



Supporting PGR Writing

Resources to Support
PGR Writing Groups





PROJECT INFO

These cards have been developed as part of the Supporting Postgraduate Researcher Writing project, run by Kelly Preece in the University of Exeter Doctoral College.

The project aims to develop training and resources for PGRs to run their own writing groups, and promote the value and importance of early writing and structured writing time.



INSTRUCTIONS

These cards collate a range of creative and discussion tasks to be used in writing groups, and in conjunction with the approach developed by Kelly Preece and Dr. Sally Flint.

Each writing group begins with a creative task **C**, in conjunction with discussion **D** tasks that break up the 30 minute writing blocks.

You can use these cards to plan your writing groups, and to inspire you to create your own tasks.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These cards are based on exercises used in our writing groups by our staff and PGRs. Thanks goes to everyone who has participated in the project, but especially those who have contributed tasks to this resource:

Dr. Lisa Alberici
Dr. Karen Kenny
Debbie Kinsey
Ellen Lesser
Kelly Preece
Dr. Sally Flint
Edward Mills



METAPHORAGING

The idea is to create a group 'found poem', which can be about anything you like. Each line of the poem begins with your topic like "Writing is..." and ends with a sentence fragment or word found in magazines.

You need a selection of magazines, enough for at least one each. Include any kind of magazines – sometimes the best things come from unexpected places like the Argos or ScrewFix catalogues!

Ask people to find at least two sentence fragments in the magazines. Once everyone has two, you go around the group and one at a time say "Writing is..." and the sentence fragment. Go around twice and you have a found poem all about writing! For example

Writing is an angled floor lamp
Writing is not just for today
Writing is a field guide to getting lost
....and so on

Contributed by Debbie Kinsey

俳句

HAIKU

Write a Haiku about your research, or about writing.
A Haiku is a poem with 3 lines of 5, 7, 5
syllables that doesn't rhyme:

Writing together
Even for a little while
Is very useful.

Contributed by Kelly Preece and Edward Mills

俳句

短歌

シンカイン

SHORT FORM POEMS

Write a short form poem either on a) the process of writing, or b) the themes of your research/what you are writing about in the session. Example short forms are:

A. Haiku (5/7/5)

Writing together
Even for a little while
Is very useful.

B. Tanka (5/7/5/7/7)

Writing together
Even for a little while
Is very useful
It helps us stay productive
And feel we are not alone.

C. Cinquain (2/4/6/8/2)

Writing
What is harder
Than putting new words down
Filling that ominous blank page
With thoughts

Contributed by to Ellen Lesser, Edward Mills and Kelly Preece



RESPONDING TO OBJECTS

Pick an object from the selection provided.
Give it a few minutes thought. Consider:

Who owned it?

Where is it in the world?

Contributed by Sally Flint



RESPONDING TO MEMORIES

Spend a minute thinking about your most precious or vivid memory. Close your eyes, and try to remember the thoughts, sensations and emotions connected to the memory.

Spend 5 minutes writing a narrative – capturing every thought, sensation and emotion you recalled, as well as the detail of what happened.

Contributed by Kelly Preece



THE STORY OF YOUR RESEARCH

We come to our research for various reasons, from researching phenomena that impact us personally to the simple but significant quest and desire for knowledge.

This will usually come in to your thesis somewhere, and is sometimes an introductory question in the viva. We tend however to give it an 'academic' framing. For this task – don't. Write how you came to your research as a story. You are the hero(ine).

Contributed by Kelly Preece

THE GOD OF

THE GOD OF ...

Write about the God of your discipline or area of study.

Decide on the name of the God.

What is its purpose?

Who are its enemies?

Contributed by Lisa Alberici

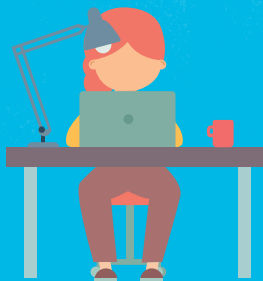


FLASH FICTION HORROR

Flash fiction is the art of writing a story using minimal words. e.g. 'For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.' Flash fiction can be written in 2 sentences. The first sentence establishes a scene, the second disrupts – horrifically, e.g. 'The grinning face stared at me from the darkness beyond my bedroom window. I live on the 15th floor.' or 'I can't move, berate or hear, and it's so dark all the time. If I knew I'd be this lovely I'd have been cremated.'

In the next 10 minutes, write your own 2 sentence horror story. It does not need to be about your thesis...but it could be!

Contributed by Karen Kenny



WRITING THE WRITER

Imagine the life of a successful writer.

Make some notes (1-2 sentences is fine) on the following:

Where do you see this writer working? Is s/he at a desk or table?

A quiet space? Is there a pen or pencil in her/his hand? Is she using a laptop or a tablet? When and for how much time is she in her writing space? Say, four-hourly periods without a break – or twenty minute flurries with lots of tea breaks? Or something else? Who are her/his favourite authors and what does s/he like to read? How does this successful writer respond to criticism of her/his work? How does s/he respond to rejection of her/his work? How does s/he respond to praise of her/his work? When you have finished, take time to settle your mind again. Then re-view your notes. What positive changes could you make so that your life more closely resembles that of your 'successful' writer?

From 'The Joy of Mindful Writing'



HOUSE

The facilitator shows the group her keys, and talks through each of her keys and keyrings in turn. When she has finished, she asks the group if they have learnt anything about her from her keys. Then, participants split in to pairs and talk each other through their own keys. Finally, everyone is shown a picture of another set of keys – with an unknown owner – and write for 10 minutes imagining the owner of these keys.

Share a selection of stories.

Contributed by Karen Kenny



FLASH POETRY

Concentrate on a favourite place, a new idea, a loved one or a treasured object. Write down how it looks, smells, feels, sounds and tastes.

Try to use simple language.

Now you can play with the language, word order, order of senses.

You have created a poem.

Contributed by Karen Kenny



What's the best **time** and
place for you to write?



How long do you typically write
for before taking a **break**?



What helps you write?



What stops you writing?



?

How **comfortable** are
you writing here?



What are the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of writing in a group?



How do you set tasks
that are achievable?



What works best for you to help
get some writing done?



Do you find it useful being in a space where others are writing and discussing their goals and ideas?



**What are your frustrations
about academic writing?**



What are your biggest **concerns**
and **anxieties** about your writing?



How do you approach
editing your work?

Are there are strategies you can
share that work well for you?



Do you approach it differently?
If so, how? Why?

Blog? Creative writing? Journaling?
Twitter? Do you approach it
differently? If so, how? Why?
How or why is academic
writing different?



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