

Elementary School (4-5) Narrative Writing Prompts

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IntelliMetric® Prompts

A Bus Trip to Anywhere

You and a group of students from school are on a school bus. Your teacher tells you that you can take the bus and the students anywhere you want to go.

Where would you choose to go? Write a story for your teacher about where you go and the journey that you take. Describe what you see, where you stop, and what part of the trip the students enjoy the most.

A Day at the Zoo

The local zoo has asked you to take care of George, a young monkey. Write a story about the day you spent taking care of George. Before you begin to write, think about all the things you did with George. Now tell the story about the day you spent taking care of George.

A Day With Columbus, Pilgrims or Native Americans

When we learn about life long ago, it seems very different, but some things were just the same. Just like us today, people had to live somewhere, find food, work, and play. Pretend you are sailing with Christopher Columbus, living with the Pilgrims, or living in an indigenous village. Write a short story about a day in your life. Be sure to talk about the work, clothes, games, and festivals in your life.

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A Funny Thing

Each person has had an instance when something funny or out of the ordinary happened. Write an essay describing the funniest thing that ever happened to you in your own life.

A Good Deed

Everyone has done something to help another person. Think about a time when you did something that helped someone else. Now write a story about a time when you did something that helped someone else.

A New Invention or Discovery

Imagine that one day you created a new invention or made a new discovery.

Write a multi-paragraph story about your experiences creating this invention or making this discovery. Be sure to include details to make your narrative interesting.

A Special Day

Is there a day or an event in your life that was so special that you wish you could live it over again? What day would you like to relive? What happened that made it so special?

Write a story about this special event or special day.

A Train That Can Go Anywhere!

Imagine a train that could take you anywhere on Earth! You have a ticket in your hand for a trip that can make stops at any three places. Write a story about what happens from the time you get on the train until it returns to your hometown.

A Trunk in the Attic

Imagine that you found an old trunk in your grandparents' attic. What would you like to find in the trunk? Explain the reasons for your choices. As you write your story, remember to describe what you found and give details to explain your discovery.

A Vivid Childhood Memory

We all have experienced something in our childhood that has impacted our lives. Think of a vivid memory from your childhood. Do you remember the first time you rode a school bus? Do you remember your first best friend? Do you remember when you learned to ride a bicycle? Do you remember the first time you earned enough money to buy something that you really wanted?

In a multi-paragraph essay, narrate the events related to a vivid childhood memory. Be sure to use details and examples so that your readers will understand what makes your memory so important.

A World Without Gravity

Imagine you wake up one day in a world without gravity. Write a story about what happens throughout the day.

Be sure to include specific details and examples in your story.

Adventure in a Blackout

Imagine that there is a thunderstorm one night, which causes a blackout for the whole town. The street lights are out, and people everywhere are in the dark. Everyone in the town has to use either a flashlight or a candle in order to see anything at all.

Write a story about an adventure that takes place during a blackout in your town.

Adventures in a Haunted Mansion

Imagine that you are walking to school with a friend when you find yourselves in front of the scariest haunted mansion ever. You and your friend cannot resist the adventure, and you enter the mansion with only the contents of your backpacks to defend yourselves against any monsters you may find. As you roam through the mansion, you meet several monsters, but you and your friend are able to successfully defend yourselves and escape the mansion unharmed.

Write a creative story about your adventures fighting monsters in the scariest haunted mansion ever. Remember to use only items that might be in your backpack to defend yourself, and include sensory details to make your story come to life.

An Exciting or Funny Experience

Think about a time something exciting or funny happened. Write about the exciting or funny experience and what happened.

An Exciting Time

We all have things that we believe are exciting. Think of something you have done that was exciting to you. It might be winning a ball game, getting a new pet, or riding a bike. Write a story about a time when you felt excited.

