

Thoughts

from your Co-Authors

*“My aim is to put down on paper what I see and what I feel
in the best and simplest way.”*

Ernest Hemingway

In our years of working with students like you, we have discovered free-writing to be one of the surest paths to clearer and more confident writing. Free-writing will encourage you to “put down on paper” what you see and what you feel. Most prompts invite you to express your feelings on familiar subjects. Some ask for your opinion on today’s topics. Still others ask you to share your past experiences. If you do not know where to start, just let your words spill out. If you already write well, stretch to become better.

Here is what we do in class. The minute our students come in and settle behind their desks, they tackle a prompt. We offer no discussion or instruction on the prompt, other than to make it clear, if needed. Our classroom is quiet for about fifteen minutes, while everyone writes. When time is up, we assign partners, who share what they have written. Next, three or four volunteers read aloud to the class. Our students love reading and hearing their classmates’ writing. You will find that your journal has a section for your teacher’s feedback -- words of encouragement or suggestions for improvement.

As you continue free-writing, you are also practicing the elements of good writing, such as focus, a varied vocabulary, fresh thinking, appropriate usage, and composing with an introduction, body, and conclusion, even in your short passages. You may also realize that you are noticing the world around you through the eyes of a creative writer.

So this journal is for you! Practice seeing and describing your world in new and beautiful ways. And from time to time, go back a few pages to notice how your writing is improving.

And Enjoy!

Janet and Gail