

VIDEO

Write. Read. Feel. with Mychal Threets

by Mychal Threets,
librarian and literacy
ambassador

GRADES 1–12, K

TYPE

MEMOIR
NARRATIVE
POETRY

Librarian and literacy ambassador Mychal Threets invites you to write about your feelings, your way with four writing prompts to explore your emotions on the page.

WHAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LEARN

Writing is a powerful tool to understand our emotions, and ourselves. In this lesson, we invite you to explore an emotion and express the depth of your feelings on the page.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

Write. Read. Feel. with Mychal Threets — Exploring Your Emotions on the Page

Writing is a space to come as you are...to show up as your authentic self, explore your identity, and process emotions. It's a space that invites you to tap into whatever you're feeling. To look inward and consider: how are you, really, today?

We live in a world that can be messy, noisy, and hard. We all have days when we're not OK, days we're on top of the world, days where we feel uncertain, and also days where joy finds us where we least expect it—and in that way, we're all connected.

In this prompt, we invite you to use writing to explore your feelings. It's all about reflecting on the power and possibility of your emotions—your highs, your lows, and everything in between. This is an invitation to explore those emotions

through writing and to share what you're feeling inside on the page. There's no wrong way to do it—just be you.

All emotions are welcome here—joy, overwhelm, love, loneliness, etc. And, whatever you choose, writing about your emotions can be a powerful form of self-care. It's a way to honor where you're at, and it can even be a way to write your way forward. We invite you to put pen to paper and make space for how you're feeling on the page.

Your mission is to write about your feelings, your way. It can be a poem, a reflection, a story—you name it. No matter what you decide, we encourage you to bring your full self to the writing process.

Lección disponible en español [aquí](#).

Find the facilitator guide to accompany this lesson here: [Write. Read. Feel. Facilitator Guide](#).

Submission Directions: Submit Your Writing to our 2024-25 Student Anthology!

826 National's mission is to publish and amplify student voices—that means you! When you finish writing, reading, and revising your work, you can submit your piece of writing to 826 National for the chance to become a published author.

Students and families, submit your work using the links below:

- [Students and families submission form](#) — English
- [Formulario de presentación de antología de escritos de estudiantes 2024-2025 de 826 National: ESTUDIANTES Y FAMILIAS](#) — Spanish/Español

Educators, submit work from multiple students using the link below:

- [Educator submission form](#)

Note: We encourage students to write in their home language, and we welcome submissions in any language. If it is possible to include English translations with your original piece, they are welcome, but not required.

Submissions forms will be open to the public through November 22, 2024.

Step 1: Writing Prompts

Choose one (or more!) of the prompts below to start writing.

Educator Note

Writing is a powerful tool for students to identify, understand, and express their emotions. The prompts below can and should be used for any emotion that a student wants to explore further through writing.

When introducing the prompt(s) with students, be mindful that not all students are in a place to write about how they are feeling today, and not all students can easily access or express their emotions through writing.

We encourage you to invite students to write about any emotion they are interested in and comfortable exploring; and to explore other mediums for expression as a starting point if helpful (drawing, talking, listening to music, etc.) All students should feel welcome to participate and bring their full selves to the page.

1) Explore Your Feelings | Grades K-12

To start, pick an emotion you want to explore further through writing. It can be joy, or fear, or love, or anxiety, etc. Choose an emotion that you'd like to understand better. Begin your exploration by making 3-6 lists:

1. Objects that bring you (chosen emotion)
2. Songs and/or sounds that bring you _____
3. People that bring you _____
4. Places that bring you _____
5. Colors that bring you _____
6. Words that bring you _____

From here, write a memory about one of the items on your lists to turn into a “small moment” memoir or a poem (recommended for students in grades 6-12), or write a repetition poem about the many ways this emotion shows up in your life (recommended for grades K-5).

See the [Write. Read. Feel: Explore Your Feelings — Handout](#) for graphic organizers and an optional poem template.

2) [What's Your Happy?](#) | Grades 1-3+

We can find joy in so many places. Think and write about what makes you happiest. Start with people and things, but be sure to also think about sounds, smells and tastes that fill you with joy: maybe joy sounds like your cousin's laugh. Or looks like your dog's ears. Or smells like the pages of your favorite book.

Then, create your own poem or write a reflection about the different things that fill you with joy. You can also make a drawing or collage to go with it.

See the [Write. Read. Feel: What's Your Happy? — Handout](#) or read the full Spark, [What's Your Happy?](#) for materials and ideas to get started.

3) [Mine Your Memories](#) | Grades 5-12

How are emotions and memories connected? In this prompt, you'll pick an emotion that you'd like to write about, and reflect on times in your life when you felt that emotion most clearly.

To start, make a memory line: draw a horizontal line across a blank page of paper (landscape or hotdog-style works best here). Make a star on the left end of the line. That will be the earliest, joyful memory you can think of. Jot down 2-3 words about that memory for now—they'll be time to write more about your memories later.

Next, make a star on the right hand side of the line. That will be your most recent joyful (or other chosen emotion) memory...from today? Yesterday? This past weekend? Next, fill the line with 3-5 other points, at least. If you get stuck, try the prompts below to get you thinking about different types of memories—your chosen emotion should be central to each type of memory you include.

