

200 Writing Prompts for Middle School and High School

Immortal for a Day

If you got one whole day where you were both unable to feel any pain and totally indestructible, what would you do with that 24-hour time period? How would the absence of pain and indestructibility change your perspective on trying new things? Would you use this day to try out extreme sports or activities that you wouldn't attempt otherwise? Would you try to use this day to help others or make the world better somehow?



Narrative option: tell the story of this day for yourself or a character who gets to be indestructible for the day.

Common Core: Writing Anchor Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. Make sure you introduce your topic, develop your topic with facts, definitions, and details, include linking words and phrases to connect ideas, and end with a concluding statement.

Additional standards: CCRA.W.1, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.3, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.5, CCRA.W.6, CCRA.W.10

Optimistic Future

Write an optimistic version of what's going to happen in the world in the next 50 years. Think about things like climate, technology, politics, justice, equality, education, health, and more. Imagine the possibilities for what the world could become in the next 50 years.

Narrative option: tell a story set in this optimistic future // **Argument option:** make the case for the changes humanity needs to make to arrive at this future.

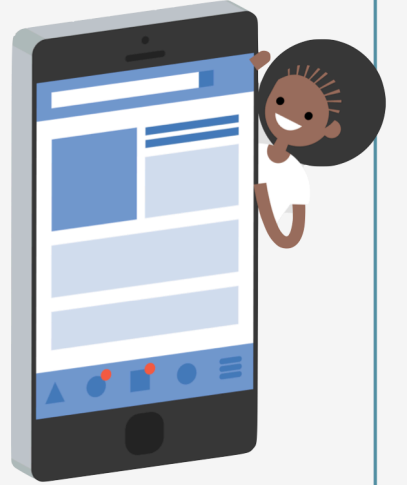


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Future Profile Page

Make a social media profile page for yourself ten years in the future. How do you imagine yourself? What do you think will be on your page? What accomplishments, interests, and experiences will it show? Explain what you included, from profile pictures to status updates, and explain the thinking behind your choices. Where do you think your life might take you in ten years?



Narrative option: tell the story of a significant addition to your future profile page.

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What's on page 217 of your autobiography?

An autobiography is when someone writes their own story in their own words. Imagine you're writing an autobiography, and you've arrived at page 217. What is happening in your life that is detailed on this page? Describe it in rich detail, capturing the setting, people involved, emotions felt, and why this moment is included in your life's story. Did you learn any lessons from this event? How did what's on page 217 shape the person you are today?



Narrative option: tell the story of page 217.

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What if everyone thought just like you?

Imagine that there is a magic potion that made the person who drank it think about everything exactly the way you think about everything. Once they drink the potion, they don't get your memories, but their way of thinking and their perspective on all the important topics is the same as yours. Think about someone you know well. What would happen if they drank the potion? Imagine that scenario and explain how it would go. What if everyone in your family drank it? What if everyone in your school drank it? What if everyone in the world drank it? How would the world change? Would you like this version of the world, one where everyone thought the same way as you?



Narrative option: tell the story of this scenario happening.

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A full year of creative, high interest writing prompts for bell ringers and writing journals

Created by Dr. Luke Neff



The Fine Print, page 1

This is a zipped PDF with a set of 200 writing prompts for middle school and high school students. They have been carefully crafted to be creative, engaging, interesting, and not-stereotypical. My experience with my students was that they had done too much bland, repetitive writing about their summer break and their pet and the person they most admire. They were bored and wanted something different and interesting to write about, so I worked hard to come up with ideas for them. Over the last fifteen years or so, I've made over 1000 writing prompts for my students. For this set, I went back through all of them and chose the 200 best prompts — the ones that worked the best, facilitated the best writing, and sparked the most enthusiasm for writing. These prompts work well for daily writing practice or as a bell ringer activity or for a daily journal or quick write. They could also be used with a writing center or as a resource for building a writing portfolio. I have taught both middle school and high school, and I believe that that these prompts should work well with students anywhere from sixth through twelfth grade.

