



Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



Borrowed Lines

by Kyle Hunt

DURATION: 1.5 hours

GRADE LEVEL: High School

WRITING LEVEL: Developing and experienced writers

FOCUS: creative process; revision

EXAMPLE TEXT
A Course in Miracles
by Meg Fritag

Check in | 15 minutes

Pick any word at random and write it down. Come up with a six-word story using your word as the title. This means that your story could be “about” the word you chose or just inspired by it. Think of the way stories and poems are titled: They aren’t always strictly about the title, but it does encapsulate something about the story.

Resource Building | 15 minutes

EXERCISE | Write one short sentence or phrase using each of these words: **lemons, money, grass, fire, skinny** and **bed**.

- Consider the music of your sentences more than whether or not they make sense.
- Example: For the word “animal: through the body like glass, instincts fell

Close Reading | 20 minutes

A Course In Miracles by [Meg Freitag](#)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What’s happening in this poem?
- Why are the situations so specific?
- What might the ghosts represent?
- How are the ghosts like skinny shelter cats? Why do they follow you around?
- Why should the ghosts stay?
- How are the fires connected to the ghosts?

Writing Prompt | 30 minutes

PART 1: SEE WORKSHEET INCLUDED

Fill in the blanks to create a poem using the lines from Meg Freitag’s poem. The poem does not have to make perfect sense; again, consider the music of your lines more than whether they make sense.

Use your six sentences from the opening exercise. What happens when you simply plug some of those lines into the blank spaces? Odds are, the poem will not make sense -- and that’s okay.



Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



PART 2

Once you have filled in all the blanks, cross out the Meg Freitag lines, leaving only your lines. Now, once again, **fill in those blanks with more of your original lines.**

When you are finished, you likely will not have a completed poem. Much of it will not make sense. **Here, revise your poem** in any way you see fit (cut lines or words; add more lines or words, etc.).

When you feel your poem is complete, **give it a title.**

Share Out | 15 minutes



Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



A Course In Miracles by Meg Freitag

Forgive yourself the fire you set in your trash can
And the lemons you stole from the tree in the churchyard.
Forgive yourself what money you spent
On drugs. Forgive yourself the days that soured
Before you had a chance to open them up.
Forgive yourself the melon liqueur
You poured hastily into the grass on the side
Of the highway, and the animal you left for dead.
Forgive yourself the ages of swelling, the ages
Of eating only what's meant to make you thirsty.
Forgive yourself the fires you didn't even try
To put out in time. Forgive yourself the ghosts
That follow you around like skinny shelter cats,
And the sugar water you feed them
And the little velvet box you place them in
Before you get into bed each night so that they'll stay.

[From *Edith: Poems by Meg Freitag* \(BOAAT Book Prize, 2016\)](#)



Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



WORKSHEET | *First, fill in the blanks to create a poem using the lines from Meg Freitag's poem. Use your 6 sentences from the opening exercise or create new ones. Next, cross out Meg's lines and replace them with more of your own lines. Then, revise your poem, and give it a title.*

And the lemons you stole from the tree in the churchyard.

On drugs. Forgive yourself the days that soured

Forgive yourself the melon liqueur

Of the highway, and the animal you left for dead.

Of eating only what's meant to make you thirsty.

To put out in time. Forgive yourself the ghosts

And the sugar water you feed them

Before you get into bed each night so that they'll stay.
