



INTERACTIVE WRITING TOOLKIT

Choose a tool • click it • use the scaffold • craft your sentence

FANTASTIC

Feeling

Asking

Noticing

Touching

Action

Smelling

Tasting

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Personification

Feeling

Show how a character feels through what their body does, thinks or says.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- My hands began to ____.
- A sudden ____ filled me as ____.
- Without looking up, I ____.
- My heart ____ as ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

trembled • tightened • faltered • froze • raced • ached •
stared • swallowed

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the feeling.
2. Do NOT name it straight away.
3. Pick a body action or reaction.
4. Add what caused the feeling.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Maya's fingers tightened around the note as the footsteps approached.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you make the reader infer the emotion without using words such as scared, happy or angry?

SELF-CHECK: I showed the feeling. ✓ I used a precise action. ✓ My sentence makes sense. ✓ I checked punctuation.

Asking

Use a question to reveal thought, doubt, curiosity or uncertainty.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Could ___ really ___?
- What if ___?
- Why had ___ suddenly ___?
- How was I supposed to ___?

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

could • might • perhaps • really • possibly • why • how • what if

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Decide what your character does not know.
2. Choose a question opener.
3. Make the question relevant to the moment.
4. Finish with a question mark.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

What if the map had been wrong all along?

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the question hint at a future problem or reveal something about the character?

SELF-CHECK: It is a genuine question. ✓ It fits the scene. ✓ I used ? ✓ It adds something new.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- I noticed ____ beside ____.
- In the distance, ____ caught my eye.
- There, almost hidden, was ____.
- At the edge of ____, I spotted ____.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

There, almost hidden beneath the ivy, was a narrow wooden door.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

glimmer • shadow • crack • flicker • outline • stain •
movement • shape

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Look around the scene.
2. Choose ONE useful detail.
3. Say where it is.
4. Use a precise noun or verb.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER

Can the detail foreshadow what might happen next?

SELF-CHECK: I focused on one detail. ✓ I said where it was. ✓ I chose precise vocabulary. ✓ I avoided listing everything.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Under my fingers, ___ felt ___.
- The ___ was ___ against my ___.
- As I touched ___, ___.
- A ___ sensation spread across ___.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

rough • smooth • icy • warm • jagged • sticky • velvety • prickly

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose what is touched.
2. Choose a precise texture/temperature.
3. Add the body part if useful.
4. Say how the sensation changes the moment.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the touch reveal danger, comfort or atmosphere?

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Under my fingers, the stone felt icy and uneven.

SELF-CHECK: I used a precise sensory word. ✓ The detail fits the scene. ✓ I avoided vague words. ✓ I checked punctuation.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- ___ seized the ___ and ___.
- Without warning, ___ lunged ___.
- ___ darted / staggered / crept ___.
- In one movement, ___ ___ed ___.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

seized • lunged • darted • staggered • crept • hurled •
snatched • scrambled

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the character/subject.
2. Replace a weak verb.
3. Add where/how if needed.
4. Read it aloud for pace.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Noah seized the rope and hauled himself onto the ledge.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you remove an adverb because your verb already does the work?

SELF-CHECK: I used a precise verb. ✓ The action is clear. ✓ I avoided went/got/looked. ✓ The pace fits the moment.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- The air smelled of ____.
- A faint scent of ____ drifted ____.
- The sharp smell of ____ filled ____.
- Beneath the smell of ____ was ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

smoke • damp earth • salt • pine • fuel • flowers • dust •
burning wood

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose a believable smell.
2. Decide if it is faint or strong.
3. Say where it comes from.
4. Link it to mood or memory if useful.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

A faint scent of smoke drifted through the open window.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the smell hint that something has happened before the character sees it?

SELF-CHECK: The smell fits the setting. ✓ I used a precise noun. ✓ It adds atmosphere. ✓ I did not force the sense in.

Tasting

Use taste when it naturally belongs in the scene.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- The ____ tasted of ____.
- A ____ taste lingered ____.
- On my tongue, ____.
- The first mouthful was ____, but ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

bitter • sweet • salty • sour • metallic • spicy • stale • fresh

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose what is tasted.
2. Choose a precise taste.
3. Add a reaction if useful.
4. Keep it relevant to the scene.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

A bitter metallic taste lingered on my tongue.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the taste trigger a memory or reveal that something is wrong?

