

Warm up

Remember the rules of writing practice:

1. Keep your hand moving.
2. Lose control. (Don't worry if it's correct, polite, appropriate. Just let it rip.)
3. Be specific. (Not car, but Cadillac. Not fruit, but apple. Not bird, but wren.)
4. Don't think.
5. Don't worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar.
6. You are free to write the worst junk ever.
7. Go for the jugular. (If something scary comes up, go for it. That's where the energy is.)

Now, spend 15 minutes writing about whatever you want.

Developing characters out of real people

In the film, 'The Wonder Boys' Michael Douglas' character is a writer. There are a couple of scenes where he and his editor play a game in which they point out people they see in bars, on the street -- anywhere -- and fire off a list of characteristics about the person (made up, of course). They say what their life is like and what will happen to them. It's a great way to create characters or generate ideas for stories.

Now give it a try yourself. Read the story on page 2. Choose one of the people mentioned and write for 10 minutes about them, and what happens next in their life.

What are you working on?

Are you working on a short story, screenplay or novel? Perhaps a collection of poetry? Spend 30 minutes working on this.

If you haven't got anything that you're working on, try this:

Write a story incorporating these words: little boy, torn page, market, cart
([#185](http://www.creativewritingprompt.com))

Or: develop what you wrote in any of the previous exercises we've done today.

Problem solving

Do you have a problem with a piece you are working on? Not sure where to go with it or how to cross a particular hurdle? Talk about it with the group -- let's work on it together.

Writing deadlines

Let's agree to finish something. Make a note of what you are working on at the moment and put a deadline beside it. Then tell the group what those deadlines are.

Writing schedule

When are you making time to write, this week? Make a schedule, take time out, go to a cafe and write.

OMG - win gives 30,000 reasons to LOL

The Australian, April 23, 2007

IT'S a pursuit only for the fleet of thumb with a ruthless dedication to punctuation. And while competitive text-messaging may not have gained Olympic status, the hundreds of mostly teenagers who took part in the US championships in New York over the weekend could think of little but the \$US25,000 (\$29,900) prizemoney.



Champion: Morgan Pozgar, 13, plans to spend her \$30,000 prize money entering more competitions and shopping

About 250 challengers battled it out for a chance to take on the reigning West Coast champion, 21-year-old Eli Tirosh, for the title of US Texting Champion.

Contestants had to stand with their hands behind their backs until a bell sounded and a message appeared on an overhead screen. The winner was judged on whoever's message - checked for exact punctuation - reached the judges first.

The text tests ranged from "Faster than a speeding bullet ..." and "What we do in life echoes in eternity" to the less poetic but urgent "OMG, nd 2 talk asap," which (for those over 30) means "Oh my God, need to talk as soon as possible."

The 250 competitors were quickly whittled down to eight semi-finalists, one of whom, Anne Finn, 24, of Allegany, New York, said the pressure became too much.

"It was so nerve-racking. My hands started to shake. I couldn't get my apostrophe," she said.

In the end, 13-year-old Morgan Pozgar faced off against Michael "Cheeser" Nguyen in the east coast final, with Pozgar slipping past her challenger to face west coast champion Tirosh, a law student from Los Angeles.

"I just wasn't fast enough," said Nguyen, 23, an engineer from Pennsylvania.

Asked how it felt to take second place, he was clearly disappointed: "I just got beaten by a teenage girl, but you know."

Pozgar said she trained by sending on average 8000 text messages a month to her friends - an astonishing rate of one every 5 1/2 minutes. She pays \$US10 (\$12) a month for an unlimited text package on her mobile phone.

In a tense championship final, Tirosh seemed to have won after putting down her phone first, only for judges to rule she had made an \$18,000-dollar typo in the lyrics to the Mary Poppins song Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Pozgar, who wants to work in fashion, had no hesitation about how to spend her prize money - \$US10,000 for the east coast championship and \$US15,000 for the national award. She was going to hit the stores in New York City.