Bad Manners

Manners are like laws that set a standard for behavior, but they are unlike laws in that there is no formal system of punishment for bad manners. Examples of bad manners include not saying “please” and “thank you,” keeping your elbows on the table while you are eating, and talking when someone else is talking. Have you ever used bad manners? Have you ever experienced someone’s disapproval because you or a friend used bad manners?

Write a story about an experience you had with bad manners.

Celebrating a Special Day with Family Traditions

People celebrate special days by doing things their families have done for many years. This is called following a tradition. For example, in America, many families have a big turkey with pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving Day. What traditions are followed in your family? Choose one and describe it so we can all imagine we are right there with you.

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Fractured Fairy Tales

Choose a well-known fairy tale. Retell the story in first person from the point of view of one of the characters. Be sure to use descriptive language and dialogue so that the plot, setting, and conflict of the story are clear to the reader.

Fun During a Break from School

During the year students are given several breaks from school. Think about the times you were out of school on these breaks. Write about a time when you had fun during your break from school.

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I Had A Hundred Dollars...

Imagine that you have \$100 to use in any way that you would like. What would you do with the money and why?

Influencing an American Hero

How would history have been different if Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King, Jr. had not spoken up for people's rights? Imagine if they had decided that it was all too risky and too hard to change the way people thought. It would have been much easier if someone from the future had been able to go back in time to encourage them to make the right decision. Imagine that you could be the one to do that. Write a story about your time-travel adventure when you went back in time to an American hero's side to encourage him or her to take a risk to secure freedom for others. Describe what you took back with you to show your hero the future consequences of his or her actions.

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Learning a New Skill

Think of a time when you learned how to do something new or taught someone a new skill. Maybe it was a new sport or playing a new instrument. What happened? What did you find difficult about learning or teaching this new skill? Write a story about learning or teaching a new skill.

Locked in a Department Store

Gabrielle and her two friends are shopping at the local mall. While shopping in a department store, they notice that it starts getting late. They are told that the mall is closing, but they lose track of time. Now the exit doors are locked, and they are locked in the store with no way out!

Think about the girls being locked in the department store, and write a story about what happens next.

Only Ten Inches Tall!

Write a story about what would happen if you woke up and discovered that you were only 10 inches tall.

Spaceship Trip Through the Universe

Imagine a spaceship that could take you anywhere in the universe. You have a ticket for this spaceship and can make several stops during your trip.

Write a story about what happens from the time you get on the spaceship until it returns to Earth. Include descriptions of the stops you make along the way.

Stranded on an Island

Imagine that you and your friends are stranded on an island. What would you do to find food? How would you get water? Where would you live? Write a story in which you describe how you and your friends would work together to help each other survive.

When Someone Helped Me

Throughout our lives, we all need help from others from time to time. Think about a time when you needed help. Who helped you? Write a story about a time when a person helped you when you were struggling or in trouble.

Your Life as a Drop of Water

You are a water drop. Write a story that describes your life as a gas, a liquid, and a solid. Start from the time you were water vapor in the clouds, and then describe what it was like to fall to the ground as rain. Finally, tell the reader how you then became an icicle!

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Pilot Prompts

A Change that has Occurred in Your Life (pilot)

Change happens many times in our lives. Think about a time that there was a change in your life. This change could have occurred years ago or just days ago. How did you feel about this change in your life?

In a detailed narrative, write about a change that has occurred in your life and how you felt about this change. Be sure to include facts and details about the situation and your feelings.

Adventures as a Cowhand (pilot)

Throughout the 1800s, many Americans moved westward to explore the great frontier. During this time, many of these people started to take care of herds of cows, primarily for the milk and hides they provided. These people became known as "cowhands," "cowboys," and "cowgirls."

Imagine you want to become a "cowhand." Think of the tools you would need and the challenges you would face. Write a story about your adventures as a "cowhand" during the westward movement.

An Uncomfortable Outfit (pilot)

Imagine a situation or recall a time when you wore something you did not like or did not want to wear. Why did you have to wear it and how did it make you feel?

Write a story in which you describe what happened when you had to wear something you didn't want to wear.

