

What Makes You Angry Prompts

Choose one of the following prompts and write at least one page on it. As an alternative, choose two of the prompts and write at least ½ page on each.

Make a list of things that have angered you in the past week or month. Pick one item from your list and freewrite about it, telling in a rush of words how you felt and why you felt that way. Can you fashion this into a more considered essay or poem?

Make a list of chronic anger sparkers. Pet peeves, if you will. When you finish your list, choose one and freewrite about it. Include examples of when this has occurred and how you reacted. Is there a way to resolve this problem? Write about some possibilities.

Review the list from the previous prompt and look for patterns. Why types of things tend to make you angry? People who are chronically late? Machines that break down? Kids with attitudes? Parents with attitudes? Choose one and write about it. Explore reasons behind the pattern. Use examples.

Write about your relationship with anger. Are you an angry person? Do you hold your anger in or let it out? Do you let it out in what could be considered appropriate ways? Do you express anger at the true sources, or do you find other people and things at which to vent?

Psychologists tell us that beneath anger lies fear. Think about how this theory applies to you or, if you're writing a story, to one of your characters. In a freewrite, try to dig beneath the anger and find what fears might be causing the anger.

Place anger at the center of a scene between two characters, but keep it below the surface. Allow the tension to build slowly. You can end with a blowup, in which the anger finally boils over, or you can resolve the anger, allowing the emotion to dissipate.

Write a monologue in which a character vents his rage. As the monologue develops, add clues that suggest the character is more fearful than angry, or is angry as a result of fear.

Write a monologue in which a character vents her rage, but this time vary the tone of the character's voice. Instead of one long howl, soften the voice, or add a touch of humor. Perhaps the entire monologue can be delivered quietly, the rage burbling just below the surface.

Write a scene, based on a real experience in your life, in which two characters are angry with each other. Do not base the viewpoint character on yourself. Instead, give the viewpoint to the person with whom you argued.

Begin a story with a character in the middle of a rage. The character's anger seems completely inappropriate to its source. For example, a character can be cursing in great anger about a minor inconvenience or disappointment—the local baseball team lost an

unimportant game, the cookie jar is empty. As readers watch this character explain—and bellow—his frustration at the characters around him, it becomes clear that the character is angry about something else, which you could name or not.

Write about a social injustice, some issue that makes your blood boil. Begin with an essay, titled “On [issue of social injustice],” and try to get your ideas on the page in an expository way. Then try to move to a less direct approach—fiction or a poem or a script.

Write about something that happened to you that made you very angry at the time but now seems funny. Recall the event in as much detail as possible, writing it down exactly as it happened. Then try to fictionalize the event, adding a few details, sharpening the situation, exploring the dramatic possibilities. Don’t feel tied to the story as it happened.