I have included 200 prompts to make it so that this set can take care of a full school year of daily writing, along with some extras as well. These are the ones I would use if I wanted students to practice writing every day for a full school year.

I did include about a dozen optional, holiday-themed prompts (they are at the end, if you are looking for them). I included them as optional/bonus

prompts, beyond the 180 of a typical school year, knowing that some contexts don't allow for holiday-themed writing prompts. If this is true for your context, don't worry. I've got you covered. There are more than enough prompts to do a prompt every single day for a typical 180 day school year and never use a holiday-themed prompt.

There are just over 200 pages in this resource, with each prompt getting its own page and done in a visually appealing way, so it can be shared digitally or displayed in front of a class or as a standalone image or slide.

One note about them being in PDF format: I share them this way because I design them in Keynote and converting to other formats considerably alters the formatting. If you'd like to get them in the original Keynote file, please let me know, although it seems Keynote users are few and far between. Unfortunately, this does mean that since this is a PDF resource it is not editable as is. I am working on making them available in other formats in the future, so keep an eye out for that possibility. Since they are in a PDF format for now, I would recommend either showing one page/slide at a time to a whole class by displaying the PDF in full screen mode or you could export the slides as images from the PDF and then embed those images on slides in whatever slide software you typically use. You could also export a slide as an image for use in an LMS with your students. For students who need accessible text, I would recommend copying and pasting the text from the PDF into the LMS / online system that you use.



The Fine Print, page 2

These prompts are aligned to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1,2, and 3. Most all of them are focused on anchor standard 2, but most of them also have an option for a narrative (anchor standard 1) and many of them have an option for anchor standard 3, making arguments.

Common Core Writing Standards that are covered in these prompts:

- Writing Anchor Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Writing Anchor Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- Writing Anchor Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

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One more disclaimer to share: I do have some other sets of prompts that are available, and there is some overlap with some of those other sets. The ones that are included here have been specifically chosen for this and

have been reworked and reformatted for this set. That said, if you have purchased other sets from me, you may find a small amount of overlapping content.

This set of prompts was made by Dr. Luke Neff (drlukeneff.com) for Unicorn Writing. The Unicorn Writing site has more educator resources and writing prompt resources available at unicornwriting.com.

If you do have any feedback or suggestions, I'd love to hear from you. Please drop me a line. I love to hear how they are used or ideas to make them better or anything that you've spotted that could use fixing or improving. You can email me at unicornwithakeyboard@gmail.com.

