

## Think Outside the Box: Creative Writing Beyond the Formula

### ### Introduction

In this lesson, we'll explore how to break free from traditional writing formulas and unleash your creativity. We'll look at unconventional writing techniques, experiment with unique storytelling methods, and learn how constraints can paradoxically enhance our creative output.

### ### Narrative Outline

1. Understanding Unconventional Writing
2. Exploring Constraint Writing
3. Breaking the Rules of Reality
4. Reflecting on Creative Freedom

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### ### Breakdown

#### \*\*1. Understanding Unconventional Writing\*\*

##### \*\*Elements:\*\*

- Recognising traditional writing formulas
- Identifying techniques that break conventional rules
- Analysing the impact of unconventional writing

##### \*\*Exemplars:\*\*

#### 1. "The Day the Words Ran Away"

Tuesday morning,  
I woke up to find all my  
.  
Just gone. Vanished. Like they'd never

How does one                without ?

I tried to        but only        came out.  
The                looked at me like I was        .

Maybe if I                , they'll come back?

Wait! I see a                sneaking around the corner.  
Quick, grab it before it

#### 2. "Question Everything?"

Who am I?  
Where did I come from?  
Why can't I remember anything?  
Is this room spinning, or is it just me?  
How long have I been here?  
What's that noise outside?  
Should I be afraid?  
Will anyone find me?  
Can I trust my own thoughts?  
When will this end?

### 3. "A to Z Story"

Abruptly, Bob crashed down the stairs.  
"Egad!" He exclaimed, feeling giddy.  
Hopefully, I just knocked loose memories, Bob thought.  
Jumping up, knees lifting laboriously, Bob moved nimbly onward.  
Perhaps quite recklessly, sprinting toward unknown victories.  
Why? Xenial yearnings zoomed through his mind.

### \*\*2. Exploring Constraint Writing\*\*

#### \*\*Elements:\*\*

- Understanding the concept of constraint writing
- Recognising how limitations can spark creativity
- Practicing different constraint writing techniques

#### \*\*Exemplars:\*\*

##### 1. One-Syllable Story:

"The sun set. The sky turned red. I saw a bird fly by. It sang a song of hope. The world felt right. I wished this time would not end. But all good things must. So I said bye to the day and went to bed."

##### 2. Backwards Story:

"And that's how I ended up with a pet elephant in my apartment.  
The zookeeper looked at me, bewildered, as I tried to explain.  
Somehow, I had accidentally signed adoption papers instead of visitor forms.  
I hadn't paid attention while filling out the paperwork at the zoo entrance.  
It all started on what I thought would be a normal Tuesday morning."

##### 3. Dialogue-Only Story:

"Hey, what's that noise?"  
"I don't hear anything."  
"There it is again! Like a scratching sound."  
"Oh, now I hear it. It's coming from the attic."

"Should we check it out?"

"I don't know... What if it's a ghost?"

"Don't be ridiculous. Ghosts don't scratch."

"Fine, you go first."

"Okay, I'm opening the door... Oh my god!"

"What? What is it?"

"It's... it's... a family of raccoons!"

"In our attic?!"

"And they look pretty comfortable up here."

"Great. How are we going to explain this to Mom and Dad?"

### **\*\*3. Breaking the Rules of Reality\*\***

#### **\*\*Elements:\*\***

- Imagining scenarios that defy logic or physics
- Incorporating surreal elements into storytelling
- Blending the impossible with the familiar

#### **\*\*Exemplars:\*\***

1. "As I bit into the apple, I tasted the colour blue. Confused, I looked down to see the fruit had shrunk to the size of a pea in my hand. 'That's odd,' I thought, my words materialising in front of me in neon green letters."
2. "Time flowed backwards like a river running uphill. I watched my coffee un-drink itself, the liquid rising from my stomach, through my throat, and back into the cup. My alarm un-rang, and the sun retreated below the horizon. I was getting younger by the second."
3. "Emotions painted the air around us. Sarah's anger blazed red, while Tom's sadness dripped blue. I tried to stay calm, but couldn't help noticing the growing cloud of purple anxiety above my head. If only I could reach up and wipe it away like a stray cobweb."

### **\*\*4. Reflecting on Creative Freedom\*\***

#### **\*\*Elements:\*\***

- Recognising the value of unconventional writing techniques
- Understanding how breaking rules can lead to unique expressions
- Developing confidence in one's creative voice

#### **\*\*Exemplars:\*\***

1. "Breaking the rules of writing felt like learning to fly. At first, it was terrifying – what if I fell? But as I pushed past my comfort zone, I discovered new landscapes of imagination I never knew existed."

