

INTRODUCTION

This PDF is the result of a blog challenge I participated in: A to Z Blogging Challenge 2013. The aim was to create 26 blog posts (we had Sundays off!) working through the alphabet, using any theme we desired.

I immediately knew what I wanted my theme to be: writing warm-ups.

If I start my writing session with a five-minute warm-up, it's always more productive than if I hadn't. Every. Single. Time. No. Exceptions.

This PDF has 159 warm-ups to help you find your way into Storyland. Choose from:

- 26 photo prompts
- 26 mind maps
- 26 freewriting exercises
- One personal questionnaire
- 79 sentence starts

I'm positive you'll find something in here to ignite that creative spark.

What is mind mapping?

Mind mapping, or clustering, is an excellent technique for associating and connecting words to come up with unique and wonderful ideas. I've gleamed many a short this way. There is a mind map example for each step in the PDF, to show you how it works. I like to cluster using one nucleus word, then freewrite with any of the branch words that appeal to me.

What is freewriting?

Freewriting is also known as stream of consciousness writing. You write with no regard to structure or sense of control; literally just whatever comes into your head as you write. It will feel like you're spouting a hideous pile of nonsense, but you'll be surprised. Go back and read through what you've written, and you'll find lots of precious snippets just waiting to be expanded upon!

Best of luck with your writing warm-ups!

Note: All photos in this PDF are **not** great, but they **are** mine. Feel free to use and share them to your heart's content. I'm not precious over them.

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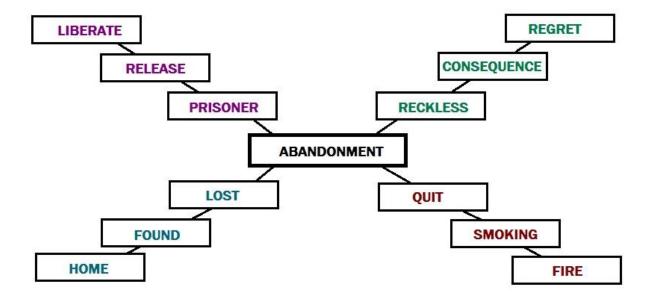
ABANDONMENT



"Art is never finished; only abandoned."

Leonardo da Vinci

- 1. Whose hat is this? How did it end up there? Simply overlooked by a harassed, unobservant mother (why is she harassed?)? Or is it a clue to something more sinister? Scribble down a scenario/character profile based on the poor wee hat.
- 2. Sketch a mind map using the key word as the nucleus, then branch out in whatever direction you please. You might find yourself going in completely unrelated paths (which I personally prefer). Do a five-minute freewrite incorporating as many (or few) branch words as you like. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - It was hat & scarf weather...
 - She couldn't find it anywhere...
 - The rain made it soggy...

BIRTHDAY

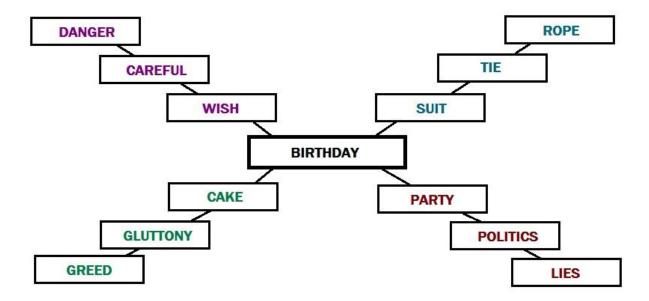


"With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come."

William Shakespeare

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- 1. Do you believe in birthday wishes? What would you wish for? Do you celebrate birthdays or is it a sore subject? Imagine a birthday party scene (small & intimate or excessive & lavish) and write it down, filling it with devious and eccentric characters.
- 2. Now sketch your mind map with the key word as the nucleus, followed by your five-minute freewrite incorporating as many (or few) branch words as you like. Here's what the word **Birthday** made me think of:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - She didn't tell them it was her birthday...
 - He thought back to how different things were on his last birthday...
 - Another year older...

CLOCK

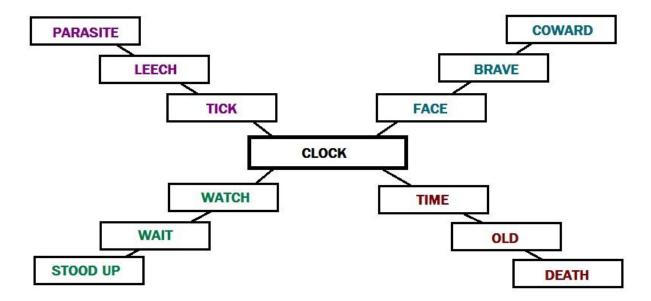




"Lost time is never found again."

Benjamin Franklin

- 1. You're running late for an important meeting/date. The consequence of not getting there on time is beyond dire. Try and come up with as many obstacles in your journey from A to B and scribble down a high-suspense scene.
- 2. Now do your mind map and five-minute freewrite with your branch words for the word **Clock**. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I knew he wouldn't turn up...
 - If only she'd answer her phone...
 - They weren't expecting me home an hour early...

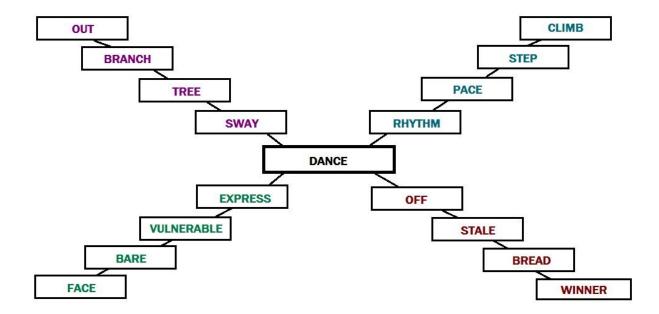
DANCE



"Never give a sword to a man who can't dance."

Confucius

- 1. Picture the scene: a young couple, in love, dancing to a live swing band. Why are you watching from the back row? Is a broken leg/shattered pelvis preventing you from hitting the dance floor? Are you a creepy stalker to one of the lovebirds? Does the trombone player have something terrible on her mind? Scribble down your thoughts in a free-flowing manner for five minutes.
- 2. The word **Dance** brings so many words to mind. Create your own mind map and follow it up with a five-minute freewrite with the branch words. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - Today I was paired off with a new dance partner...
 - His two left feet landed me in A&E...
 - 'The customer paid for a dance,' Antonio snarled, 'so get out there and give him one, Crystal...'

