

FREE WRITING FOR LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF AS A WRITER

Words are everywhere. How they are used can have a huge impact on the message a listener or reader receives. Writing has many rules about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. And these can hold back the writer within. Free writing helps let that writer emerge.

In this exercise, there will be **NO ANALYSIS OF WHAT IS WRITTEN**. The free writing will not even be read over in the first two exercises. This activity is simply designed to let students learn to trust themselves, and to explore how they operate as a writer. There is one rule with free writing. **Do not stop**. Write, write, and write. No pausing to think or read over anything. Allow words to spill. Give permission to free the writer within. Reading over one's work with a view to reworking, rewriting and editing is for specific material or projects only, **never for free writing**.

Step one: In www.emmacameron.com.au look at photographs on pages titled 'Teachers' and 'Links'. Choose one as a visual prompt to begin free writing. Put pen to paper or fingers on the keyboard and write for five minutes **WITHOUT STOPPING**.

Step two: **WITHOUT READING YOUR FREE WRITING BACK**, share with others what the photograph you chose brought up for you. Listen to what it brought up for them. Note the similarities and differences in what sparks a writer's mind. Remember, also, that there are **NO** 'rights' or 'wrongs'. Simply similarities and difference. Focus on the writer within you so you learn more about yourself as a writer.

Step three: Choose a character you are using in a story. If you don't have one, chose one from a story or movie, or someone from real life. Sit with your eyes closed for a minute, immersing yourself into the character. Absorb them. What are their likes, dislikes, hopes and fears? How do they see the world? What is life like for them? Using the same photograph as before, repeat the free writing exercise from the viewpoint of this character.

Step four: **WITHOUT READING YOUR FREE WRITING BACK**, share with others what the photograph brought up for your character. Listen to what it brought up for their character. Discuss whether you found this easy or tricky and why. Did you know enough about your character to really write from their viewpoint? Discuss how well you know characters affects what comes forth when writing.

Step five: If you wrote the last piece in first person, this time free write it in third person. Alternatively, if you wrote in third person, free write now in first person. If you wrote in second person, chose either first or third. **DO NOT** try and replicate the first version. Although using the same photograph, treat this as a new exercise. Let your first person or third person voice take over.

Step six: Share how you found the experience of writing in line with the required change. Scan **briefly** over the last piece of work. Did you stick with the first or third person viewpoint you began with? Do you naturally seem to favour writing in first, second or third person? Or does this vary? Why do you think that is?

For future writing of particular works, try and recall the freedom that allowing words to spill can bring. Remember that it does not matter what comes out at first. Rereading, reworking, rewriting and editing can later play a role in transforming your draft into the best piece it can be. But let your first draft come out as it will. If you manipulate as you go, you could be losing something valuable!