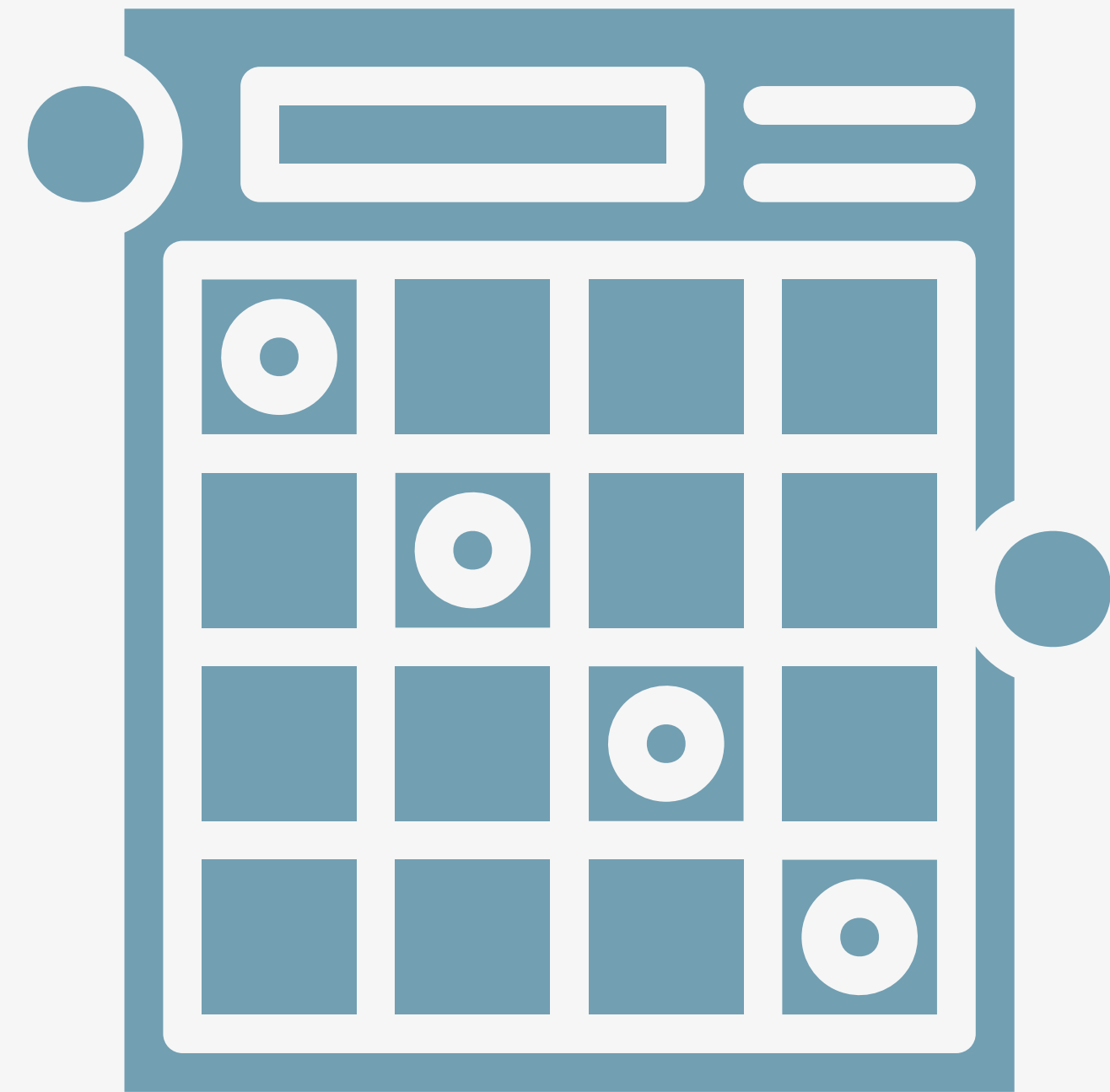
Best wishes,
Luke

Please note, this version is the sample version, so it has watermarks on the slides. Please visit unicornwriting.com for the full version without watermarks.



First Week of School Bingo

What should go on a First Week of School Bingo Card? What are the classic experiences of a first week of school? Locker problems? Food fiascos? A syllabus in every class? Share some of your own ideas for what you think should go on the bingo card. Explain why you think they should be included, what you think about them, and share if any of them have happened to you or someone you know.



Narrative option: tell the story of someone who scores a bingo on the first day of the first week of school.



SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE

Kids These Days

Pretend that you are old enough to be a great grandparent. Complain about kids these days. What really bothers you about today's youth?



Narrative option: tell the story of someone who complains about how kids are these days.

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CCRA.W.1, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.3,
CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.5, CCRA.W.6,
CCRA.W.10



Air Sharks

Imagine a world where sharks live in the woods and swim in the air and somehow you find yourself lost in the woods ...