EYES DOWN



"You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you have to learn to play better than anyone else."

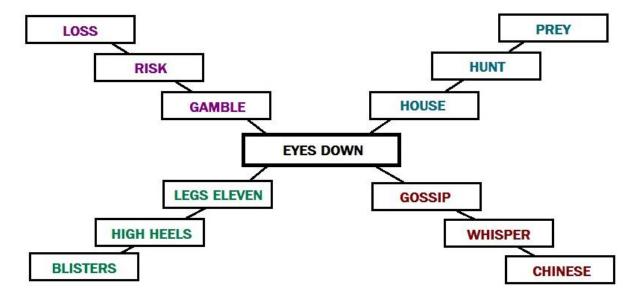
Albert Einstein

1. Here are some notes I made during my last jaunt to the bingo with Mother:

Passers-by saying hello, lonesome individuals sitting at a table for four, man holds a £20 note in the air for change, flashing lights from nearby casino slots, clattering of coins, a foul-mouthed old woman talking loudly, potential fisticuffs over seats, shhhhhh-ing when the caller speaks, fidgeting with bulbous dabber pens, walking sticks littering the walkways, old, wrought wedding rings, bad wigs, room clears immediately as people scarper for cigarette break, waiting on one for the house, grumble grumble, caller's farewell: "On behalf of all of us, love you and ta-ra!" A sea of "ta-raaaa"'s with one mutter of "get it up ye..." Jackets on.

Have a look at your surroundings and describe everything you see, hear, feel, smell, etc. You might feel a story begin to form (I found a few with my bingo notes!).

2. Create your mind map with the key word as the nucleus, then do your five-minute freewrite using some (or all) of your branch words. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - We always promised we'd split the winnings...
 - Old Betty hadn't shown face in the bingo for three weeks now...
 - It got her out of the house, at least...

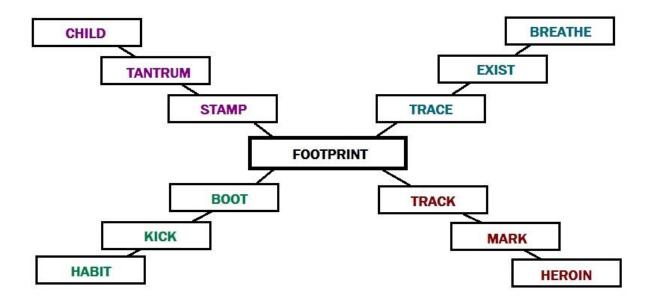
FOOTPRINTS



"As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives."

Henry David Thoreau

- 1. Footprints can be quite symbolic. It can represent the impact (wanted or unwanted) someone makes, on the road, in our lives. A journey has been taken, but many people wish they could go back and retrace their steps. Spend 5 minutes writing down any thoughts you have about this.
- 2. Now do your mind map and five-minute freewrite with your branch words for **Footprint**. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - There were two sets of prints in the snow...
 - He didn't cover his tracks...
 - The carpet was covered in muddy paw prints...

GRAFFITI

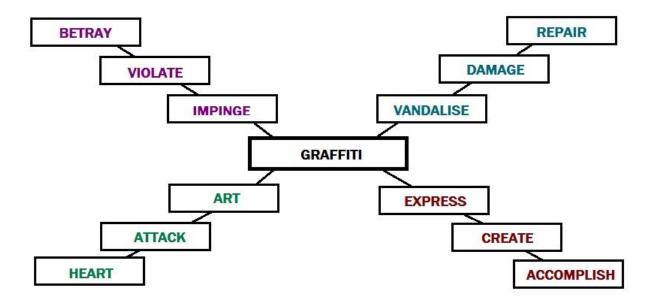




"Life imitates art far more than art imitates Life." **Oscar Wilde**

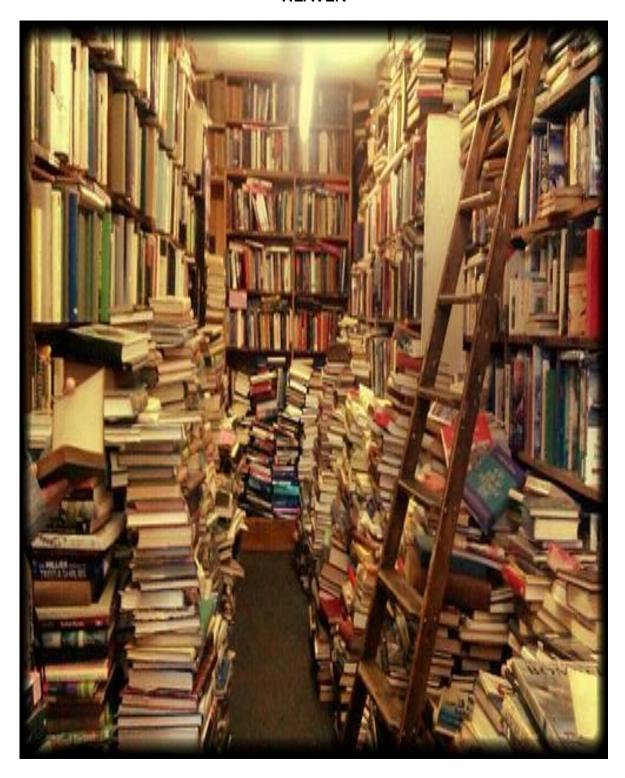
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- 1. You may dismiss graffiti "artists" as mindless vandals, but have a wee think about the person behind the spray paint. Are they troubled? A self-absorbed brat, rebelling against their strict upbringing? Or simply an attention seeking troublemaker (in which case, what makes them act out like that?)? Scribble down all the possible characteristics and back story, and see if anyone comes alive and takes you on their journey.
- 2. Time for your mind map and five-minute freewrite. Here's what I came up with:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - They'd laugh at him if he didn't do it...
 - Now they'd all find out what she was really like...
 - I caught him writing about Mum again...

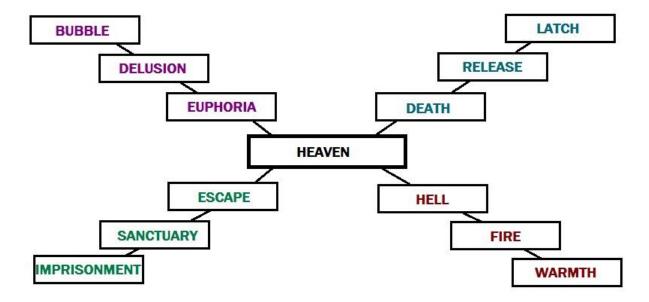
HEAVEN



"The 'kingdom of Heaven' is a condition of the heart - not something that comes 'upon the earth' or 'after death.'"

