

# Fifteen Prompts for Fiction Writers

Workshop Notes  
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## **Workshop Notes**

A series of short guides on fiction writing

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Writing prompts are not magic. They do not  
generate stories automatically. What they can do is  
help you begin.

These exercises are meant to lower the stakes.

Do not try to write a masterpiece.

Write a sentence. Then – a paragraph, and after  
that – a whole page.

Trust your gut and choose the prompts that speak  
to you.

## 1. The Return

Write a scene about someone returning to a house or a place they have not visited for many years.

What has changed? What has remained exactly the same? What do they notice first?

*Focus on the meeting point between memory and reality.*

## 2. The Distracted Monologue

Your narrator needs to deliver an important piece of news. The problem is that they keep getting distracted. Allow interruptions, digressions, and wandering thoughts to shape the scene.

*Use rhythm, digressions, and spoken language to reveal the narrator's state of mind.*

## 3. The Ordinary Horror

Write a frightening scene in which the source of fear is something completely ordinary.

A place. An object. A person. Show how the familiar becomes unsettling.

*The goal is transformation rather than shock.*

## 4. The Unfamiliar Landscape

A group of travellers has arrived on an unknown planet. Describe the landscape through their eyes. What makes this world feel strange, beautiful, or disturbing?

*Try to make the setting feel unfamiliar without relying on clichés.*

## 5. Five Openings

You are beginning a detective story.

Write five different openings using five different approaches:

a monologue;

a memory;

direct speech;

a gradual entry into the story;

an abrupt beginning.

*Notice how the same story changes depending on the door you choose.*

## 6. Second Person

Your narrator works at a boring job and meets many different people every day.

They are desperate to tell someone about their day.

Tell the story using the second person ("you").

*Experiment with distance, intimacy, and voice.*

## 7. The Locked Space

Two people dislike each other.

For some reason, they find themselves trapped together in a confined space.

*Make their feelings clear without naming them directly.*

## 8. The Same Sentence

Write a story whose first and last sentences are identical. But a year passes between them.

*Let the meaning of the sentence change while the words remain the same.*

## 9. Ten Minutes

Write a scene that unfolds in real time over exactly ten minutes.

The scene should contain movement, conflict, and some form of resolution.

Avoid flashbacks and major time jumps.

*Use time itself as part of the structure.*

## 10. The Mirror Day

Write two accounts of the same day. For one narrator, it is a wonderful day. For the other, it is a terrible one.

The weather, events, and circumstances must remain exactly the same. Only the narrators' perception changes.

*Explore how the point of view shapes reality.*

## 11. The Dream

Describe a dream so convincingly that the reader mistakes it for reality.

Include just one detail that reveals it is a dream.

*Choose that detail carefully.*

## 12. Subtext

Write a dialogue in which neither speaker says what they truly mean.

The real conversation takes place beneath the words.

*Use silence, avoidance, and implication as tools.*

## 13. The Worst Possible Place

One person urgently needs to discuss something important and deeply personal.

Unfortunately, they are surrounded by people: at a station, a conference, a wedding, or some other crowded place.

*Show both the private conversation and the intrusive background.*



## 14. The Object

Choose an object that holds special meaning.

Describe it without naming it.

Allow the reader to identify it through details, memories, and associations.

*Trust specificity more than explanation.*

## 15. The Unnamed Disaster

Something terrible is happening.

Do not reveal what it is until the final sentence.

Use atmosphere, detail, pacing, and point of view to guide the reader.

*Build suspense through uncertainty rather than information.*

Write one. Write a few. Or try all fifteen.  
I hope they become starting points for  
stories only you can write.

## About the Author

Masha Kamenetskaya is a writer, playwright, workshop facilitator, and publisher of Panel Literature Association, based in Hungary.

She writes fiction, essays, and plays, and works with emerging writers through creative writing workshops and individual mentoring.

These guides grew out of workshop discussions, writing exercises, literary observations, and conversations about stories and storytelling.

To learn more about Masha's work, upcoming workshops, and publications, visit:  
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