

# Week 7: Writing prompts: Persuade and the attic

## Vermont attic

By BRIANA PATTEN  
Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Grade 9

Up in an attic tucked away there was an old crate that we found one day. It was plastered with cobwebs and dust filled the air. We opened the box and handled with care. It seemed to be old, but we couldn't find a date. Then we discovered a book that said 1908! I couldn't believe the picture I saw there was Great-Grandma Patten sitting by my napping grandpa. We searched even further and what we found next was a little toy horse carved with an axe. Behind the horse I was astounded to see a furry little mouse looking up at me. A bottle of maple syrup some cow figurines a tiny toy farmer with overall jeans. A large woolen blanket covered in static and that's what we found in the old Vermont attic.

## Memory box

By VERONICA KOVACS  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

She gave him her heart  
He gave her this  
A ring to remember  
Their summer of bliss  
Then the leaves changed colors  
And thus they had to part  
So she put her ring in a box  
With her broken heart  
The weather got cold  
They made angels in the snow  
And this new boy made her forget  
That summer long ago  
But the snow turned to puddles  
And he wrote her goodbye  
So he could mail it  
And not see her cry  
So she put the letter with her ring  
In the box of memories  
And her heart began to mend  
With the budding of the trees  
He gave her a rose  
In the middle of spring  
And she wondered  
What heartache this boy would bring  
And so summer came  
And he found someone new  
And she put the rose in the box  
As her heart turned blue  
She met him in fall  
He proposed in spring  
She planned the wedding  
He bought her a ring  
Years later the girl  
Got a letter that said  
That her hero husband  
Tragically lies dead  
The war ended  
She had a child  
She won't know her father  
Though she has his smile  
The pictures and rings  
The letters and notes  
She put in her box  
Along with her hopes  
Her daughter grew up  
Had kids of her own  
And on the day of the funeral  
She returns home  
and looks though the attic  
With hope to find  
Something to remember her  
To keep her in mind  
She finds a small box  
Full of those things  
Tear stained notes  
A rose, some rings  
And pictures of her father  
She never met  
She kept this box to remember  
What her mother tried to forget.



ANGELA NYE, Essex Junction High School

## Little brass box

By GREG GOEDEWAAGEN  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Sun shines through the crudely spaced walls, casting highlights of gold on a dust carpeted floor. And while the wind weeps its weary call, there's a little brass box that hears no one, sees no one, for one day and a few more, and back again. And for years on end it sits there alone, minding its own business, nobody's, only its own. It sits there in an old Vermont attic, showing nothing, no bravery, no fear, little brass box what are you hiding? Show me, I'm right here.

## Into the dark

By NOELLEN NEISNER  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

It was musty up there  
In the attic  
Where the old possessions were kept  
Out of sunlight  
Until the day the curious step out of the light  
And into the dark.

## The pink dress

By CAITLIN BERNARD  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Outside, the rain is falling gently. The clouds have taken over the sky, and the smell of lightning is in the air. Her feet find themselves walking up the attic stairs. She wants to see the storm from the little window in her attic. The dusty brown walls and creaky stairs bring her back to a time when she was very small. Her bright blue eyes blazed with curiosity whenever her mother let her play in the attic. All of her memories, wonderful and some not so wonderful flood back through her and, yes, she can almost see them again.

She remembers the day when her mother bought her the most beautiful pink dress.

It was April and her 8-year-old smile was missing some teeth. This was the dress she wanted since the day she saw it in the shop window. "An early Easter present," her mother said as she handed her daughter a pink dress with ribbons. The girl screamed with excitement and danced around and around until she became dizzy. She immediately slipped on her dress and ran to the attic to play with her toys. Thunder boomed and crashed and lightning lit up the sky. The little girl watched out the window with intent curiosity. The lightning would flash and she would see her reflection in the glass; her pink dress was glowing with her smile.

She floats out of her memory with light in her eyes. She is looking out of her attic window at a familiar thunderstorm. By her feet is an open wood chest, and in her hands is a tattered bright pink dress. She holds it close to her as she watches the rain fall.

## ORANGE ON THE TREES

## Why else would I do it?

By KACIE COLLINS Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

After a long day of school, the bus seemed to inch its way toward the bus stop, taking a lot longer than a 50-mile-an-hour speed limit should have allowed. I meander towards an empty house, open the door handle, and drop my bags carelessly to the floor surely crushing a few important papers. To the sink I go beginning the interminable task of scrubbing and rinsing the debris off last night's dinner dishes. When my hands are right and pruned, I turn the handle reducing the flow of water to a few spare drops hanging carelessly from the faucet. A few swipes with a towel to dry the dishes, and then I put them with their twins on the shelves. I make sure the sink is tidy and dry and move into the living room. With the blankets all folded, the pillows in place, and the cushions straightened I sit down and begin solving endless equations for math. After what seems like mere minutes I hear the crunching and churning of gravel under turning tires and the engine of a car dying. The car door slams setting off the alarm of dog barks. My mom walks into the room and says, "O.K. so what do you want this time?"