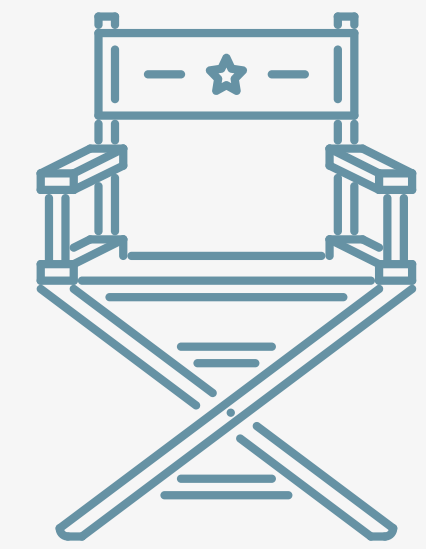
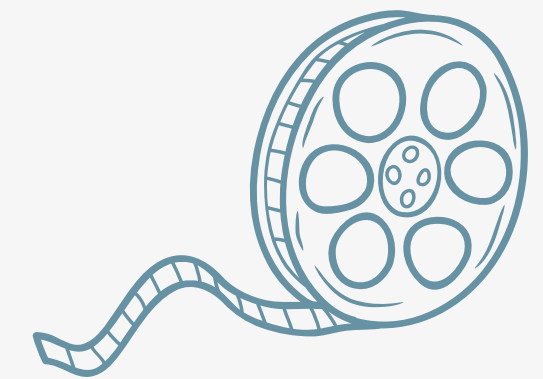
Tell this story



"You know the greatest films of all time were never made."

— Taylor Swift

Imagine she is right about this, and the greatest films never actually got made. Describe one of these films. What genre is it? An epic adventure, heartwarming drama, mind-bending sci-fi, or a mesmerizing fantasy? Who stars in it? What's the plot? What songs are on the soundtrack? What are the memorable scenes? Can you help bring to life one of these unmade masterpieces? Share what you imagine.



Narrative option: tell the story of a film that was never made.



Planet for Sale

Humanity has decided it's time to move to a new planet, but first it needs to sell Earth. You have been chosen to take on the important task of marketing Earth to potential buyers. Take a moment to think this through. How would you advertise earth? What features would you highlight? What about any potential negative aspects? How would you carefully address those issues? What would the price tag be? What details will you include? Will you highlight all its potential? Note that it's a fixer upper? Highlight the potential for solving centuries-old mysteries or the exploration of ancient ruins or ...? Craft an advertisement of earth using vivid details to help entice potential buyers.

