



PAGE A WRITER

FOR EVERY WORD AT STAKE

HANDOUT 1 — For Writers

Using Desire & Dream to Deepen Creative Writing

Core Reflection Prompts

- What desire drives my characters or narrator?
- Is that desire shaped by culture, family, history, or power?
- What dream frames the world of my story?
- Do I write toward validation, witness, healing, identity, or transformation?

YA NOVEL — Desire & Dream in Coming-of-Age

How to Apply the Prompts

- Clarify urgent teen desires: belonging, autonomy, romance, justice.
- Root those desires in social context: diaspora, sexuality, class, family duty.
- Frame a dream that defines change—escape, purpose, voice.

Example Questions

- How does my protagonist's desire clash with culture or expectation?

Recommended Books

- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay

Outcome

Multi-dimensional teens driven by contextually rich motivations.

MEMOIR — Desire & Dream in Lived Experience

How to Apply the Prompts

- Identify longing: reconciliation, survival, love, forgiveness.
- Examine how memory and heritage shape that longing.
- Let the memoir's dream guide arc and tone.

Example Questions

- Does the dream arise from trauma or tradition?

Recommended Books

Handout Notes: As Teachers or writers, you can insert specific texts you use in this template, add pages for your student/writer reflections, or expand the exercises according to classroom or workshop needs.



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- *Educated* by Tara Westover
- *The Body Papers* by Grace Talusan

Outcome

Narratives that move beyond recounting to meaning-making.

REALISTIC SHORT FICTION — Desire in Ordinary Worlds

How to Apply the Prompts

- Keep the desire sharp and specific.
- Let culture, class, gender, and history complicate it.
- Use small dreams to expose larger truths.

Example Questions

- Is the dream attainable or tragic?

Recommended Books / Collections

- *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *The Thing Around Your Neck* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Outcome

Emotionally resonant realism rooted in nuance and context.

SPECULATIVE FICTION — Dream & Desire as World-BUILDER

How to Apply the Prompts

- Let desire drive plot and revolution.
- Let dream shape rules of magic, tech, empire, apocalypse.
- Connect speculative frameworks to lived histories.

Example Questions

- How does dream reimagine or critique power?

Recommended Books

- *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin
- *The Fifth Season* by N.K. Jemisin

Outcome

Speculative worlds grounded in human longing.

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HANDOUT 2 — For Teachers

Teaching Desire & Dream Across Genres

Core Discussion Prompts

- How do we identify desire beyond surface goals?
- What dreams, national, ideological, personal, shape worldview?
- How do desire and dream connect to student contexts?
- What fosters critical and empathetic reading?

YA NOVEL: Classroom Discussions

Focus: identity, social belonging, resistance.

Discussion Starters

- Where do we see implicit vs explicit desire?
- How does community shape the protagonist's dream?

Recommended Texts

- *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang
- *Eliza and Her Monsters* by Francesca Zappia

Activities

- Track how desire evolves from chapter to climax.

MEMOIR — Classroom Applications

Focus: authenticity, ethics, witness.

Discussion Starters

- Is desire explicitly stated or revealed through memory?

Recommended Texts

- *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi
- *The Mistress's Daughter* by A.M. Homes

Activities

Compare personal dream vs cultural dream.

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REALISTIC SHORT FICTION — Classroom Applications

Focus: subtext, everyday pressure, social realism.

Discussion Starters

- How does a small desire reveal systemic constraints?

Recommended Texts

- *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson
- *Men Without Women* by Haruki Murakami

Activities

- Rewrite a scene emphasizing implicit desire.

SPECULATIVE FICTION — Classroom Applications

Focus: allegory, ideology, reimagined power.

Discussion Starters

- What dream justifies or critiques the speculative world?

Recommended Texts

- *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Activities

- Map one worldbuilding choice back to desire.