Blind for a Day (pilot)

Many famous people have lived their lives without the ability to see and accomplished great things using their other senses. Helen Keller, Ray Charles, and Louis Braille are some famous names that come to mind.

Imagine living without the sense of sight. Write a story in which you describe what it would be like to be blind and to rely on your other senses for a day.

Changes in an Eroding Cliff (pilot)

We know that moving water erodes landforms, reshaping the land by taking it away from some places and depositing it as pebbles, sand, silt, and mud in other places (weathering, transport, and deposition).

Imagine that you are a cliff. Describe what it would be like to be beaten by waves every day. Are you eroding? What does it feel like, and is your appearance changing?

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Choose a Duck (pilot picture)



Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

Cloud Narrative (pilot)

Imagine that you are playing outside with your friends when you look up at the sky. What do the clouds look like? How does one cloud look different from another? Is it a clear, bright, sunny day or a dreary, rainy day? Do the clouds' shapes remind you of anything?

Write a story about the different clouds that you might see while playing outside. Combine facts and imagination in your story.

Coming to America (pilot)

Making the journey from Europe to America has gone through many changes since the first settlers arrived. Only a few generations ago, most families made the trip by ship, which often took many weeks. Now, many families travel by airplane, which only takes a few hours. Past and present journeys from Europe to America had their risks, dangers, and adventures.

In a well-developed story, tell the tale of a family coming to America. Include details appropriate to the time period in which the family traveled that will make the journey come alive for the reader.

Continue This Story (pilot)

While out exploring the woods one day, you hear the clouds start to rumble and small drops of rain begin to fall. As you turn to return home, you hear a twig snap in the woods behind you. When you turn around, you see nothing, but you get the feeling that you are being followed.

Write a story in which you describe what happens as you return home. You might consider adding people, creatures, or a surprise ending to help make your story more interesting. Be sure to use details to help readers imagine what is happening in your story.

Control the Weather for a Day (pilot)

Imagine that for one day, you can control the weather. What kind of weather would you bring to your city? How would people react? Write a story that tells about what happens on the day that you control the weather in your city.

Create Your Own Tall Tale (pilot)

Some believe that tall tales originated from bragging contests held between the rough-and-tumble people of the early frontier. The main characters in tall tales are capable of great and unbelievable feats, and the stories are told as if they are true-life stories. Think about a character from a tall tale that you have read. What traits make the main character likeable or unlikable to you? Is the character capable of unbelievable feats?

In a multi-paragraph essay, make up your own tall tale. Be sure to describe a character capable of doing unbelievable things, possibly to the point of being a hero. Include details that make your story larger than life.

Discovering a New Habitat (pilot)

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, naturalists were busy collecting and naming many new species of plants and animals. Journals were a popular form of recording their new discoveries, and naturalists wrote detailed descriptions of the new habitats they were exploring. Imagine that you are an 18th century naturalist and that you have just come upon a new habitat. What types of plants and animals might you find? How would they relate to each other and the habitat?

Write a journal entry as a naturalist about your discovery of a new habitat and its life forms. Include facts and details to describe the habitat.

Dump the Tea into Boston Harbor (pilot)

Imagine that you joined the Boston Tea Party. Write a journal entry describing what it was like to disguise yourself as a Native American, to sneak onto the docks at night, and then dump the tea into Boston Harbor. Be sure to pay attention to the sights, sounds, feelings, and smells of this adventure.

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Early Entrepreneur (pilot)

Settlers had a big influence on the economy of your local area in the past, and their influence is still evident today. Step into the shoes of one of the early entrepreneurs and tell the story of who you are, where you came from, why you settled in the area, and how you affected the economy.

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Exciting School Announcement (pilot)

Imagine someone made an exciting announcement at school. Write about the announcement and what happened next.

Going to a Concert (pilot)

You have received a gift from a relative: front-row tickets to a performance in your town by your favorite musical group. You can take someone with you to the concert and you will meet the group following the concert. Write a story about your experience.