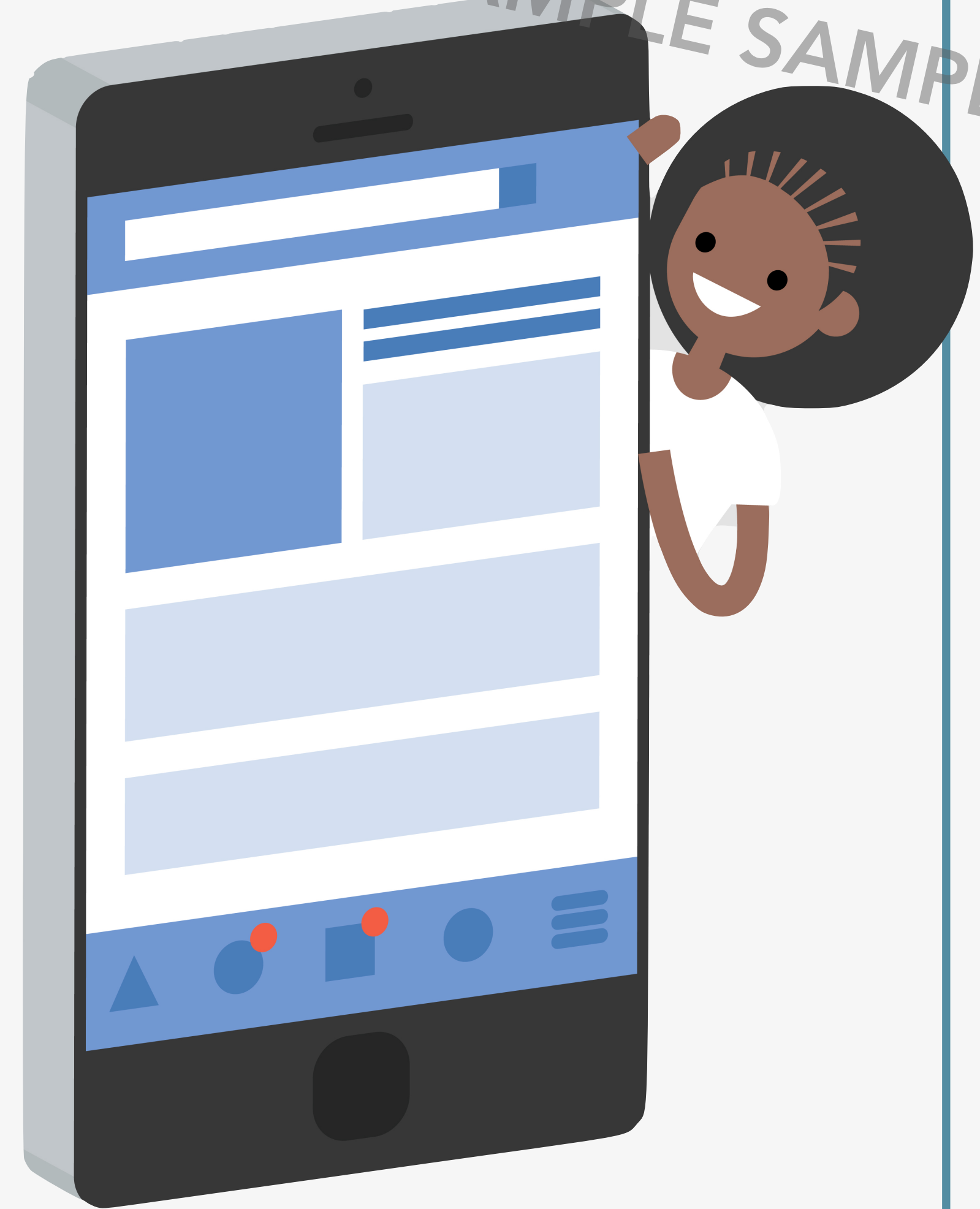


Narrative option: tell the story of selling the planet.



Future Profile Page

Make a social media profile page for yourself ten years in the future. How do you imagine yourself ten years from now? What do you think will be on your page? What accomplishments, interests, and experiences will it show? Explain what you included, from profile pictures to status updates, and explain the thinking behind your choices. Where do you think your life might take you in ten years?



Narrative option: tell the story of a significant addition to your future profile page.

FILE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE



Fridge Disaster

“I’ve seen a few fridge related disasters in my life, but this was the fridge disaster to end all fridge disasters.”

Tell this story



SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE

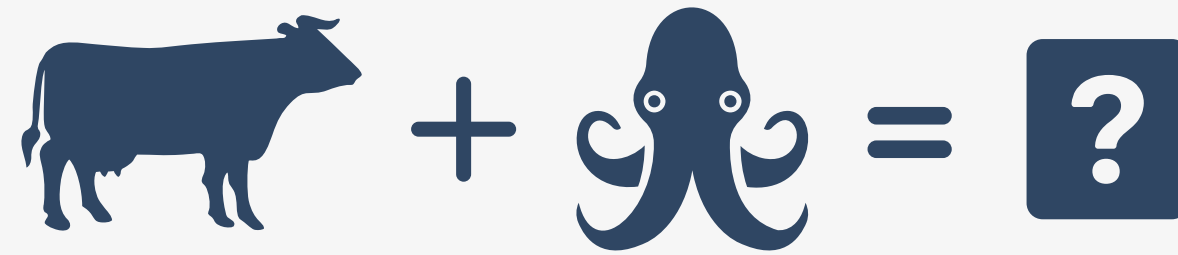
What Would You Do with Your Last Hour of Internet?

