

From: Dr Eric Miller (PhD in Folklore, MSc in Psychology)
Director, World Storytelling Institute (Chennai), 98403 94282
www.storytellinginstitute.org , eric@storytellinginstitute.org
April 2019

Creative Writing Workshop: 14 Activities

Complete a piece of writing that you began in class -- or begin a new piece of writing.
Please type it and email it to me.

REAL-LIFE STORIES (INVOLVING MEMORY)

1

Something interesting that happened in the past 24 hours (or 48 hours, etc).

2

What do people say about you?
What do you say about yourself?
What are you known for? What are you famous for?
What are some ways in which you see yourself?
Write about some of your best, worst, and most distinctive personality traits.
Your strengths and weaknesses.

Give examples of incidents in which these personality traits have appeared.

3

The Story of your life. Your Life story. (Various versions, including: In ten minutes.
In two pages.)

4

"Tree as self": a drawing activity. The roots represent one's past, and the influences that
have helped to make one the person one is today. The branches, leaves, and fruits represent
things one is doing and creating, and hopes to do and create in the future.

5

Social and Environmental issues.
Regarding society --
What are you happy, proud, and satisfied about?
What are you concerned and unsatisfied about?
What do you suggest might change?

6

Write down a dream you have had (in the present tense).

Regarding all of the above:

Two ways to make-up an imaginary story --
using ideas, situations, and characters from real life -- are:

- 1) Shift from writing in 1st person ("I did ...") to doing so in 3rd person ("She/he did ...").
In other words, project what you have experienced onto a character outside your self.
- 2) Make changes in what happened. Add characters. Change the endings of situations.
Exaggerate (make things more extreme).

ROQI

Remember (involving memory of real-life events).

Observe (involving memory of real-life events).

Question (involving memory of real-life events).

Imagine (involving imagination, fantasy).

IMAGINARY STORIES (INVOLVING FANTASY)

7

Who would you like to meet? If you met this person, imagine and write a conversation you might have with the person.

What would you like to do?

Where would you like to go? What might you do there?

What would you like to make?

What would you like to achieve?

8

Falling in darkness. Land softly. Get up. Walk. There is some light. What and/or who do you see? How do you interact with what you see?

9

Meeting a little green man in a forest.

10

Draw a character, as a stick figure.

Draw:

- the character's mouth, as a way to discover / indicate how the character feels.
- the character's attributes (hair, clothing, etc) and environment.
- what the character wants (optional).
- what happens as the character seeks what he/she wants (optional).

11

Imagine that society, culture, and technology are basically the same 20 years from now as they are today.

Now imagine yourself 20 years from now. (You would be approx 35 years old.) Where are you? What are you doing? Describe a typical day in your life.

12

Imagine that 20 years from now, society, culture, and/or technology have changed drastically.

Describe one or more of these changes. Such as methods of communication and transportation. This topic relates to science fiction.

COMBINATIONS OF
REAL-LIFE STORIES (INVOLVING MEMORY)
AND IMAGINARY STORIES (INVOLVING FANTASY)

13

"Why does he/she feel that way?"

Choose an emotion, such as happy, sad, confused, confident, not-confident, etc.

Recall a character in a story you have read, or in a movie you have seen, who felt this way.

Why did the character feel this way?

Recall the last time you felt this way. Why did you feel this way?

Why might an imaginary character feel this way?

14

Daydream.

Write about what you often daydream about.

In addition --

Regarding the Workshop Handout (2 pages, at <http://storytellinginstitute.org/323a.pdf>) --

You might copy words and sentences from the Handout, paste them into a word-processing file, and add your comments about why the selected words and sentences are interesting.

Links to approx 65 of my (non-fiction) writings are on my website, <http://storytellingandvideoconferencing.com> .

There is also a good deal of material written by me on the website of the NGO I direct, <http://storytellinginstitute.org> .

You might glance through these websites and see if any writings on them looks interesting. If yes, you might read the piece(s) of writing and send feedback to me.