SELF-CHECK: The taste is believable. ✓ I used precise vocabulary. ✓ It adds to the writing. ✓ I avoided unnecessary detail.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- I imagined ____.
- For a moment, I pictured ____.
- Perhaps ____ was already ____.
- In my mind, I could see ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

perhaps • maybe • pictured • wondered • feared • hoped •
expected • remembered

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose what the character is thinking about.
2. Decide whether it is hope, fear or prediction.
3. Use a thought opener.
4. Link it to the current situation.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

For a moment, I pictured the boat disappearing beyond the horizon.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the thought reveal something the character would never say aloud?

SELF-CHECK: The thought fits the character. ✓ It adds meaning. ✓ I avoided repeating events. ✓ I punctuated the sentence.

Checking

Slow the moment by making a character inspect, verify or look back.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- I checked ____ before ____.
- Glancing back, I made sure ____.
- Carefully, ____ examined ____.
- One last time, I ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

checked • examined • inspected • tested • glanced • searched
• confirmed • studied

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose what needs checking.
2. Explain why it matters through context.
3. Use a precise checking verb.
4. Decide whether this slows or builds tension.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Glancing back, I made sure the gate was still locked.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the check reveal a problem the character was hoping not to find?

SELF-CHECK: The check has a purpose. ✓ I used a precise verb. ✓ It affects the pace. ✓ It adds tension or clarity.

Adverbials

Tell the reader when, where, how or how often something happens.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Without warning, ____.
- Beyond the ____, ____.
- Moments later, ____.
- With a ____, ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

suddenly • silently • beyond • beneath • later • at dawn •
with care • in the distance

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose WHEN, WHERE or HOW.
2. Put the adverbial at the front if useful.
3. Write the main clause.
4. Add a comma after a fronted adverbial.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Without warning, the lights flickered and died.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Move the adverbial to another position. Which version has the strongest effect?

SELF-CHECK: My adverbial adds useful detail. ✓ A fronted adverbial has a comma. ✓ The main clause still makes sense. ✓ I varied my opener.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- The ____ ed ____.
- ____ was ____ because ____.
- The ____ became ____.
- ____ had ____ the ____.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The exhausted climber dropped his heavy bag.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

subject • verb • object • noun • adjective • precise verb •
who? • what happened?

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose who/what the sentence is about.
2. Give it a verb.
3. Add an object/detail if needed.
4. Read it: is it a complete thought?

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you improve one noun and one verb without overloading the sentence?

SELF-CHECK: It has a subject. ✓ It has a verb. ✓ It is a complete thought. ✓ Capital letter + correct end mark.

Complex Sentences

Combine a main clause with a subordinate clause.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Although ____, ____.
- Because ____, ____.
- While ____, ____.
- If ____, ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

although • because • while • when • if • since • before • after

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the relationship between ideas.
2. Pick a subordinating conjunction.
3. Write the subordinate clause.
4. Add the main clause; comma if subordinate clause comes first.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Move the subordinate clause to the end and compare the emphasis.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Although the path was narrow, they continued towards the summit.

SELF-CHECK: I have a main clause. ✓ I have a subordinate clause. ✓ The conjunction makes sense. ✓ I checked the comma.

Dialogue & Contractions

Use direct speech accurately and make the speech worth reading.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- “___,” said ___.
- “___?” asked ___.
- ___ whispered, “___.”
- I’m / don’t / can’t / won’t ___.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

- said • asked • whispered • muttered • replied • warned • I’m
• can’t

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Decide what the speaker needs to say.
2. Open inverted commas.
3. Put punctuation before closing speech marks.
4. Add the reporting clause; new speaker = new line.

- 5 MAKE IT STRONGER** Can the speech reveal character or move the plot without explaining everything?

4 MODEL SENTENCE

“We need to leave now,” whispered Erin.

SELF-CHECK: Speech marks surround spoken words. ✓ Punctuation is inside speech marks. ✓ Reporting clause is punctuated. ✓ New speaker = new line.

Purpose

Choose language and structures that fit why you are writing.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- To persuade: It is essential that ____.
- To explain: This happens because ____.
- To inform: One important fact is ____.
- To entertain: Without warning, ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

persuade • inform • explain • entertain • formal • friendly • expert • reader

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Name your purpose.
2. Think about your audience.
3. Choose an appropriate tone.
4. Select sentence structures and vocabulary that fit.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

It is essential that action is taken to protect the woodland.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you explain why this sentence suits its purpose and audience?

