

### *The Journal Prompts*

As noted previously, your assignment is to respond to the journal prompts below as you read Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*. When you are finished, you should have 20 entries (or more, if you choose). You do not have to respond to every journal prompt. Many are optional; some, however, are required. Please read through the prompts before you begin.

**“Beginner’s Mind, Pen and Paper” through “Trouble with the Editor”**  
**Choose either A or B. (Each constitutes five journal entries.)**

- A. For at least five days, write nonstop for at least ten minutes per day.
- B. Each day for five days, write nonstop for at least ten minutes with different “tools” or combinations of “tools.” (So, what was it like? Did your writing change somehow? What worked best for you?)

**“A List of Topics for Writing Practice”**  
**Choose either C or D. (Each constitutes three journal entries.)**

- C. Spend at least ten minutes per day for the next three days writing nonstop about three of the topics on Goldberg’s list.
- D. Make your own list of writing topics. Spend at least ten minutes per day for the next three days writing nonstop about three of the topics on your list.

**“Elkton, Minnesota” through “Writing Is Not”**  
**Choose either E or F.**

- E. Spend at least ten minutes writing nonstop in response to the question that Goldberg asks of students: “Where do you come from, who are you, what makes you?” (27).
- F. Spend at least ten minutes writing nonstop in response to the beginning: “Writing is not....”

**“Obsessions” through “Don’t Use Writing to Get Love”**  
**Choose either G or H.**

- G. For at least ten minutes, write nonstop about a moment in time. (It doesn’t have to be an important, momentous moment.) Use as much specific detail as you can.
- H. Spend at least ten minutes writing nonstop in response to the beginning: “Writing is....”

**“Writers Have Good Figures” and “Listening”**

**Choose either I or J.**

- I. Pick up one of your favorite books, and read, reread, and read aloud a passage that particularly strikes you. Write about it—how it makes you feel, why it makes your “body sing,” what you think of it as a piece of writing – anything, but just write for (you guessed it) at least ten minutes.
- J. Do a “recall” as described by Goldberg on page 53 in response to a section of one of your favorite books.

**“What Are Your Deepest Dreams” through “The Ordinary and Extraordinary”**

**Write in response to two of the following prompts. Oh, and be sure to give yourself at least ten minutes of nonstop writing for each choice.**

- K. Respond to the question that Goldberg asks her class: “Where do you want to go with writing?”
- L. Do the syntax exercise described in the chapter titled “Syntax.” (It’s fun!)
- M. Write in order to show (rather than tell) a strong emotion, such as love, hate, anger, relief, despair, joy.
- N. *With intense specificity*, describe an object or event.

**“Talk Is” through “Write Anyplace”**

**Write in response to two of the following prompts. Don’t forget the at-least-ten-minutes rule!**

- O. Write a story that you like to tell.
- P. Tell who you really are. (See “One Plus One Equals a Mercedes-Benz.”)
- Q. Write a series of questions and answer them. (See “Make Statements and Answer Questions.”)
- R. Do the exercise described in “The Action of a Sentence.”
- S. Try journaling in a public place.
- T. Write about some very ordinary object, and remember, “Writing is the act of discovery” (99).

**“Go Further” through “Writing Marathons”**

**Respond to any two of the prompts below.**

- U. It’s confession time. Did you stop a journal – even though you were really getting somewhere—simply because ten minutes were up? Well, now is your chance to add more: “Go further than you think you can” (104).
- V. Write in response to the beginning: “I write because....”
- W. Meet a friend. Choose a topic. Write, read aloud to each other, and write some more. Have fun!
- X. Say to three people, “Give me a topic, and I’ll write about it.” (Keep what you write this time.)
- Y. Write as many haiku as you can in ten minutes.

Z. Write about a meal you love.

AA. Write to another lonely soul.

BB. “Make a list of all the expressions your family uses and incorporate them into your writing” (144).

CC. Get together with friends and do the story circle described in “A Story Circle.” Later, write your stories down.

**“Claim Your Writing” Through “Epilogue”**

**Complete both exercises below. (Exercise EE constitutes two journal entries.)**

DD. Reread your journal. Next, circle (or highlight) whole sections as described in “Rereading and Rewriting.” Then type them up.

EE. Complete another timed writing on a topic you’ve already written about. Pick out the best parts of each, and then put them together.