Friedrich Nietzsche

- 1. What's your idea of Heaven? Using your stream of consciousness, scrawl the description as you see it in your head. Now, think of one of your characters. What would their idea of Heaven be? Does a person's idea of Heaven say something specific about them? Ask people what theirs is and you'll find it probably does.
- 2. Now do your mind map and five-minute freewrite with your branch words from the nucleus **Heaven**. Here is my mind map:



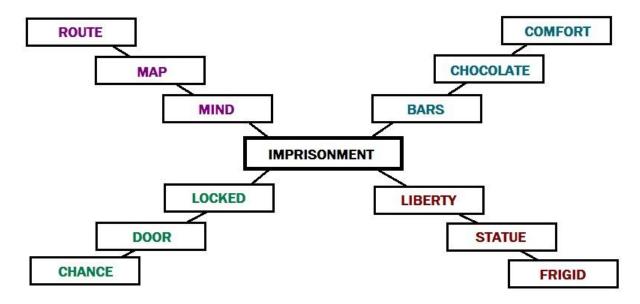
- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - It was their Heaven, but my Hell...
 - He was only allowed entry to Heaven on one condition...
 - I couldn't bear to tell her it didn't exist...

IMPRISONMENT



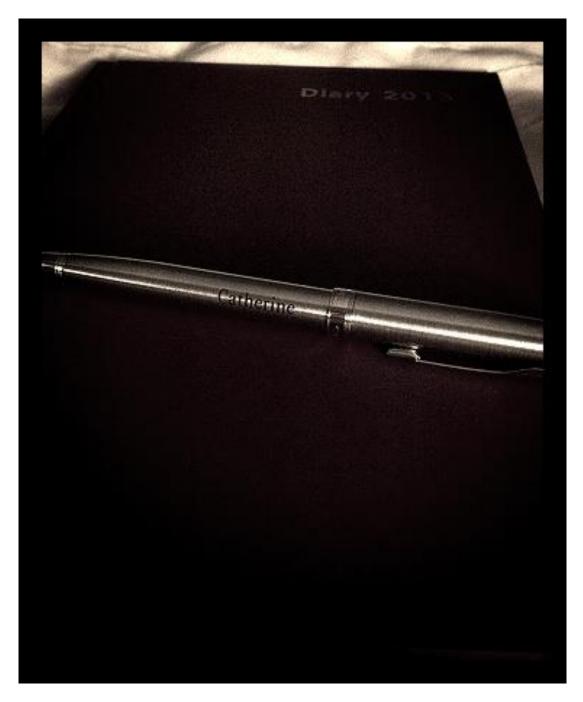
"So I departed and was free from imprisonment." **William Adams**

- 1. There are many ways you can be imprisoned:
 - Literally (the tin pail): what are you in for? Who's your cell mate? Are the guards treating you terribly? Are you due any visitors? Or have you been disowned by all?
 - Physically: you've lost all use of your body in a freak accident and can only observe things with your eyes. What happens when you can't answer back (I'm writing a short story about this right now, as it happens)?
 - Mentally: you're so crippled by anxiety you can't see past what's bothering you. Trapped in your own mind, you delve into a whirlpool of paranoia. Scribble down your thoughts...
- 2. Create your mind map and do a five-minute freewrite with the words that come from it. Here is my mind map for **Imprisonment**:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - 'You're not leaving until you tell me...'
 - Nobody else believed him when he said he didn't do it...
 - I'd have to break the glass to escape...

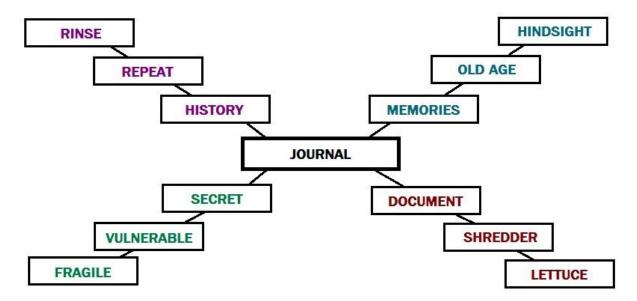
JOURNAL



"A page of my journal is like a cake of portable soup. A little may be diffused into a considerable portion."

James Boswell

- 1. You've moved into a new home and find a bunch of old journals up in the loft. What kind of person lived there before you? Have they any juicy secrets? How come they didn't take the journals with them... did they have to flee in a rush? Or were they bludgeoned to death?
- 2. Do a mind map for the word **Journal**. What words spring to mind? Do a five-minute freewrite with your results. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I know I shouldn't look, but...
 - I had to hide it from him, he couldn't know the truth about her...
 - Dear diary, today I'm going to end it all...

KANGAROO

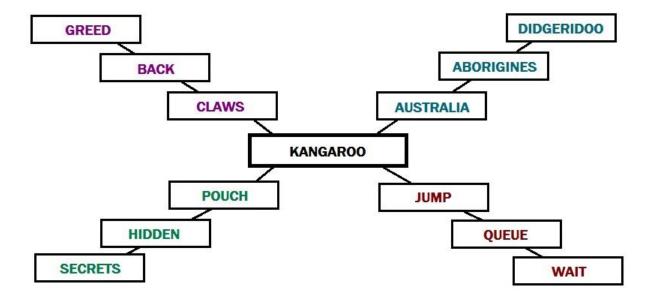




"The animal is ignorant of the fact that he knows. The man is aware of the fact that he is ignorant."

Victor Hugo

- 1. Imagine you're taking a short cut through the woods when, out the corner of your eye, you see something approaching you (it doesn't have to be a kangaroo). Write what happens next, building up suspense of whether it's going to attack you or not. Does it turn out to be friendly? Does it lead you to a grim discovery? Does it rescue you from an even bigger danger in the woods?
- 2. Now do your mind map and five-minute freewrite with your branch words for **Kangaroo**. Here's the mind map I came up with:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - He filled the feed dispenser with the sedative... he didn't want to risk a repeat of yesterday...
 - I clawed the human's fragile hand as I lapped up the treat...
 - I moved the kangaroo steak around the plate, loathe to try it under their amused, testing gaze...