"Hey mom, my day at school was great! Thanks for asking," is my facetious reply.

My mom laughs and counters, "No really, what do you want?"

"Can't a girl clean up a little without having ulterior motives?"

"No."

"Oh, well, now that you mention it," I began, "Can I go to the movies Saturday night?"

## Persuasion

By SEAN BJORNSSON  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Hey man, could you do this for me?  
I would love you forever.  
You know you want to.  
C'mon, I can't do it, I'm totally swamped.  
Please? It would be great if you could.  
You don't want to?  
Well, that's a shame.  
I was trying to be nice about it,  
But he said you have to.  
What do you mean you don't believe me?  
He's right there, why don't you go ask him?  
On second thought, you don't need to do that.  
How 'bout I'll do that for you for the next week,  
If you do this for me now.  
Why would I do that for you?  
Why, it's out of the bottom of my heart,  
For such a good friend as you.  
You're a pal.  
I'm glad you see it my way.  
Hey you.  
Yes you.  
If I pay you five bucks,  
Would you do this for me for the next week?  
Thanks, Bud.

## Strength is for the lonely: A lesson in persuasion

By MOLLY PEKARIK  
Mount Mansfield Union High School, Grade 9

Tilt your head a little more  
Look through the corner of your eyes  
Smile more unsurely than is necessary  
Above all be polite  
Make yourself smaller, the bench is long  
Clasp your hands nervously  
Flip your hair  
Laugh at all his jokes  
Order another glass of water  
Part your lips slightly  
Plead with your eyes  
Ask to share your dessert  
Wipe the whipped cream off his face  
Let him help you out the door  
Talk before you get in the car  
Brush his arm gently  
And grin off-center  
Do not protest when he sweeps you  
Into a long embrace  
Kiss him back  
Hold it a minute longer than you want to  
Cast your eyes down and pull your coat tighter.  
Yes, there will be another date.

## Persuaded by me!

By CHLOE DICKINSON  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

First I ask nicely, that's always the key  
Smile politely; they'll like what they see.

I'll carefully craft the question and wait,  
To see if they've followed my bait.

But if they don't my honesty ensues  
And they learn all my reasons and views.

My blunt opinion comes out of it all  
And they know that the conversation won't be resolved.

Until they consider how great life would be

To be one more person persuaded by me!

## Everyday persuasions

By HENRY FARRAND  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Persuasions of the day  
Affect us in every way  
Thoughts you kept to yourself  
But then changed by someone else  
Ideas and memories held once dear  
Changed by sound for slightest ear  
Persuasion to me  
Is like looking through an eye you cannot see  
Reading people  
Knowing that they may be feeble  
Using your mind  
To break and bind  
Finding what makes them tick  
Making so that you can use it  
Making them do what you say  
If it were to go or simple to stay  
You see this art of persuasion  
In everyday relations  
Buy one, get one free!  
What does this mean to me?  
Buying one, getting more  
Let's spend more money at the store  
This illusion  
I come to a conclusion  
Is an ability  
That we use willingly  
Everyone uses it a bit  
No sense in denying it  
Making my brother get me food,  
Because I'm not in the mood  
I'd much rather sit,  
And be lazy for a bit.  
Persuasion, it's how you use it!

## YWP Special Projects

**SYMPHONY POEMS.** The Vermont Symphony Orchestra is seeking poems written in response to "The Skater's Waltz" by Emil Waldteufel. (Download or listen by going to [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org); click on PUBLISH and Special Projects.) Selected poems will be read at the Holiday Pops concerts in Barre, Burlington and Rutland on Dec. 7, 8 and 9 respectively. Only students in the general area of these communities are eligible. The poems should be about skating and, if possible, about sleep dreams. **Deadline Oct. 26.**

**WINTER TALES.** The Vermont Stage Company's professional actors give dramatic readings to selected student winter tales. VSC's shows will be in early December. This year additional presentations will be made at First Night in Burlington. The prompt: Tell a story about winter; it can focus on the holidays or the season – the weather, the outdoors, the emotions. **Deadline: Oct. 26.**

For specific details on all the projects and to submit your work for the **Newspaper Series** go to: [www.youngwritersproject.org](http://www.youngwritersproject.org)



YWP is a grassroots nonprofit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing ideas or prompts, special projects and a safe Web site, [www.youngwritersproject.org](http://www.youngwritersproject.org), where students can share their writing, comment on each other's work, participate in group discussions and use the extensive tips and materials in the YWP Writer's Library. YWP is indebted to the generosity of the Vermont Business Roundtable which is funding the YWP's core work for the second year.

