

Activity

GENERATION LOCKDOWN

Share your story on life in lockdown and you may like to enter the Generation Lockdown writing competition for a chance to become a published author!

What should I do?

Find out about the competition

Generation Lockdown is an exciting writing competition that's just been launched for ages 7-17. Take a look at the website here to find out all the details: <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/>.

You have until midnight on Friday 17th July 2020 to write about life in lockdown during the coronavirus crisis, and submit your work to be judged by a published author. You can write about a personal experience, craft a poem or a creative story – the choice is yours!

You don't *have* to enter the competition but, if you do, your entry must not go over 700 words. To give yourself a rough idea of how much writing you should be aiming for in your competition entry piece, try writing 100 words first. Allow yourself to ramble about your initial thoughts and feelings during lockdown. Don't worry at this point if some of what you scribble is nonsense or not in full sentences; this exercise will get you thinking and warm up your ideas. Look at how much space you have taken up on the page and think about what x7 more might look like. If you'd prefer to word-process your work straight away instead of writing it by hand, do: you can then use an electronic word count function to do the counting for you. (Save your work regularly!)

In order to submit your entry, you will need to copy and paste your writing into the online form so it will need to be typed out even if your drafts are handwritten. You don't have to do this all by yourself though – as long as the writing itself is your own work, you might prefer to persuade a fast typist in your family to copy it out for you (offer to do some housework or make them a cuppa, or something!)

Grow your idea(s)

The brief is quite broad and so you will need to start with a clear idea of *what* you will write about. Once you have settled on an aspect of lockdown that interests you, and found something worth saying, you should then consider *how* to say it - what type of writing you'd prefer to try to best communicate your ideas...

1. What to write about

Professor Joe Moran offers some great suggestions on how to get inspired by taking the time to simply *notice* what's around you: <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/2020/05/10/inspiration-comes-from-opening-your-eyes/>.

Sophie Minchell also has tips on finding ideas for your writing: <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/2020/05/06/sophie-minchell/>

You might also like to think about and make some notes on...

...change and contrast:

- What is the same as and what is different from before: daily routines; what you eat; when and where and how you play; what you dream of...?
- The effect the changing light throughout the day has on something, or the varying noise levels, or busyness in a room
- What do you like and dislike about lockdown?
- Your inside thoughts and feelings versus your outside actions (what others see of you)
- What experiences are you having that everyone shares and what ones are unique to you and your family?

...points of view. Can you come at something from a different angle?

- Follow one thing throughout a day in lockdown – your dog, a drinks mug, the sofa, your front door/letterbox...
- Could you write about two different people's opinions on something or imagine how they might see an object or action differently from different positions – out at work while you're homebound? areas of the same house, or places in the same room? over a face mask and once it's been taken off?
- Describe lockdown as though it's something that's happened in the recent past; a few years ago; many, many years long, long ago? Or as though it's yet to happen and you're looking into the future?

- Imagine somebody else's experience of lockdown – a homeless woman, an elderly man living alone, your younger/older brother or sister, the family cat, birds in the garden or public parks; what difference would it make to a caged hamster who is still behind bars, same as always?

2. How to write about it

Think about whether you'd like to capture a single moment in time or prefer to explore a situation over hours and days and/or weeks. This may lead you to writing in a particular form: narratives 'work' because something in a story changes and things happen; this is what gives us the plot. Poems or short descriptive passages, though, could just focus on one instance in time.

Before you begin to write, decide what form you will be writing. The Generation Lockdown suggestions include

- a recount
- a poem
- a story

but you are free to choose and submit writing in other forms too!

Mess about with genre and text type

What would the same content look, sound and feel like to the reader if you chose vocabulary, grammar and sentences, ways of structuring and organising ideas that are typical of...

- **Stories, or parts of a longer story, e.g.**
 - science fiction stories
 - magic and fantasy narratives
 - action and adventure books
 - gritty 'real life' stories
 - thrillers and chillers
 - a fairytale
 - mystery and suspense writing...?
- **Non-fiction texts, e.g.**
 - a newspaper report
 - a featured magazine article
 - recipes
 - DIY instructions
 - a written advertisement for a magazine
 - a diary entry, or series of entries
 - a letter to a friend (and perhaps their reply)
 - a letter to a politician
 - a series of emails
 - information text for a non-fiction book
 - an encyclopaedia entry...?
- **Playscripts?**
- **Poems, e.g.**
 - haiku or sequence of haikus
 - a narrative poem
 - limericks
 - a sonnet (Shakespearean, Spenserian, Petrarchan/Italian?!)
 - poems written to be performed (by one voice or many voices?)
 - poems in blank verse (regular or irregular stanzas?)
 - kennings
 - a poem that uses shape to add meaning...?

Each of these forms of writing will have different purposes and you must be clear on what you hope to achieve. It can help if you make a note of this before you begin your first draft. What do you want your reader to think? How do you want your reader to feel? Try summing this up in three words and then write these at the top of your page as a constant reminder. You can check at each writing stage to make sure you've stayed true to your aims.

Draft your writing

A number of the other Generation Lockdown Top Tips from Teachers offer advice and encouragement on how to draft your piece of writing. Read these on the competition website (under the 'Inspiration' tab's drop-down menu): <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/top-tips-teachers/>.

You can watch some of the author videos (under the same drop-down menu) to get even more suggestions:
<https://generationlockdown.co.uk/video-inspiration/>

Produce your final version

Remember, if you wish to submit your writing to the competition, it will need to be typed. You can enter your work here: <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/enter/>.

The site is very clear that 'If you are under 16 years old, you should enter with permission of a parent/guardian'. Make sure you have it!

GOOD LUCK!

Share your work

How might you also share your work with your friends and your teacher(s)? Can you film yourself reading your writing, or take photographs, then email or upload to a shared area? Could you create a copy of your work to post?

You can tweet what you've been up to using the Twitter handle @BabcockLDPEng and the hashtag #BabcockEnglishAtHome. The Generation Lockdown Writes' Twitter handle is @lockdownwrites so don't forget to tag them too!

IMPORTANT: If you decide to share your finished work publicly, just remember everything you have been taught about staying safe online, and do check with the person who looks after you before posting anything.

Things that could help me

Explore the competition website fully to get as much information to help you as you can. The Top Teacher Tips are useful to read, e.g. Zoe Enser's Three tips that could make all the difference: <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/2020/05/09/three-tips-that-could-make-all-the-difference/>.

You can find a good online dictionary at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>.

Change it up! ...Go further!

- A) Find out more about the judge who will be reading your work: <https://generationlockdown.co.uk/judges/>. Discover what they have written and the sorts of books they enjoy.

Notes for parents and teachers

If your child would like to enter the competition, check you are happy for some of their details to be shared. Under 16s will need your permission to submit work.

Get them to talk through their ideas with you before they begin as this should help them become clearer on what they're hoping to achieve. The plot of a story in particular will need to be very carefully thought through and planned in order to fit within the word count and still feel satisfying to the reader. When they are editing and improving, ask your child to keep checking back to make sure their writing is fulfilling its aims.