LIBRARY

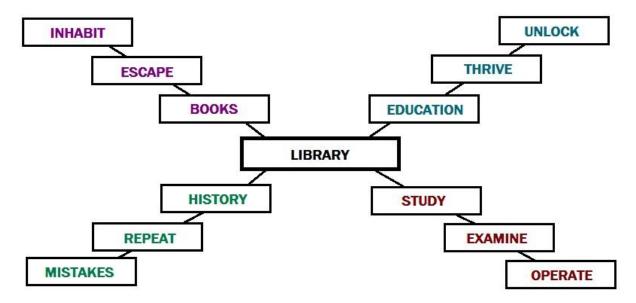


"A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life."

Henry Ward Beecher

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- 1. You're sitting at a desk in the library, surrounded by a big pile of books. At the table to your left is a scruffy old man, reading a newspaper. Is he homeless; seeking sanctuary from the bitter cold? To the right of you is a group of giggling girls who'd prefer to gossip than study. What's going on in their lives? Do they have fickle, theatrical dilemmas? Or are there sensitive family issues affecting them all in various degrees of severity? Spend a few minutes pondering characters, using the library as common ground.
- 2. Using the word **Library** as your nucleus, sketch out your mind map and follow it up with a five-minute freewrite. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I found the letter in the library book I'd just checked out...
 - The couple argued in hushed tones, mindful of the library rule...
 - She didn't notice the "entry forbidden" sign as she walked through the door, looking for a way out of the library...

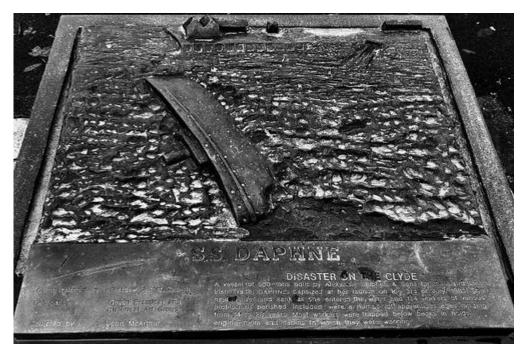
MEMORIAL





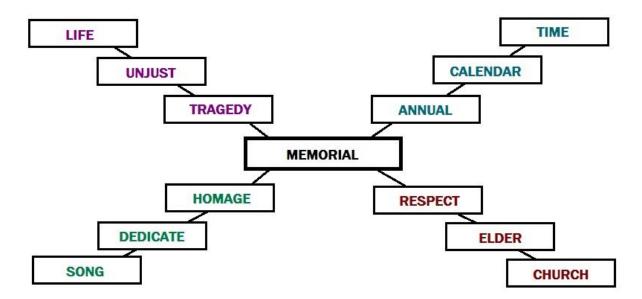
"There is no refuge from memory and remorse in this world. The spirits of our foolish deeds haunt us, with or without repentance."

Gilbert Parker





- 1. Have a look at the memorials and see if any in particular stand out for you. Do you think of those who died? Or the people left behind? What impact has their deaths left in their worlds? Explore the aftermaths and strength needed to pull through these disasters. Or what about a haunted memorial? Do the fallen linger there, waiting to meet their weeping relatives?
- 2. Now do your mind map and five-minute freewrite with your branch words. Here is my mind map for **Memorial**:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I can't face anyone. It's the same every year, on this day...
 - She said there had been a telegraph, but I fled the house. I couldn't; wouldn't hear of it...
 - If he hadn't died, I might not have found out about her...
 - The sheer number of people who'd come to pay their respects overwhelmed me. I had no idea...

NOSTALGIA



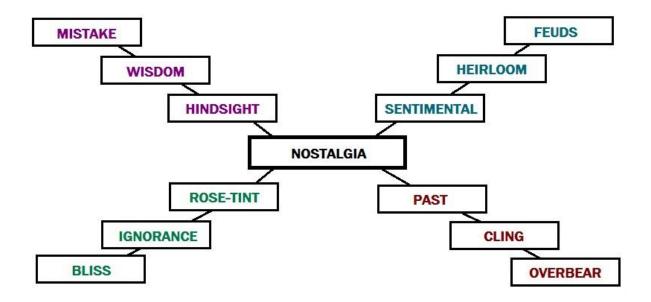
"There is no greater sorrow

Than to recall a happy time

When miserable."

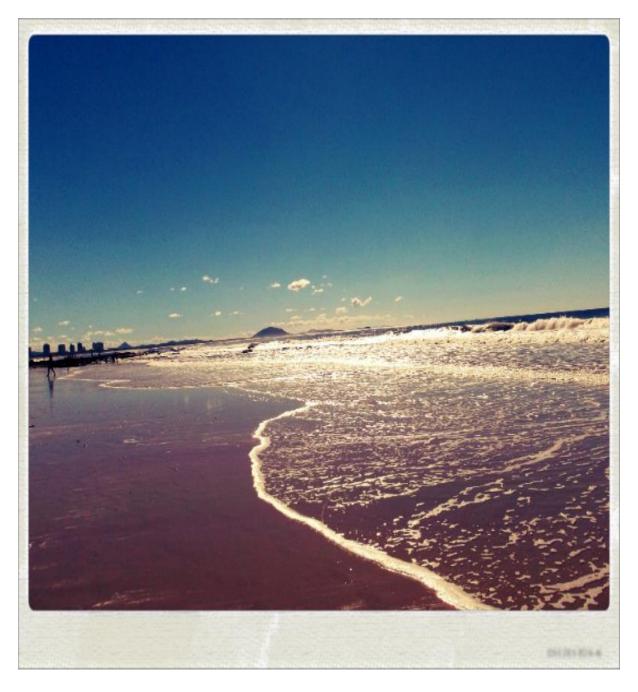
Dante Alighieri

- 1. You come across your old childhood toy. Describe the toy in vivid detail (throw in the senses: touch, smell, hear, sight and dare I say it taste). Does it stir up positive/negative emotions? Does it remind you of other aspects of your childhood, such as old friends, or family members long since passed?
- 2. **Nostalgia** was one of my favourite starter words for mind mapping. What can you come up with for your own mind map? Remember to follow it up with a five-minute freewrite using some (or all) of your branch words. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
- She always thinks the grass was greener...
- He wanted to go back to a simpler time...
- I couldn't believe she'd kept my teddy bear, after all these years, and after everything I'd done to her...