1. A big, meaningful memory
2. A small memory that's stuck with you
3. An outdoor memory
4. An inside memory
5. Something someone said to you that filled you with (chosen emotion)
6. A loud memory
7. A quiet, solo, or private memory
8. A memory shared with someone special

Now, think about the patterns and connections that you can make across these memories (for example, who are they with? Where are they? What are you doing?). Write a poem about how this emotion shows up in your life, and try to include as many of these connections as possible.

Or, you can choose to focus on just one of these memories and write about it. Try to bring yourself back to that time and place, and write as if you were living the memory, today. What sounds, sights, tastes, smells, and feelings are present?

4) Unexpected Joys | Grades 9-12

Joy can show up in the most unexpected times and places. Write about a time when joy surprised you, or where you found joy in something uncommonly viewed as joyful.

To start thinking about unexpected joy, first take 3 minutes and write down all of obvious, expected, even cliché joys you can think of. Consider: food, objects, things from nature, etc. that you and MANY other people find joyful.

Then, brainstorm all of the unexpected joys that show up in your life. Maybe it's the crack in your bedroom ceiling that reminds you of a banana, or the way your grandma's glasses steam up when she drinks her coffee, or the sound of nails on a chalkboard, etc. You can make a list, mind map, or freewrite—whatever format you decide, try to incorporate as much specific, sensory language as possible into your brainstorm.

Choose one, or more, of these unexpected joys, and write about it. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- Why is this joy important to you?
- What insights can you make—about who you are, your values, your hopes—from this unexpected joy?
- How will you make room for unexpected joys in the future? What kinds of joy do you hope await you?

Step 2: Read Mentor Texts

Browse book recommendations from Mychal Threets, and writing from young authors across the 826 Network, to discover more joy and inspiration to capture your emotions on the page. Check out the below titles at your local library or independent bookstores for further reading!

Elementary (Grades K-5)

- **Everywhere, Wonder!** by Matthew Swanson
- **Now** by Antoinette Portis
- **Sky Color** by Peter Reynolds

- **Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs** by Judi Barrett
- **Where the Wild Things Are** by Maurice Sendak
- **Henry Huggins** by Beverly Cleary
- **Student Mentor Text:** “[The First Day of School](#)” by Edwin M.V., Grade 2, 826 Valencia
- **Student Mentor Text:** “[Letter to My Grandma / Querida Abuela](#)” by Ayelen C., Grade 4, 826 Valencia

Middle (Grades 6-8)

- **The One and Only Ivan** by Katherine Applegate
- **Song for a Whale** by Lynne Kelly
- **Front Desk** by Kelly Yang
- **The Unteachables** by Gordon Korman
- **El Deafo** by Cece Bell
- **Echo** by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- **The Crossover** by Kwame Alexander
- **Student Mentor Text:** “[Crystal Truth](#)” by CA, Grade 7, 826CHI
- **Student Mentor Text:** “[Happy](#)” by Evelyn Escamilla, Grade 8, 826 Valencia

Secondary (Grades 9-12)

- **The Joy Luck Club** by Amy Tan
- **Eleanor & Park** by Rainbow Rowell
- **I’ll Give You the Sun** by Jandy Nelson
- **Since You’ve Been Gone** by Morgan Matson

- **With the Fire On High** by Elizabeth Acevedo
 - **Student Mentor Text:** “[The Heart of a Dominican / El Corazón de un Dominicano](#)” by Raymond A., Grade 12, 826 Boston
 - **Student Mentor Text:** “[I’m Not Home But I Am](#)” by Sally Phan, Grades 12, 826 Boston
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Step 3: Revise Your Writing (and Keep Going!)

Students, remember to revise and edit your piece before you submit! We recommend that you share your writing with teachers, friends, and family. Ask for their feedback about parts of the piece where you need extra support or ideas. You can also read your piece out loud, to yourself, to check for flow and word choice.

After you revise, please check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar to showcase your BEST work!

Educator Note

Before you submit writing, we strongly recommend you offer opportunities for students to get feedback on their draft, revise, and edit their writing. We receive hundreds of pieces of student writing each year, and revised, edited pieces are more likely to be selected during the review process. Share with students that focusing on revision will help to showcase their best work and help their chances to get their writing published in a real, professionally bound book!

Find strategies, activities, and tools for revision in the links below:

- [Guide to Revision](#)
- [Revision Bingo for Poetry – Handout](#)
- [Revision Bingo for Narratives – Handout](#)

Step 4: Submit Your Writing to our 2024-25 Student Anthology!

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MATERIALS

- [Write. Read. Feel. with Mychal Threats — Video](#)
- [Write. Read. Feel: Explore Your Feelings — Handout](#)

- [Write. Read. Feel: What's Your Happy? — Handout](#)

Materiales en Español:

- [Escribe. Lee. Siente. con Mychal Threets — Lección](#)
- [Escribe. Lee. Siente. Explora tus Sentimientos — Folleto](#)
- [Escribe. Lee. Siente: ¿Qué te inspira felicidad? — Folleto](#)