In one hour (through a strange set of circumstances ... maybe aliens?) the internet is shutting down forever. You — and the rest of the world — get one last hour to spend online before it's wiped out forever. What would you do with your hour? Indulge in some social media nostalgia? Watch one last episode of a favorite show? Download music? Explore Wikipedia? Download Wikipedia? How do you think people you know will spend their last hour? What do you think how you spend your last hour on the internet says about you? How would you feel about the internet being gone?

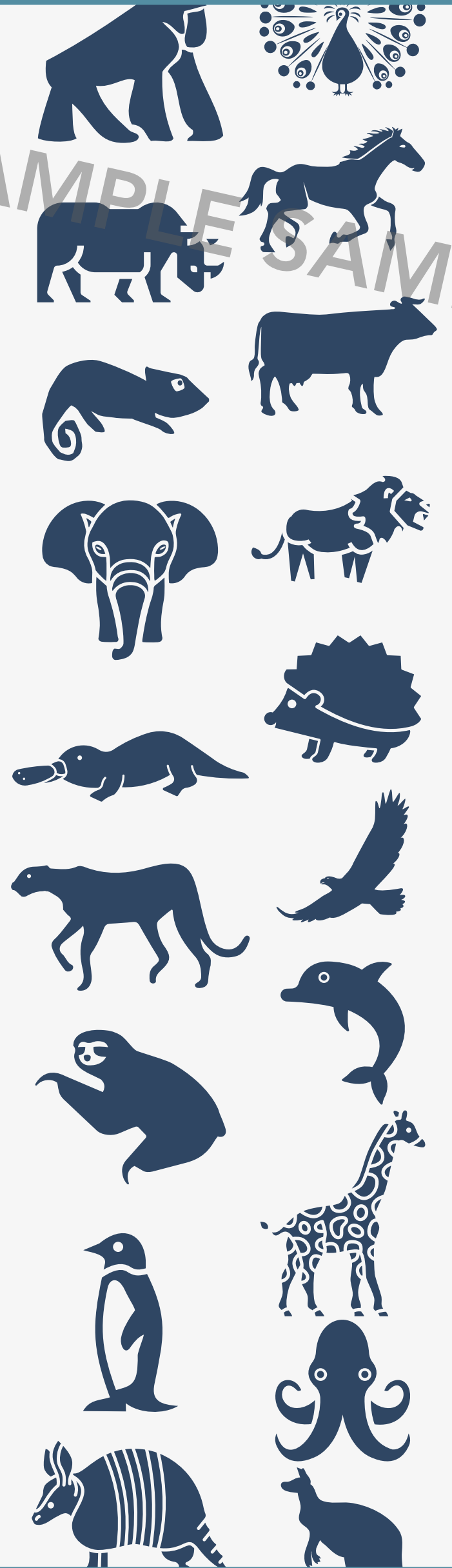


Narrative option: tell the story of the last hour of the internet ... and the days and weeks after the internet is gone.

Hybrid Animal



What two animals when combined into one hybrid animal make the best or most interesting combination? Share your thinking about the different possibilities, and then describe the combination you choose. Make sure you give plenty of reasons to explain your choice. Imagine if scientists could actually create your hybrid animal. What do you think the future might look like with these animals in it? How would the world be different?



Narrative option: tell the story of this hybrid animal.



Pocket-sized dragon

Tell the story of what happens when a young child catches a tiny dragon, small enough to fit in their pocket and carry to school. You could write about how the young child discovers the tiny dragon and how they catch it. You could share the challenges the child has with keeping the small dragon hidden while carrying it to school. How does the tiny dragon react to being captured and carried around? Does it have any unique abilities or characteristics? Does it breathe tiny balls of fire? How does that go? What adventures — or misadventures — happen to the child and the pocket-sized dragon?