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Helping in the Community (pilot)

We help people in our community in many ways. Think about an experience that you had helping someone in your community. Write a personal narrative that tells about your experience. Include details that help the reader relive your time helping someone in your community.

If You Were an Animal for a Day (pilot)

Imagine you are any animal you want to be for a day. Write to tell where you live and what you do. Be sure to include details in your story.

If You Were Invisible (pilot)

Imagine one day you wake up and discover you are invisible. Write to describe where you go and what you do.

Imagine Something Wonderful Happened to You (pilot)

Imagine something wonderful happened to you. Write to describe your experience.

Imagine That You are an Artist (pilot)

You have just seen artwork by (name of artist). Imagine that you are this artist. Describe what inspired you to create this work of art and your experience while creating the artwork.

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Imagine You are a Musical Instrument (pilot)

Choose an instrument that you like. Imagine you are that instrument. What do you sound like? Write about your musical adventure in a band or orchestra.

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Imagine You Found a Spaceship (pilot)

Imagine you and a friend found a spaceship. The door opened and you looked inside. Write about what happened.

Imagine Yourself as a Superhero (pilot)

Imagine yourself as a superhero. You might be able to see through walls, fly, or swim like a fish.

Write about your superhuman power and what happens when you use it.

Importance of Exercise for Good Health (pilot)

Sometime you might hear that a family member or close friend of the family has had an illness such as a heart attack. Write a real or imaginative story that explains why you believe exercise is important and how a person can avoid having a heart attack in the future.

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In the Museum (pilot picture)



Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

Journey through the Digestive System (pilot)

After we eat, the food we swallow goes on a journey through the organs in our body. Imagine you are a piece of food being eaten by a human being. What type of food are you? Which organs would you pass through? What would happen to you in those organs?

Choose a food, describe its personality, and write a multi-paragraph story about its journey through the organs of the human digestive system. Include facts and details to support the story of your journey and ensure its accuracy.

Lost in a Museum (pilot)

Jon and his classmates are on a field trip visiting a museum in Washington, D.C., when suddenly, Jon and his two best friends realize that they have lost the rest of their group. They walk around the museum hoping to find their group, but they are out of luck; they cannot find their teacher or classmates anywhere!

Think about Jon and his friends being lost in the museum, and write a story about what happens next.

Mirror (pilot picture)

Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

Monitoring a Storm (pilot)

There are many factors, such as air pressure, humidity, wind speed, and direction, which cause weather. Different combinations of these factors cause different weather patterns from calm, sunny days to windy, stormy days. Imagine that you are a meteorologist at a weather station responsible for collecting data from weather-monitoring equipment. What types of information would the equipment provide on a stormy day? How would that information be different on a sunny day? Write a story as a meteorologist describing a day at a weather station during a major storm. Include facts and details in your story.

Owning Your Own Toy Company (pilot)

Imagine that you suddenly wake up one morning and find yourself the owner of a toy company. Write a story about what happens next.

Package from Someone Special (pilot)

Imagine you received a package in the mail from a special person. Using details, write about what happened when you opened the package.

Participate in a School Competition (pilot)

Schools offer students many opportunities to participate in academic, athletic, or individual talent competitions throughout the school year. Some examples of these opportunities are spelling bees, science fairs, races, and talent shows.

Imagine you have decided to enter a contest at your school. Write a story that details your experience preparing for and participating in the event. Be sure to include the outcome, so readers will know how you did!

Pizza Illustrates Fractions (pilot)

Gina was enjoying her birthday party until the pizzas arrived. Gina's mom ordered enough pizza so that each guest could eat half a pizza each. Some pizzas were cut into four slices and others were cut into eight slices. A big argument broke out when some kids who got $\frac{2}{4}$ of a pizza thought they weren't getting as much as the kids who got $\frac{4}{8}$! Write the dialogue for this crazy party scene. As the scene progresses, decide who shows the guests that they all have equal amounts of pizza.

