Image & Imagination

Ideas and Inspiration for Teen Writers

by Nick Healy and Kristen McCurry
If you want to write, you probably know it can be a pleasure, a thrill, and a laugh. You might also know it can be a struggle, and that often the struggle begins before you get your first sentence on the page. When your life buzzes with constant sharing, posting, tweeting, etc. (so many words!), how do you know what's worthy of something more?

How do you know when you've got the perfect idea? How do you get started?

The truth is, the universe offers us very few perfect ideas, but our world produces lots of good ideas—interesting, surprising, and fresh ones. As most experienced writers will tell you, the way to uncover gems amid rubble is by writing your way to them. You may grind out a thousand words before you discover the trail you want to follow.
You may need to lay down only a sentence or two before reaching that point. Either way, the work that gets you going is worth it.

Most writers quickly discover that the process includes three phases—getting your words onto paper, shaping them into something that really glows, and sharing them with other people. This book is all about that first step—and that part is the most fun.

Yes, the process of creating something new, something entirely your own, can be fun. Lots of it. So let down your guard. Use the wild mix of prompts and photos in this book to get yourself started. Don’t hesitate. Don’t doubt. Don’t worry. Just choose a path and follow it.
How do I use this book?

Simple. However you want. You will find space to write near each prompt, and you’re free to jot ideas anywhere you want.

What should I write?

That’s what the nearly 150 prompts—ideas, tips, story starters, examples, and more—are for. Some of them ask you to dig deep inside and pull those hidden thoughts out into the open (or at least onto the friendly pages of this book). Others ask you to create something entirely new—write a scene, describe a character, write a poem, make up some bold and bizarre stuff. Still others offer inspiring quotes that might blow your mind if you think about them too hard.

This isn’t a workbook, and you don’t have to do what the prompts ask. You don’t have to follow any rules. But images and ideas you’ll encounter can be a starting point. The idea is to get you thinking, get your fingers twitching, get your pen moving.
Write big. Write small. Write fancy (cursive, anyone?). Or scribble. If you run out of room or have SO MUCH to say about a particular idea, flip to the end of the book and write some more. There’s extra space back there.

Share what you write with others or hide it under your mattress for all eternity. Trade it back and forth with your best friend or leave it lying around the house and see what happens. This book is yours to do with what you want. The only requirement is that you WRITE.

Oh, and don’t forget to have fun. Go!
Describe your top three magical moments.
Explain the difference between how the world sees you and how you are.
Lissa saw it before her friends did,
but she didn't know what she was seeing.