

Discovering Poetic Elements

By Jennifer Miller

Week 1, Day 1 – The What of Creativity

Do you like to read? Maybe you even love to read! When I was your age, I loved climbing into the big magnolia tree in my family’s backyard with a good book. One of the tree’s limbs was just right for sitting on, and I would sit there and read and read and read.

I often thought I would like to write interesting things myself, but sometimes I thought I could never be as good as those whose books I read. But I didn’t have to be “as good” as those writers in order to enjoy what I wrote, or for others to enjoy what I wrote either.

Writing is a skill; like playing an instrument, the more you practice and critique and learn, the better you’ll likely get. And the more you see how others display their craft, the more you can learn and be inspired by others as well.

In fact, being inspired and thinking creatively are important parts of writing, and I want to start our lessons there. People who love to read often enjoy books because they’ve been inspired by at least some of the things they’ve read. Similarly, people who write really well often mix creativity and inspiration with hard work and established techniques.

Writers may use various methods to get their creative juices flowing. Here are just a few of them; maybe you’ve already used some yourself!

1. Writing prompts
2. Going outside
3. Looking at pictures
4. Reading another’s poem or book
5. Writing a letter
6. Writing in the morning or before bed
7. Drawing a map

Let’s use the first method today to get your creativity going. Choose one of these three writing prompts, and write for at least ten minutes. Have fun!

1. A dog who has lost his collar
2. A hippo who is afraid to go to a birthday party
3. A princess who has to take etiquette lessons

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines. A large, light gray watermark reading "SAMPLE" is oriented diagonally across the page.

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Week 1, Day 2 – The Where of Creativity

Even though someone might enjoy writing and have really good intentions, it's hard to get into a good writing routine. Distractions are all around us! For people who like to use a computer or tablet to write, it's easy to get distracted by a website or an email. For people who like to curl up on the couch to write, family members might come in and out of the room. For people who like to sit at a kitchen table, snacks may seem to call out, "Come eat me!"

But it's also not a good idea to sit in a room with only one chair and plain, bare walls. That would be no fun at all! A dreary place might make you start to feel dreary as well.

So, here's the key. During the next few weeks, especially when you're working on lessons that require creativity, see if you can work in various places until you find one that you feel inspired in. For example, you might find that you like to write outside on a back porch. Or you might enjoy sitting underneath a shady tree. Maybe you'll feel more creative working near sweet-smelling roses or in a comfy chair in your room by the window. Like I said, try different places until you find one you really like, and then see if you can write there as much as possible.

That doesn't mean that you can't write at a kitchen table or on a sofa or using your computer, but the more senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch) that your location jumpstarts naturally, the more likely you'll feel creative.

For example, let's say a girl decides to sit in a comfy chair by a window. As she starts writing, she might feel the warmth of the sun coming through the window just as she rubs her toes through soft carpet. Down the hall, she might be able to smell a candle burning. She looks up and sees a picture on a shelf, and she hears the air conditioner blowing. Her senses of touch, smell, sight, and hearing are all being affected. And maybe she'll want to write a poem about a chilly fall day by a bonfire, where someone feels warm and cozy. See what I mean?

So, here's what I want you to do to get us thinking about the concept of using a place to spark creativity. Go to four different places and write down which senses you can use in that place and how. See which places allow you to feel inspired without being distracted too much.

Place 1: _____

Senses	How You Use Your Senses
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Place 2: _____

Senses	How You Use Your Senses
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Place 3: _____

Senses	How You Use Your Senses
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Place 4: _____

Senses	How You Use Your Senses
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

SAMPLE

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Week 1, Day 3 – The Why of Creativity

Did you know that language is a gift from God? And since it is a gift from God, we should take care of our language and know how to use it correctly. We can use the language that God has given us to share beautiful ideas as well as lessons we've learned with others.

The Bible is a great example of using language in various ways to share important ideas and truths. In the book of Psalms, we can read poetry. In Proverbs, we can read proverbs (short sayings that give us advice or tell us a truth). In the Gospels, we can learn from Jesus' parables (a story that illustrates a heavenly truth). And all throughout Scripture, we can read stories about real people who went through real struggles and either rejected God or built a relationship with Him.

Different types of writing communicate best with different people. Isn't it amazing that we get to use different styles and types of writing to share information with others?

But no matter what style (genre) of writing we use, we should always write in line with Philippians 4:8 (KJV), which says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." When we write, we need to remember the "why" of our writing—to glorify God by writing in such a way that honors Him, even if it's simply through focusing on something beautiful or of good report.

And we should write well, since as I Corinthians 14:10 says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Our writing should be orderly so that others can easily understand the message we are trying to communicate.

What about you? Are there some truths you've learned over this past year that you would like to share with others? Maybe you've learned that kindness is very important or that God can answer prayer. Write down three lessons you would like to share with others.

Lessons:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some of the beautiful things you enjoy that can help point others to a wise Creator? Maybe it's a lake from a summer camp or the flowers growing in a neighbor's garden. Or maybe it's a new pet or the fall leaves as they change color. As we finish our lesson today, name three beautiful things that can remind others of God's goodness.

Beautiful Things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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