2. "I used to think good writing meant following a strict formula. Now I realise that the most memorable stories are often the ones that surprise us, that take unexpected turns and challenge our perceptions."

3. "Experimenting with unconventional writing techniques has taught me that creativity isn't about perfection – it's about exploration. Every 'mistake' is an opportunity to discover something new about my voice as a writer."

### ### Vocabulary List

1. Avant-garde - new and experimental ideas and methods in art, music, or literature
2. Nonlinear - not progressing or developing smoothly from one stage to the next in a logical way
3. Stream of consciousness - a literary style in which a character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions are depicted in a continuous flow uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue
4. Juxtaposition - the fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect
5. Surrealism - a 20th-century avant-garde movement in art and literature that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind
6. Constraint - a limitation or restriction
7. Paradox - a statement or situation that contradicts itself or defies intuition
8. Unconventional - not based on or conforming to what is generally done or believed
9. Innovative - featuring new methods; advanced and original
10. Experimental - based on untested ideas or techniques and not yet established or finalised
11. Abstract - existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence
12. Fragmented - broken or separated into distinct parts
13. Subvert - undermine the power and authority of (an established system or institution)
14. Collage - a piece of art made by sticking various different materials such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric onto a backing
15. Metamorphosis - a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one
16. Phantasmagorical - having a fantastic or deceptive appearance, as in a dream or as created by the imagination
17. Synaesthesia - a sensation produced in one modality when a stimulus is applied to another modality, as when the hearing of a certain sound induces the visualisation of a certain colour
18. Absurdism - a philosophy based on the belief that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the search for order brings the individual into conflict with the universe
19. Defamiliarisation - the artistic technique of presenting to audiences common things in an unfamiliar or strange way in order to enhance perception of the familiar
20. Ekphrasis - a vivid, often dramatic, verbal description of a visual work of art, either real or imagined

### ### Writing Prompt

#### "The Impossible Day"

Write about a day where the laws of physics, logic, or reality no longer apply. Your story should incorporate at least three of the following elements:

- Objects that change size unexpectedly
- Colours that have tastes
- Time that moves backwards
- Words that physically manifest when spoken
- Emotions that are visible
- Gravity that works sideways

### ### Exemplar Response

#### \*\*The Sideways Tuesday\*\*

I woke up on the ceiling. Not metaphorically – literally stuck to the ceiling like a bizarro-world Spider-Man. Gravity had decided to work sideways today.

"Well, this is inconvenient," I muttered. My words materialised in front of me, neon green and glowing. They hovered for a moment before shooting across the room and splattering against the wall like linguistic paintballs.

I carefully "stood up" (or would it be "stood sideways"?) and made my way down the wall to what used to be the floor but was now a vertical surface. My clock read 11:59 PM. As I watched, the digital numbers began to tick backward. 11:58... 11:57...

Great. Not only was gravity sideways, but time was reversing too. I wondered briefly if I'd be getting younger. A quick glance in the mirror (now helpfully positioned on the "floor") showed my familiar 30-year-old face. At least something was normal.

I decided to brave the outside world. Opening my front door revealed a street turned on its side. Cars were stuck to the road, which was now a wall. People walked up and down buildings as if they were perfectly ordinary sidewalks.

A woman passed by a vibrant cloud of yellow floating around her. "Lovely day, isn't it?" she called cheerfully. Her joy was literally lighting up the world around her.

"It's certainly... different," I replied. My words appeared again, this time a muted blue that matched my confusion. They drifted lazily in the air before dissipating like smoke.

As I stepped onto the vertical street, I noticed something odd about the trees. They seemed to be shrinking and growing randomly, like some cosmic gardener was playing with the universe's zoom function. One moment, an oak towered over me; the next, it was no bigger than a bonsai.

My stomach growled. I spotted a food cart nearby and made my way over, carefully navigating the sideways world. "One hot dog, please," I said to the vendor.

He handed me a luminous blue sausage in a bun. I took a tentative bite and was overwhelmed by the taste of... blueberry? No, wait – it was the actual colour blue I was tasting. Sweet, cool, and somehow exactly how I'd always imagined blue would taste.

As I chewed my chromatic meal, I noticed the world around me beginning to blur. Colours swirled and mixed, buildings bent like rubber, and the backwards-ticking clock on the town square began to spin wildly.

I closed my eyes, feeling dizzy. When I opened them again, I was back in my bed – on the correct side of gravity this time. My alarm clock read 7:00 AM, the numbers steadfastly moving forward in time.

Had it all been a dream? I wasn't sure. But as I got up to start my day, I noticed a smear of neon green words on my wall: "Well, this is inconvenient."

I smiled. Maybe the impossible wasn't so impossible after all. I just had to look at the world... sideways.