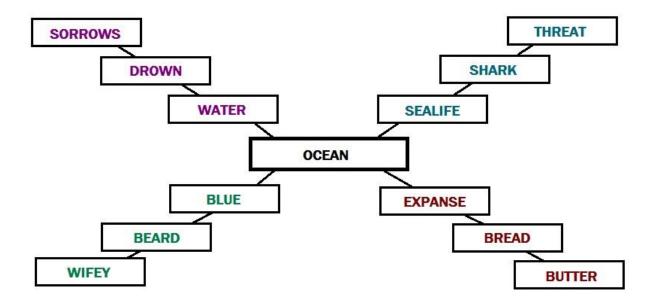
OCEAN



"The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble."

Blaise Pascal

- 1. Write about someone sitting on the sand, gazing at the water. What's on their mind? Why do they come here specifically? Describe the scene before them: are there dog walkers? People jogging by, looking disgustingly healthy and content with their lives? Does someone come along and interrupt their thoughts? Is it someone they know or a complete stranger (and a pesky one at that)? Scribble down your thoughts and see where it takes you.
- 2. Sketch your mind map and do your five-minute freewrite with the branch words. Here's what the word **Ocean** made me think of:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - My heart stopped when I saw it floating...
 - I would sit there and imagine him coming back to me, coming right back out of the water...
 - I woke with the tide coming in...

PARK

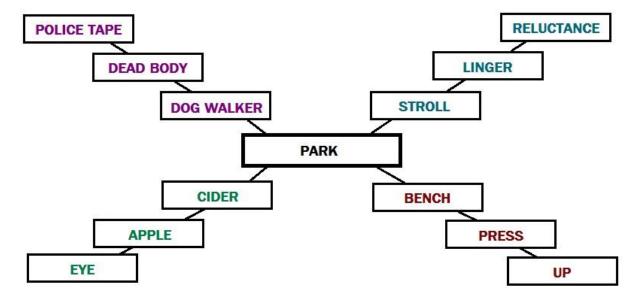




"And this, our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

William Shakespeare

- 1. Ponder these scenarios and follow on from whichever takes your fancy:
 - You're spending a few leisurely hours in the park, making the most of the nice weather. You have a rest on the bench and are horrified to recognise the name on the memorial plaque. Whose is it? Is it... yours?
 - A family day out is being spoiled by a group of youths drinking cider and throwing stones at the swans. Your children are scared and your partner is worried and wants to go home. You're absolutely raging at the youths: not only are they injuring the defenceless animals, they've spoiled your quality time with the family. You approach them, fists clenched...
- 2. Draw up your mind map and freewrite for five minutes with the words you gleamed from the nucleus word **Park**. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - He said he'd meet me in the park at midnight...
 - She'd have to take a shortcut through the park...
 - I threw the stick for my dog, but he brought something entirely different back...

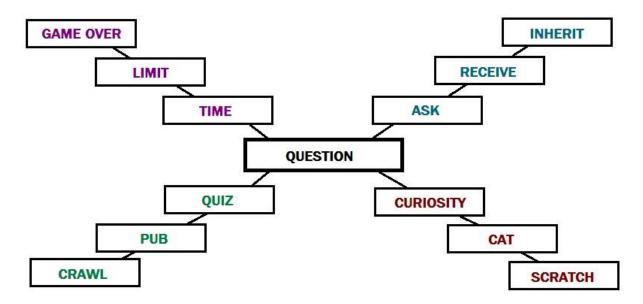
QUESTION



"Question everything. Learn something. Answer nothing."

Euripides

- 1. You should know... to my knowledge, there is no golf course near the Clydeside. This begs the questions: Is this chap really going for a game of golf? Or are they weapons (not unheard of round these here parts...)? Is he selling them? Has he fallen on hard times? Are they stolen goods? Are they a gift to his newly reunited father? Take a few minutes to come up with questions and see if you get a story spark.
- 2. What does the word **Question** make you think of? Create a mind map then do your five-minute freewrite with whatever your came up with. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - 'Fifty quid, that's my best offer'...
 - He stuffed it into the golf bag and set off. Nobody would know it was there...
 - Maybe if he took up golf, he'd get out more. I worry about him...

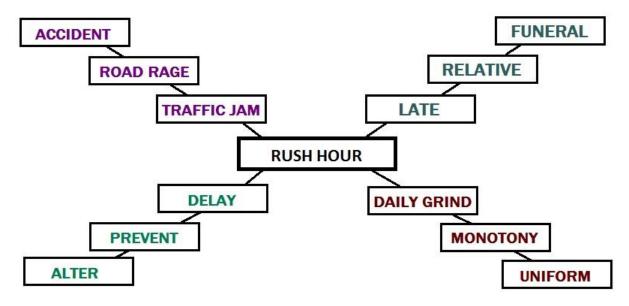
RUSH HOUR



"The men who have succeeded are men who have chosen one line and stuck to it."

