

WRITING INSPIRATION - A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



Not sure where to start for your next writing project? At a loss for inspiration? A great way to create ideas is to explore a writing exercise. Try this picture study exercise and see what writing inspiration comes.

Start With a Picture

Take a picture of a place. Urban or rural, inside or out, city or nature. Choose a picture that focuses on a location without any people in it.

Study the picture and consider the following questions. Take the questions seriously and push your creativity to the limit!

- What is the location in the picture?
- What happened right before the picture was shot?
- Is there anything unexpected in the picture?
- If this picture became unfrozen, what do you think would happen next? What would be the very next action?
- What's happening outside the frame?
- What's the most exciting thing to happen in this place?
- What's the most underhanded thing to happen here?

Start Writing

Once you've answered all the questions, you'll know quite a bit about the picture and the situation surrounding the picture. Now, move from question mode to creative mode.

- Write a paragraph from the point of view of something in the picture (be it tree, or statue, or building)
- Decide who's taking the picture. Why are they taking the picture? What are they thinking about? Write a monologue on their thoughts.
- What story would take place in this location? Would it be realistic? Abstract? Futuristic? Period? Brainstorm on the potential plot of this story.

Another Picture

For part two of this exercise take up a second picture. This picture should focus on a person. To narrow the scope of the exercise, make sure the picture only has one person in it.

- Who is the person in this picture? Give them a name, an age, describe their family, describe where they live.
- What is this person doing in the picture? Is it something expected or unexpected?
- What will they do next?

Continued Over...

- What is their most important relationship? Describe it.
- What secret are they holding? Is there anyone in their life who knows this secret?
- What is their favourite memory? Their least favourite memory?
- Do they like what they do for a living?
- Do they like what they are wearing? Why or why not?

Start Writing

Again, once you've answered all the questions you'll know quite a bit about the person in the picture. Move into creative mode:

- Write a monologue for this person. Have them speak about what's going on in the picture.
- Think about this person as a main character. What do they want? What is standing in their way?
- What life changing event could they face? Brainstorm on the event and how the character would react to it.

What's Next?

Even if this exercise doesn't directly lead to your next project, practising the craft of writing is always worthwhile. Try this same exercise with a unique object or article of clothing.