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Rescued by My Favorite Character (pilot)

Imagine you need to be rescued. Why? Are you in an embarrassing situation, or perhaps, a dangerous one? Think about a character from a book, television show, movie, or video game who has the courage to rescue you.

Write a story about the imagined situation and how your favorite character rescues you. Be sure to include details that help the readers picture the scenes in their minds.

Ride in a Talking, Flying Car (pilot)

Imagine your friend has a car that talks and flies. The car can do other amazing things too. Your friend takes you for a ride. Write to tell what happened when your friend took you for a ride in the car.

Saving for a Bicycle (pilot)

James begins working and saves his money to buy a certain bicycle he has seen in the local bike shop. When James finally earns enough money to buy the bicycle, he returns to the shop to find that the bicycle has been sold.

Think about the situation James is in, and write a story about what happens next.

Saving the U.S. Constitution (pilot)

Imagine that you get to take a field trip to visit the actual U.S. Constitution in Washington, D.C. Write a story about how you got there, how you felt as you viewed this document in its glass case and what happened when your teacher went crazy and tried to break the glass! How will you convince her not to destroy this piece of U.S. history?

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Searching for a Hidden Passageway (pilot)

Imagine you find an old letter tucked inside a library book. The letter reveals that there is a hidden passageway somewhere at your school. Write about your search for the passageway and where it leads.

Statue of Liberty (pilot picture)

Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

Story About a Talking Fish (pilot)

Imagine a fish popped its head out of the water and said something.

What would you do? Write a story about what happened. Be sure to include details in your story.

Story Using an Advertising Character (pilot)

We are all familiar with the various characters that companies use to advertise their products. We remember and like these characters because they are funny, cool, sweet, or have an unusual characteristic. Do you have a favorite advertising character? Can you imagine an adventure involving this character?

In a detailed essay, write a story involving an advertising character of your choice. Include details to make your story interesting.

Stuck at the Grand Canyon (pilot)

A group of tourists have taken a bus trip to the Grand Canyon. At the end of the day, when the group gets back on the bus to leave, the engine will not start. With the bus broken down, the group is now stranded at the Grand Canyon.

Think about how this problem will affect the tourists, and write a story about what happens next.

Taking Care of a Pet (pilot)

Pets require a lot of care and love to keep them healthy and happy. Parents sometimes make their children prove that they can be responsible before they will agree to get a family pet. Even when we do our best to care for our pets, they sometimes find themselves in dangerous or adventurous situations.

In a well-developed story, tell of the adventure or responsibility of caring for a pet. Include facts, details, and examples to make the story seem real to the reader.

The Gate with the Golden Key (pilot)

Imagine one day you were outside and came across a vine-covered stone wall. In the middle of the wall was a locked wooden gate with a golden key hanging next to it. Using details, write a story about what happened.

The Landfill Dwellers (pilot picture)

Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

The Tale of the Talking Spider (pilot)

Imagine that you are walking down the sidewalk and you almost step on a spider. Suddenly, the spider begins to talk to you. Write a detailed story about what happens next.

The Waiting Room (pilot picture)

Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

The Worst Day of School (pilot)

All of us can think of a time when we had a bad day while at school. Think about the worst day of school you have ever experienced. What happened to make this day so terrible?

Write a story about your worst day of school ever. Include details and examples that will help the reader relive the day with you.