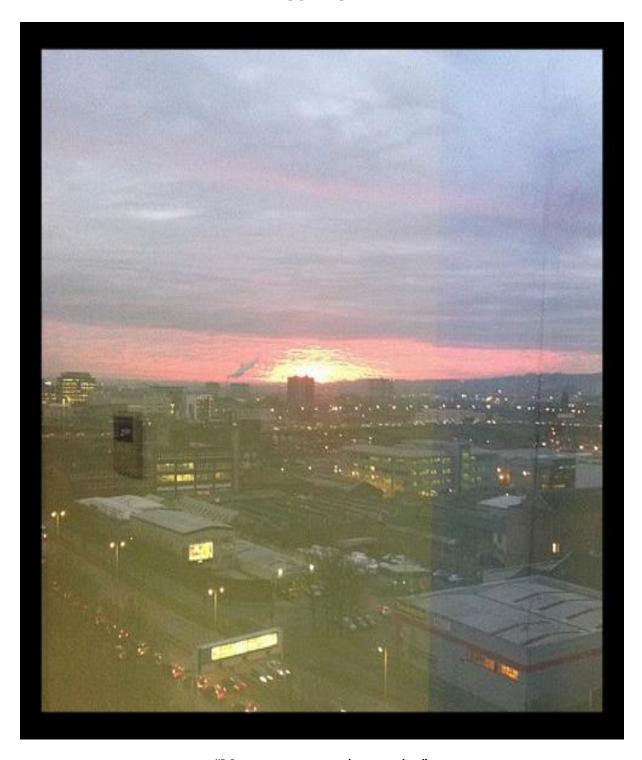
Andrew Carnegie

- 1. You've had the day from hell, and all you want to do is get home, have a long soak in a scented bubble bath, and eat something stodgy and comforting in front of some trashy TV. But you're stuck in traffic. The motorway signs say "SLOW FOR 8 MILES" and you realise it's not just normal rush hour traffic. Vehicles come to a complete standstill and people start beeping horns and even get out of their cars to confront other drivers (use the 5 senses to conjure up the scene). Whatever happens next is going to change your life. Has a loved one been in the accident that's caused all the chaos? Does a dashing gentleman come to your rescue from a furious driver who wants to take out their anger on you? Does someone require immediate medical attention (heart/asthma/hypoglycaemic attack?). Delve further...
- 2. Sketch a mind map using Rush Hour as the nucleus, then branch out in whatever direction it takes you. Don't worry about relevance to the original subject. Do your freewrite afterwards. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - It was the worst possible time for her engine to cut out...
 - I could feel a pair of eyes staring at me from the next car...
 - He couldn't even call to let her know he was going to be late...

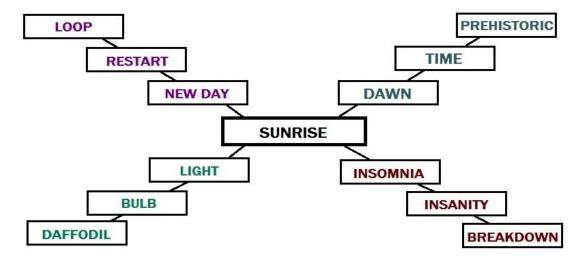
SUNRISE



"My sun sets to rise again."

Robert Browning

- 1. Do you associate sunrise with waking up? Or do you only see the sun rising if you've been up all night? Think of all the scenarios you could write where the sunrise could play a part:
 - The baby's been up all night and you're stressed out your box. What's wrong with him/her? You wish your partner was around to help with the baby, but they're gone. Furthermore, they'll never speak to you again. Where are they? What's happened?
 - You've had to come into work at the crack of dawn, because your boss is a bully and is offloading his work on to you. Your work life is having an impact on your home life (are you taking it out on your family? Do the kids miss their mummy/daddy?). Your boss has taken credit yet again for your work and landed a fat pay rise, and you can't take much more of it. What are you going to do?
 - You're walking home from a riotous party alone, though you arrived with your partner. What happened? Try and come up with as much drama as possible during those darkened hours.
- 2. Draw up your mind map with **Sunrise** as the nucleus, then follow it up with a freewrite. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I'd been searching all night. When the sun began to rise, my hopes of finding him began to fall...
 - He watched the sun rise from the window, bleary eyed. He'd had not a wink of sleep, but had to leave in an hour...
 - Their parents slept soundly, unaware that they weren't really staying with their friends that night...

TREE



"Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing."

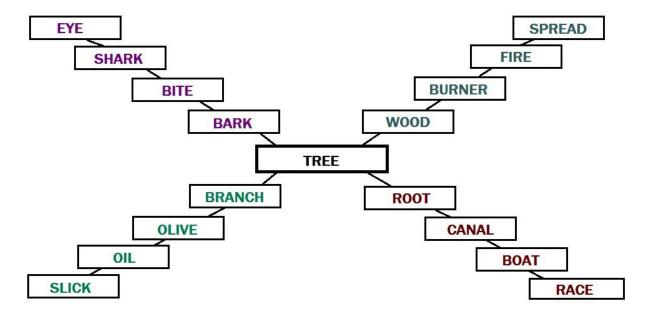
Abraham Lincoln

1. Spend a few minutes freewriting, using the word Tree as your starting point. Here's what I came up with:

Scary black tree, gnarled and eerie in front of the derelict house. Swing from it? Hang from it... climb it/have an accident. Carve history into it. Forest fire/lightning crack. What has this tree seen in its life? Landscape changed but the tree remains. Changeable nature: rot, leaves fall, grows, bare, flourish. Home for wildlife. Sanctuary for peeping toms. Hiding place.

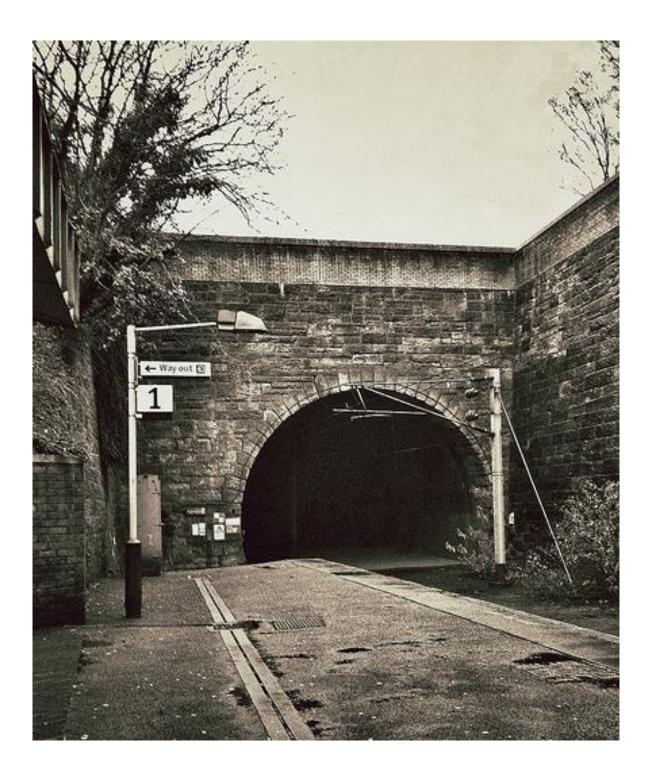
I can think of several story ideas to come from that lot. See how you get on with yours...

2. Sketch a mind map from the word **Tree** then branch out (ahem) in whatever direction you please. Do your freewrite afterwards. Here's what I came up with:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - She faced the tree, covered her eyes and counted to a hundred...
 - He visited the picnic spot from their courting days. Their initials were still etched in the tree, encased in a heart...
 - I tied the rope, in a firm knot, around the sturdiest branch...

