100 Writing Prompts for 5th Graders

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Narrative & Story 1–25

1. A class pet disappears the night before the science fair. Tell it from the pet's side.
2. You find a door in the school library that was not there yesterday. Write what happens when you open it.
3. Your family moves into a house where every light switch turns on a different memory. Describe the first evening.
4. A snow day is announced, but the snow is warm. Write the story of that day.
5. You are the last student in the building when the power goes out. Tell what you hear first.
6. Your backpack starts leaving notes for you. Write the first three.
7. A new student arrives who has never heard music. Show the day you decide to explain it.
8. You trade places with your teacher for one morning. Write the funniest moment.
9. Your dog learns to spell. Tell the story of the first word it uses against you.
10. A time capsule from 1950 is opened at your school. Write about the object you take home.
11. Every umbrella in town disappears on the same rainy morning. Tell one walk home.
12. You are a raindrop that has been to eleven states. Tell one journey.
13. Your town's statue steps down from its base at midnight. Write what it does first.
14. A letter arrives addressed to you in your own handwriting, dated ten years from now.
15. You find a shoebox of photographs of a street you know, taken before you were born.
16. The school bus takes a road that is not on any map. Write the ride.
17. Your little brother's imaginary friend starts talking to you instead. Tell what it wants.
18. A tree in the park grows something other than leaves. Write the day the town notices.
19. You are the voice inside a GPS asked for directions to a place that no longer exists.
20. The fire drill happens during the best part of the day. Write about the missing ten minutes.
21. You wake up able to hear what animals think, but only for one hour. Tell the hour.
22. A kite escapes its string and writes back. Tell what it says.
23. Your classroom clock runs backward for a single afternoon. Show what everyone does differently.
24. You are a museum guard the night a painting changes its pose. Do not name the painting.
25. Write about a small kindness that changes the whole day of someone you barely know.

Opinion & Persuasive 26–50

26. Should fifth graders have homework on weekends? Defend your position with two reasons.
27. Is it better to be the fastest runner or the best teammate? Explain.
28. Should schools start an hour later? Use what you know about your own mornings.
29. Should students help choose what the class reads? Argue one side.
30. Is a classroom pet worth the work it takes? Take a position.
31. Should phones be allowed during lunch? Give a reason a principal would respect.
32. Which matters more in a group project: a strong idea or a reliable worker?

33. Should the school keep a garden if it means less playground space?
34. Is it fair to grade handwriting? Explain your thinking.
35. Should every student learn to code? Argue yes or no.
36. Should a city spend its next budget on parks or on libraries? Choose one.
37. Is it better to read the book before the movie or after?
38. Should kids vote on school rules? Say why or why not.
39. When honesty and politeness conflict, which should win? Defend your answer.
40. Should every school day include a quiet reading time? Make your case.
41. Which is the better reward: extra recess or a homework pass?
42. Should students be allowed to redo a test? Explain your reasoning.
43. Is a rule still fair if most people break it? Take a side.
44. Should the class have assigned seats or free seating? Argue one.
45. Is it better to work alone or in a group when the grade matters?
46. Should schools teach students how to disagree well? Why does it matter?
47. Is a field trip more valuable than a day of regular class? Defend it.
48. Should a class be allowed to choose its own project topic?
49. Is it right to change a rule after a game has started? Explain.
50. Should every student present in front of the class at least once a year?

Informative & Explanatory 51–70

51. Explain how to make your favorite after-school snack so a younger student could follow it.
52. Describe how your classroom is organized and why it works that way.
53. Explain one thing adults usually get wrong about being ten or eleven.
54. Describe the steps of a game you know well, so someone could play without watching.
55. Explain how weather changes one thing in your daily routine.
56. Describe how to take care of a plant for a month.
57. Explain what makes a joke funny, using one joke as your example.
58. Describe how a school lunch gets from the kitchen to your table.
59. Explain how you study when you have only one evening.
60. Describe how to find a book you will actually finish.
61. Explain why some sounds are easier to remember than others.
62. Describe the job of one person who works in your school.
63. Explain how to build something useful from materials you already have.
64. Describe how a rule in your house came to exist.
65. Explain the difference between two things people often confuse.
66. Describe how to apologize in a way that actually helps.
67. Explain how your neighborhood has changed in the last few years.
68. Describe how to keep a secret that is not yours to tell.
69. Explain what makes a good question in class.
70. Describe how to help a new student on their first day.

Poetry & Wordplay 71–85

71. Write a poem about a sound you hear every day but never name.
72. Write four lines that describe your desk without using the word *desk*.
73. Write a poem where every line starts with "I remember."
74. Write a two-line poem that is also a riddle.
75. Write a poem about a place that is about to change.
76. Write a list poem of ten things in your pocket or bag.
77. Write a poem using only questions.
78. Write a poem about the moment before something begins.
79. Write a haiku about the last five minutes of recess.
80. Write a poem from the point of view of a door.
81. Write a poem with one word per line that tells a small story.
82. Write a poem that repeats one line but means something different each time.
83. Write a color poem that never names the color.
84. Write a poem about a person you have never spoken to.
85. Write a poem that ends with the word "almost."

Quick Writes 86–100

86. Finish this line: "The worst part about being invisible would be…"
87. Finish: "Nobody told me the library had a basement until…"
88. Finish: "I knew the plan would fail when…"
89. Finish: "The best excuse I ever heard was…"
90. Finish: "If my shoes could talk, they would complain about…"
91. Write for eight minutes about a smell that takes you somewhere.
92. Write about the last time you changed your mind.
93. Write about a rule you would keep even if no one enforced it.
94. Write about something you fixed that no one noticed.
95. Write about a time you were wrong on purpose.
96. Write about the bravest thing you did that nobody saw.
97. Write about a question you have never asked out loud.
98. Write about a place you would take someone who has never left their town.
99. Write about the best ten minutes of your week.
100. Write what you would put in a letter to yourself in one year.

How to use these in 12 minutes

1. Pick one prompt, not five. Read it once, then write without stopping for twelve minutes. Stopping to choose is where most fifth-grade writing dies.
2. If you stall, add three things: a place, a person, and one problem. Almost any stuck draft restarts once those exist.
3. Check it with three questions. Does it name a subject? Does something happen? Does it end somewhere different from where it started?
4. Revise one sentence only — the one you would cut if you had to. Rewriting everything at once teaches nothing.

Check card — read your draft once and answer:

1. Does it name a subject I can point to?
2. Does something happen, change, or get explained?
3. Does it end somewhere different from where it started?
4. Which single sentence would I cut, and why is it still there?