Tornado by Betsy Byars (pilot)

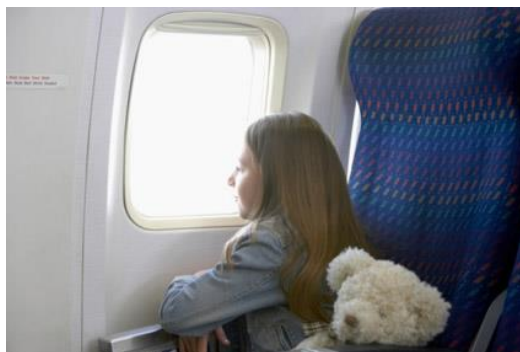
At the end of the book, Pete promises to tell the story about Tornado and the rooster "next time." The author of *Tornado* has not written this story yet, but you can! You read about what happened when Tornado had funny adventures with a turtle and a cat. What might happen when Tornado meets a rooster? Write a story about Tornado and a rooster. Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Transformations Through the Food Chain (pilot)

Producers and consumers are related in food chains in an ecosystem. Imagine that you are a blade of grass. You are eaten by an herbivore, which is then eaten by a carnivore, which is then eaten by a decomposer. Write a narrative of at least three paragraphs to describe your transformations.

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Traveling in a Jet (pilot picture)



Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

Treasure Hunt with a Talking Parrot (pilot)

Imagine you were awakened one morning by a talking parrot. "I know where a treasure is buried," it squawked. Using details, write a story about what happened.

Tree Climber (pilot picture)



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Trip Through the Circulatory System in a Capsule (pilot)

Imagine that scientists have found a way to make you and a protective observation capsule microscopic in size. You and the capsule are injected into the bloodstream of a living person's body. Write the story of your adventure as you circulate through the heart chambers, lungs, and body.

Visit By a Famous Person (pilot)

Imagine a helicopter with a famous person on board landed near your school. The person was coming to visit your class. Who was the person, and what happened when he or she came to your classroom?

"We are the Champions": Tell the Story of a Champion (pilot)

The song "We are the Champions" by Queen tells the story of a champion, describing what he/she and his/her friends had to go through to be successful. Think about how the words of the song describe the speaker's struggles and what the speaker had to do to become a champion. Tell the story of someone

you know who has also had to struggle to become a champion. What are some of the challenges they had to face? What did they do to triumph over those obstacles?

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Wearing Helmets of Unlike Magnetic Poles (pilot)

We know that magnets have two poles (north and south), and that like poles repel each other and unlike poles attract each other. Imagine that you and a friend are magnetic, wearing helmets of unlike poles. What is it like to walk around together? Is it comfortable? Be sure to describe what happens and how it feels.

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What Would You Do if School Closes? (pilot)

Imagine your school closes for the day, and you can do anything you want. What will you do? Write a story about what happens.

When an Hour Felt Like a Day (pilot)

We know that there are 60 minutes in an hour and twenty-four hours in a day, but sometimes an hour can feel like a day! Describe a time an hour felt like a day to you.

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When I Received Something Special (pilot)

Think about a time when you received something special. It might have been a gift, a party, a special vacation, a certificate, or a sports trophy. Write a personal narrative about a time when you received something special. Include details that tell the reader why this was so special.

When Something was Subtracted from Your Life (pilot)

Sometimes something is added to your life like a new book and that makes you very happy. Sometimes something is subtracted from your life and it makes you sad. Describe a time when something you liked was subtracted from your life.

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When You Open the Door. . . . (pilot)

Suppose a door suddenly appears as you are walking down the hall. Write about what happens when you open the door.

Whispering (pilot picture)



Every picture tells a story. Use your imagination and experience to write a story about the picture. Be sure to develop your characters, setting, plot, conflict and resolution.

Why are Things Disappearing? (pilot)

Things have been disappearing from your classroom. Write a mystery story that tells what is happening. Include characters, plot, conflict, and resolution to complete your story.

Writing a Myth about Earth's Creation (pilot)

Myths are created when people cannot explain a natural phenomenon, like the creation of Earth. Some plays and myths, such as *Skywoman's Rescue*, use animals to explain how Earth was created.

Write a myth about Earth's creation. Use details and dialogue when appropriate to make your myth and characters come to life.

Your Life as a Rose (pilot)

You were a beautiful rose growing in a garden. Someone picked you and took you away from your roots and the sunlight. You could no longer get your nutrients and water from the soil. What

happened to you after that? Where were you taken, and how did you feel? Write a story describing your life as a rose.

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