UNDERGROUND

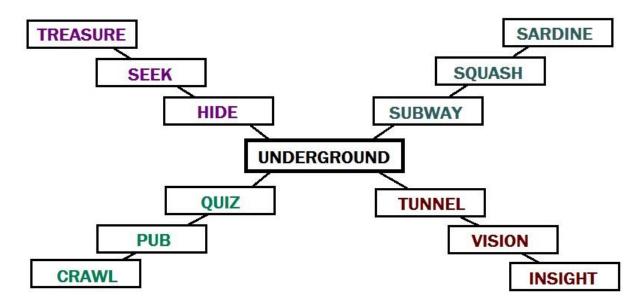


"Fear has many eyes and can see things underground."

Miguel de Cervantes

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- 1. You're on the subway, when it comes to a halt between stations. Describe three other people in the carriage, making them all completely different. You decide how long they're stuck and what will happen next...
- 2. Sketch a mind map then take a few minutes to do your freewrite. Here is my mind map for **Underground**:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - The forensic team made their way into the tunnel. All trains suspended till further notice...
 - We were strolling around the carnival, when he stopped outside the Tunnel of Love and held out his hand...
 - It was dark and creepy, but the underpass would be cut my journey in half...

VALENTINE



Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself.

But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:

To melt and be like a running brook that

Sings its melody to the night.

To know the pain of too much tenderness.

To be wounded by your own understanding of love;

And to bleed willingly and joyfully.

To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;

To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;

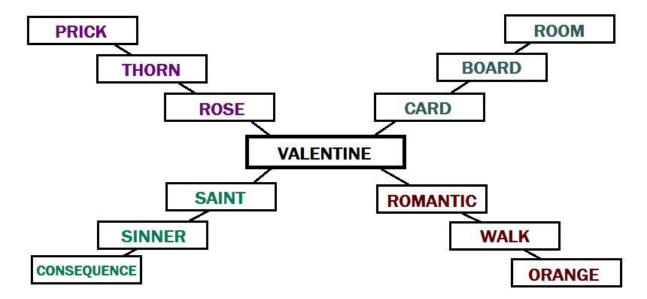
To return home at eventide with gratitude;

And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.

Khalil Gibran

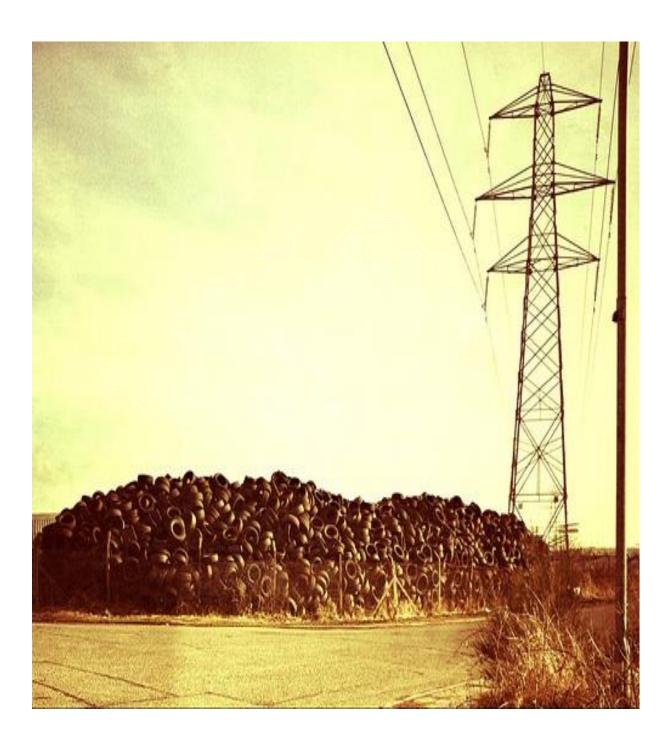
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- 1. Choose from one of the following two exercises, spending a few minutes freewriting:
 - Your partner has, rather carelessly, left a receipt loitering in the house for TWO Valentine's cards...
 - Describe an office/workplace setting on Valentine's Day: does someone send flowers to themselves? Does someone mope around the place, devastated from a recent break up? Is there a bitter singleton spouting venom on all non-single colleagues? Or what about a secret admirer...?
- 2. Here is my mind map for **Valentine**. Create your own and follow it up with a freewrite:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I squealed and told him he shouldn't have. He frowned at me, saying 'But I didn't.'...
 - It was simply the worst day of the year, for two reasons...
 - Tonight's going to be the night...

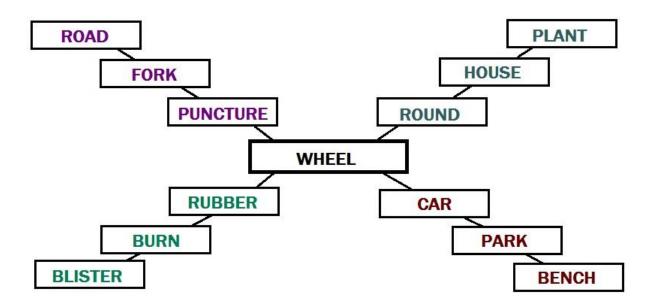
WHEEL



"We join spokes together in a wheel,
but it is the centre hole
that makes the wagon move."

Lao Tzu

- 1. Choose from one of the two following scenarios and expand further, in the form of a five minute freewrite:
 - You're driving along a quiet road when a man flags you down, saying he's got a flat tyre. Can he borrow your car jack? There are two other men in the car and they all look scary as hell. What do you do?
 - You're the one with a flat tyre and it couldn't have come at a worse possible time! You discover you have no spare tyre either. Who comes to your rescue?
- 2. Now do your mind map and five-minute freewrite with your results from **Wheel**. You'll be surprised how many branches come from this innocuous word. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I left work to discover my bike had been stolen...
 - The Wheel of Fortune theme tune was blaring in the background when it happened...
 - I could smell the burnt rubber before I saw it...

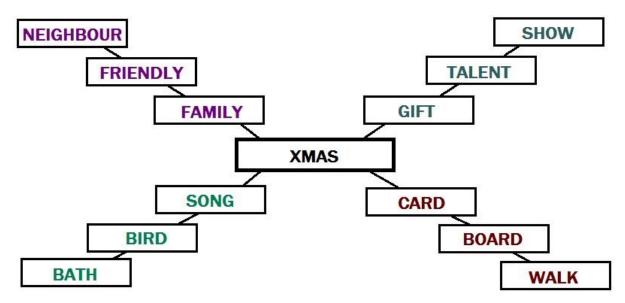
XMAS



"Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling."