SELF-CHECK: My language matches the purpose. ✓ My tone suits the audience. ✓ I chose useful detail. ✓ I avoided random features.

Paragraphs

Organise related ideas and show a clear shift.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Later that evening, ____.
- Meanwhile, ____.
- Across the ____, ____.
- The following morning, ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

time • place • topic • speaker • meanwhile • later • elsewhere • afterwards

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Ask what has changed.
2. Start a new paragraph if time/place/topic/speaker shifts.
3. Use a cohesive opener if helpful.
4. Keep related sentences together.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can your paragraph opening link back to the previous paragraph as well as move forward?

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Meanwhile, across the valley, the search continued.

SELF-CHECK: The paragraph has one main focus. ✓ A change justifies the new paragraph. ✓ Ideas are grouped logically. ✓ The opening helps cohesion.

Active & Passive

Choose whether the doer or the action/result should be emphasised.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Active: The ____ ed the ____.
- Passive: The ____ was ____ed by ____.
- ____ was discovered by ____.
- ____ had been ____ed before ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

was • were • by • discovered • damaged • created • reported
• found

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Write the active version first.
2. Find the object.
3. Move the object to the front.
4. Use a form of 'be' + past participle; add 'by...' only if needed.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The storm damaged the roof. → The roof was damaged by the storm.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you explain why a report might prefer the passive version?

SELF-CHECK: I know who/what is emphasised. ✓ Passive uses be + past participle. ✓ The meaning stayed the same. ✓ I chose voice for a reason.

Past & Present Tense

Keep tense consistent and choose verb forms deliberately.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Past: ____ed as ____ed.
- Present: ____s while ____s.
- By then, ____ had ____.
- Since then, ____ has ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

walked • walks • had • has • was • is • were • are

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Decide when the writing is happening.
2. Choose past or present.
3. Check every main verb.
4. Use perfect forms when showing earlier actions if needed.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you identify exactly why a tense shift is needed rather than accidental?

4 MODEL SENTENCE

By then, the crowd had disappeared and the streets were silent.

SELF-CHECK: My main tense is consistent. ✓ Verb forms agree with the subject. ✓ Any tense shift is deliberate. ✓ I checked irregular verbs.

Punctuation

Choose punctuation because of its job, not because it looks impressive.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Parenthesis: The ___, which ___, ___.
- Colon: There was one problem: ___.
- Semi-colon: ___; ___.
- Dash: ___ — and then ___.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

- comma • brackets • dash • colon • semi-colon • question mark
• exclamation mark • apostrophe

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Decide what meaning needs clarifying.
2. Choose the punctuation with that job.
3. Write the sentence.
4. Read both sides to check the grammar.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you justify the punctuation choice and explain why another mark would be weaker?

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The road was flooded; we took another route.

SELF-CHECK: I know the punctuation's job. ✓ The grammar around it works. ✓ I have not used it just for decoration. ✓ The sentence is clearer.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Crack! ____.
- The ____ hissed / thudded / clattered ____.
- With a ____, the ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

crack • hiss • thud • clang • buzz • snap • roar • rustle

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Hear the moment in your head.
2. Choose the exact sound.
3. Decide whether it stands alone or sits in the sentence.
4. Keep the rest of the sentence clear.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER

Can you embed the sound naturally instead of making the writing feel like a comic strip?

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Crack! The branch split beneath his feet.

SELF-CHECK: The sound fits the action. ✓ I chose a precise sound. ✓ It adds impact. ✓ I did not overuse it.

Alliteration

Repeat initial sounds deliberately for rhythm, emphasis or memorability.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Wild ___ whipped ___.
- The ___, ___ ___.
- Silent ___ slipped ___.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

wild • whipped • silent • slipped • dark • drifted • fierce • flashed

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the image first.
2. Pick 2–3 important words.
3. Try matching initial sounds.
4. Keep only the version that still sounds natural.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Wild winds whipped across the water.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you create subtle alliteration that the reader notices without it sounding forced?

