or poem with it. *Alternate:* **Dog.** You find a lost dog. Write about the journey you take to get it back to its home. What are your thoughts as you get to know the dog? Does your relationship with the dog change as you travel together? **Due March 9**

26 Sure. Begin a story or poem with the phrase, "One thing I know for sure ..." *Alternate:* **Key.** Write from the point of view of a key in a sweaty

palm. **Due March 16**

27 Sound 4-Surprise. You walk downstairs to make breakfast only to discover the animal in the recording (in this challenge on youngwritersproject.org) standing in the middle of your kitchen. Write about the chaos that ensues. *Alternate:* **Nothing.** End a story with the line, "They had nothing to say to each other ..."
Due March 23

28 Photo 8-Treetop. Write from the perspective of a character sitting on top of this tree. What can the character see? Include something — maybe a friend, a pet, or even a responsibility — waiting at the bottom. (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Kevin Huang*) *Alternate:* **Brick.** You're walking along the side of a brick building when you see a loose brick. You tug at it, and a note flutters to the ground. What does it say?
Due March 30

29 Rain. Write a rhyming poem about being stuck in the rain, and a surprising discovery you make. *Alternate:* **Food.** Write an appreciation of your favorite food. An ode to eggplant?
Due April 6

30 Photo 9-City. Write a poem from the perspective of a tiny speck of light in the big city. (*YWP Photo Library, photo by Kevin Huang*) . *Alternate:* **Kindness.** What is the nicest thing a stranger has ever done for you?
Due April 13

31 Earth. The Earth needs your help. Climate change is real. Write an urgent message to your fellow humans that will get their attention. Be specific about how to take immediate action. Write, and you'll be entered into a drawing for YWP's environmentally friendly chocolate! *Alternate:* **Contrast.** Write the internal dialogue of a character who is constantly flipping between hope and despair.
Due April 20

32 Yellow. Take pictures of things that are the color yellow. Create a slideshow on your YWP blog. Write an accompanying poem or commentary on the photos. *Alternate:* **One.** Write a serious conversation between two characters. Just write the dialogue, nothing else. Now, delete everything one person said so that only one side of the conversation remains.
Due April 27

33 Last. Write a poem or a story that begins with the line, "This is your last chance." *Alternates:* **Writing.** Record the sound of yourself writing. Post the piece you were writing and your audio clip; *OR* **Green Up.** Vermonters! Participate in Green Up Day. Write about the most interesting object you find, the best conversation you have, or the observations you make as you do your part to help clean up the state. Take a photo. Post it all on your YWP blog!
Due May 4

The due dates for the following challenges have passed. But that shouldn't stop you from writing to them. (Deadlines are for publication in the newspaper series only.)