Edna Ferber

- 1. You receive a Xmas card in the post, but you don't recognise the writing on the envelope addressed to you. Inside the card, there's a confession from someone you've never met, but who's done something terrible to you. Delve further...
- 2. Sketch a mind map using **Xmas** as the nucleus, then freewrite incorporating your resulting branch words. Here is my festive mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - This would be our first Xmas without...
 - I desperately wish I hadn't gone to the office Xmas party last night...
 - He handed me the gift: it was a large box, carefully wrapped. Inside was...

YOU



"I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self."

Aristotle

"YOU" QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1. Feel free to answer as many (or few) of the following questions about You. My answers are below, if you're interested:
- 1. What do you do to relax when you suffer from insomnia?

I listen to Meditation Oasis podcasts. They are amazing. Try them.

2. What's the worst holiday you ever had?

I'm fortunate enough to have enjoyed every holiday I've ever been on, though I have to admit... it wasn't fun having food poisoning when I went to Turkey a few years ago. *shudder*

3. Where's your favourite place to write?

The Mitchell Library.

4. If you could live anywhere in the world where would it be?

Directly opposite The Mitchell Library.

5. White, dark or milk chocolate?

White. I can inhale a large Milkybar in seconds. Though I'm also partial to dark/milk...

6. What's your favourite thing to have on toast?

Lashings of salted butter.

7. Which book do you wish you'd written and why?

The Alchemist, because it is an absolute masterpiece. Or anything written by Roald Dahl.

8. Film adaptations of novels - love them or hate them?

Depends on the film. Some films butcher the original story, but other films steer me towards a book I'd never have considered reading beforehand!

9. Do you think Al Pacino is overrated as an actor?

No. I've only seen him in The Devil's Advocate & The Merchant of Venice and he was fabulous in both.

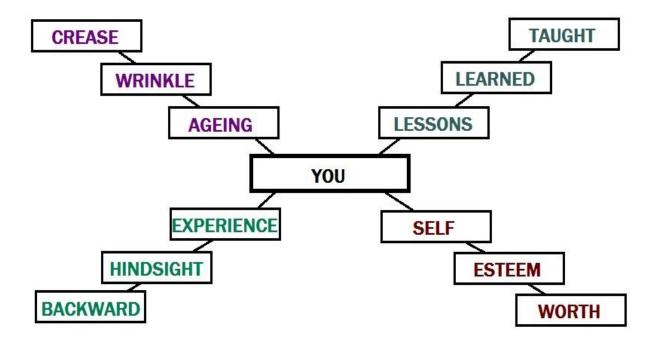
10. Coffee or tea?

Decaf. And Rooibos Tea. And Nettle Tea.

11. Would you ever do a sky dive?

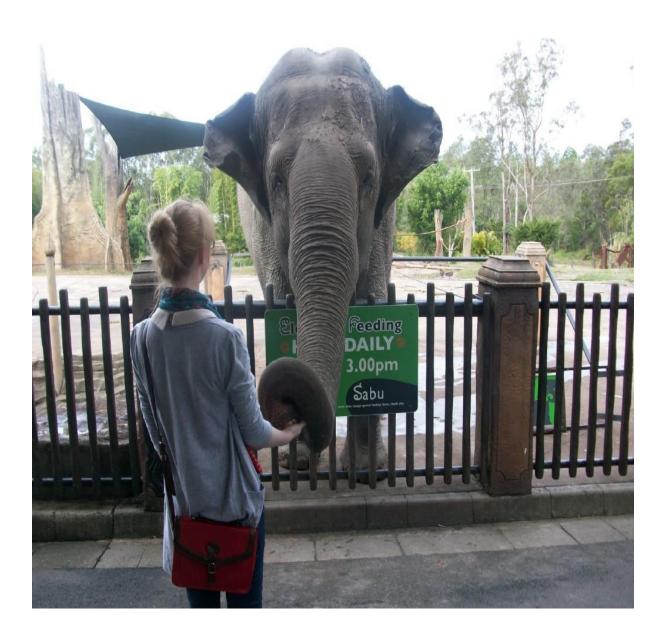
Yes, although I'm terrified of heights

2. Create a mind map using **You** as the nucleus, then freewrite using the words you've come up with. Here is my mind map:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - How could she accuse me of only thinking of myself? She's the selfish one...
 - I studied the child in the photo. So many things I wish I could've told her...
 - They made me fill in the questionnaire, saying if I didn't do it, they'd...

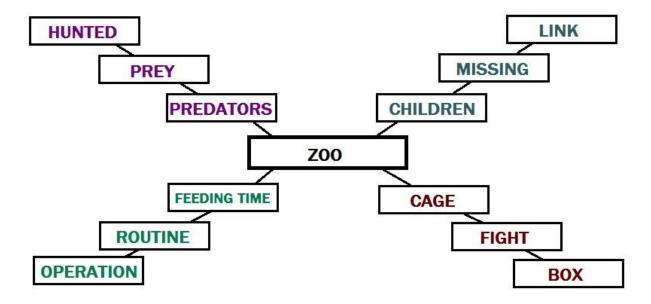
ZOO



"Zoo: an excellent place to study the habits of human beings."

Evan Esar

- 1. Plenty of dilemmas can arise at the zoo: the elephant decides to knock me clean out with his trunk, for instance. Or a child goes missing in the crowd. A group of idiots torment the wee penguins during their parade and get a taste of their own medicine. A gorilla watches everyone, with a knowing look: what's going through his mind? You're on a first date with someone who thought it'd be a wonderfully quirky idea to go to the zoo. What happens next?
- 2. Your final mind map challenge: Using the word **Zoo** as your nucleus, create your mind map and follow it up with a freewrite. Here's what I came up with:



- 3. Choose one of the following sentence starts and freewrite for a few minutes:
 - I suggested we go somewhere neutral, like the zoo. There'd be lots of people there...
 - The child dropped her ice cream and wailed. Her mother stared at the lion in its cage and wondered which one of them was really trapped...
 - The elephant curled its trunk round my arm and yanked me off my feet...

That's plenty! I hope my writing warm-ups have been useful for you.

If you have any feedback, please get in touch: catherine@catherinenoble.com

I can also be found lurking in the following places:

My website: www.catherinenoble.com

Twitter: @Catherine Noble

Tumbler: http://catherinenoble.tumblr.com/

Pinterest: http://www.pinterest.com/catherinenoble/

My Food Blog: www.noblenourishment.com

I would love to hear from you!

Take care

Catherine x