SELF-CHECK: Meaning comes first. ✓ The repeated sound is deliberate. ✓ I did not force strange vocabulary. ✓ It suits the tone.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- ___ light / ___ night
- ___ sky / ___ high
- ___ sound / ___ ground
- ___ day / ___ way

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

light/night • sky/high • sound/ground • day/way • glow/snow • sea/free

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the idea first.
2. Find a useful rhyme pair.
3. Build a line around each idea.
4. Read aloud to check rhythm and meaning.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Under the moon's pale light, / we hurried through the night.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you make the rhyme feel natural rather than choosing words only because they rhyme?

SELF-CHECK: The rhyme supports meaning. ✓ The lines make sense. ✓ The rhythm sounds natural. ✓ The form suits the task.

Repetition

Repeat a word, phrase or structure deliberately for emphasis or rhythm.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- No _____. No _____. No _____.
- Again and again, _____.
- It was _____, it was _____, it was _____.
- Never _____. Never _____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

- no • again • never • still • one by one • over and over • every
• nothing

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose what deserves emphasis.
2. Select a repeated word/structure.
3. Repeat it consistently.
4. Stop before the effect becomes annoying.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

No voices. No footsteps. No escape.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can the repeated structure build towards the most important final idea?

SELF-CHECK: The repetition is intentional. ✓ It creates emphasis/rhythm. ✓ Each repeated part adds meaning. ✓ I did not repeat accidentally.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- The ____ was like ____.
- As ____ as ____, the ____ ____.
- ____ moved like ____.
- Like a ____, ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

smoke • ice • lightning • shadow • stone • feather • storm • fire

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose what you are describing.
2. Identify its key quality.
3. Find something else with that quality.
4. Connect using like/as.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The fog curled around the houses like smoke.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you invent a fresh comparison that belongs specifically to this setting?

SELF-CHECK: The comparison is clear. ✓ The two things share a quality. ✓ It fits the mood. ✓ I avoided a tired cliché.

Metaphor

Say one thing is another to create a strong image.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- The city was a ____.
- His words were ____.
- A ____ of ____ spread across ____.
- The classroom became a ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

furnace • jungle • blanket • ocean • prison • storm • machine
• maze

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the thing you are describing.
2. Identify the quality you want.
3. Choose an image that carries that quality.
4. Keep later details consistent with the image.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The playground was a furnace beneath the midday sun.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you extend the metaphor without mixing it with a different image?

SELF-CHECK: The metaphor creates a clear image. ✓ It suits the mood. ✓ I did not use like/as. ✓ Any extension stays coherent.

Pathetic Fallacy

Use weather or nature to mirror or contrast the mood.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- Above them, the sky ____.
- The rain ____ as ____.
- Sunlight ____ across ____.
- The wind ____ while ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

brooded • wept • glared • smiled • howled • pressed •
brightened • darkened

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the mood.
2. Choose weather/nature that could support or contrast it.
3. Use a precise verb.
4. Link it subtly to the scene.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

Dark clouds gathered as the argument grew louder.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Could contrasting weather be more interesting than matching the mood?

SELF-CHECK: Nature contributes to mood. ✓ I used precise verbs. ✓ The effect is subtle. ✓ I did not make every scene stormy.

1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- It was a ___ situation — literally!
- The ___ couldn't resist a ___ joke.
- ___? That's one way to ___ it.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

roll • point • current • bright • sole • right • plane • rock

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose a key topic word.
2. Think of another meaning/similar sound.
3. Build a sentence where both meanings work.
4. Check the audience will understand it.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The baker's new business was on a roll.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you create a pun that fits naturally into a slogan, headline or humorous piece?

SELF-CHECK: Both meanings are understandable. ✓ The pun fits the context. ✓ It is appropriate for the audience. ✓ I did not sacrifice clarity.

Personification

Give a non-human thing a human action, feeling or quality.

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1 CHOOSE A STEM / OPENER

- The wind ____ed ____.
- The shadows ____ed across ____.
- The ____ refused to ____.
- Above us, the ____ watched ____.

2 WORD BANK — MAGPIE, THEN ADAPT

whispered • clawed • danced • crept • watched • swallowed •
sighed • argued

3 BUILD IT STEP BY STEP

1. Choose the non-human thing.
2. Choose a human action/quality.
3. Make sure the action fits the mood.
4. Add where/what it affects if useful.

4 MODEL SENTENCE

The wind clawed at the windows.

5 MAKE IT STRONGER Can you sustain the same personality for the object across two linked sentences?

SELF-CHECK: My subject is non-human. ✓ The action is human-like. ✓ The image fits the atmosphere. ✓ I avoided a mixed image.