

# Week 7: Writing prompts: Persuade and the attic

## Gifts from the pocket

By Moya Cavanagh  
BROWNS RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
GRADE 8

Ho hum  
The pocket sings,  
Off to wander  
The world.  
Nestled in  
Folds of grace,  
Silken gold  
The pocket  
Waits,  
A sanctuary for  
Little things  
Ribbons  
Gloves  
A piece of string  
The pocket is home  
To every thing.  
Flying with  
Spinning tiers of  
Lace,  
The pocket is  
A special place,  
A wormhole between  
Time,  
Generations slide by  
A magic of sorts,  
This small hidden space,  
A miracle among crinoline stays,  
It hides what it is  
Given  
Always,  
Keeping it safe.  
The dress is folded,  
The pocket is old  
Tucked away,  
In a trunk  
Of marbled wood.  
Yet one day  
Faded light floods in,  
The loyal  
Pocket has not yet given in  
To time's groping  
Demise.  
The scent of moth balls  
Fills the air,  
A gasp of  
Envy,  
"This is it!"  
And over a head,  
The dress is slipped,  
The gown twirls again,  
Into the pocket,  
A hand is dipped,  
Among the skirts,  
Hidden from  
The eye  
The pocket reaches,  
With all it's might.  
A gift for the  
Worthy,  
That seemed about  
Right,  
Into the hand  
Falls a chain  
A locket belonging  
To a woman of fame.  
Hers now,  
This happy girl  
Off to see the world,  
Like the lady before her  
She never met,  
A girl like her  
Long, long before.  
The hand withdraws,  
Into the light,  
The precious object clasped tight  
A shaft of  
Sunlight in the attic  
Falls upon a golden chain,  
A pendant of gold,  
And pearl  
Singing the past  
Of these walls  
Of that cloth  
A present from  
One generation to  
Another,  
An ancestor's gift to the future.  
One-hundred years later,  
Passed all others  
The pocket,  
The keeper,  
The gap between times  
Gives only what  
It wants you  
To find,  
And take.

## ORANGE ON THE TREES



ANGELA NYE, Essex Junction High School

## The attic

By Emily Coon  
MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION  
HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

She breaks the cradle  
for firewood,  
splintering along seams,  
rocking horse dreams  
melting away  
beneath heat's lick.  
She folds up red jumpsuits,  
places bobble hats  
quietly  
inside  
an oaken box  
her father left.  
She turns a key  
swift click  
of oblivion.  
She lifts it to a high shelf  
above the window  
worn leather toes  
stretching up  
as she caresses its lock  
and hinges.  
It sits, stunted  
embryo of memory,  
a seed entombed  
in its white paper  
packet, waiting  
to grow.

## 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 flashed and she saw her reflection in the glass, her pink dress 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.

## My attic

By Izzy Moody  
MONKTON CENTRAL SCHOOL, GRADE 5

My attic is where I go when I need to think. It's a room of inspiration. A cupboard packed full of fresh stories. I like to sit in an old wooden rocking chair in the corner, by the window. I call it my rainy day chair. I sit there and look out the window onto the coloring maple trees. It's like looking onto an artist's palette. I can sit there for hours on end and not write a single word. Writing takes time. You need to observe and think. You need to process your ideas. Other times I write everything that's on my mind and transfer it all onto paper.

Next to the rocking chair, there is a bookshelf. It has rows of books, adventure, fantasy, mystery galore. You can be on the moon with Neil Armstrong. You can sit in Hogwarts with Harry Potter. You can search the Amazon for new species. You can be locked in a cellar with Nancy Drew or walk through the woods wrapped in a Robert Frost poem. When I need to escape, they always help me get away.

On an old dresser on the other side of the bookshelf, is a stack of dusty pictures. Some are in frames, others in envelopes. A few are even inside an old Bible. That Bible is about four-inches thick; it has gold painted on the sides of the pages; the cover is thick and broken at the binding. I can't imagine people hauling it all the way to church and back every Sunday. The black and white photos inside are of families in frilly clothes. They all wear a stern look. Everyone is staring at the camera, standing side by side. My grandmother says that they didn't often take pictures back then, and when they did it was a big deal. Everything was just so.

In a frame on the dust-layered dresser is my grandmother's picture. She is a young woman wearing a long lacy dress, with a big bow holding her dark curls from her eyes. She was holding my dad. Some other photos of when my father grew up are on the dresser as well. Inside the dresser are many nests for many mice. I never open them. Once I did and a horrible smell entered the attic. Grandma said to stay away.

The attic smells musty and old. It smells like the mothballs that hide in every nook and cranny possible. It's so comforting to visit all the good memories of the attic when I'm lonely. I'll never be bored as long as I have the attic. It is a place of my own, a place to think.

## 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

## Persuade me

By Misha Kydd  
MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH  
SCHOOL, GRADE 9

Talk to me.  
Honeyed words, liquid and thick,  
Dripping, coating my mind,  
Making me believe,  
Bending my will with sugar-coated  
Voice.  
Dimly I'm aware that I have feelings,  
Opinions of my own,  
But you talk so sweetly,  
Your ideas seem better,  
Seem right.  
I am afraid to think,  
To reason,  
Since you are so sure,  
So positive,  
That your way is the only way  
And I have no clue  
As to what should be done,  
Should be said.  
How can I think  
When you give me my opinions,  
Ready-made?

## Persuasion, why are you so complicated?

By Celsey Lumbra  
FAIRFIELD CENTER SCHOOL, GRADE 8

Persuasion, why are you so complicated?  
So hard to do if you're a desperate kid.  
Why won't anyone agree with you?  
You know your thing is the right thing to do.

Why do you have to work so hard to persuade and to sway?  
Why won't everyone just see it your way?  
Getting the right expression on your face,  
So hard to get someone to believe and embrace.

I said, "pretty please, with a cherry on top,"  
Anything, just anything, to my knees I will drop.  
Slowly and carefully, I turn to face my mom,  
Trying so hard to stay composed and remain calm.  
"Please mom, just this once?" sweetly I say,  
She just shakes her head implying, No Way, Jose!

## The box

By Mattie Hayes  
BFA-FAIRFAX, GRADE 8

Once when I was cleaning my grandpa's attic, I realized a wooden box was sitting in the corner of the room. I walked over and opened it. Inside was an old Babe Ruth signed baseball, T-shirt and glove. When I looked closer at the box, I realized that it was very old. It had cobwebs and dust all over it. So I decided to go ask my Grandpa if it belonged to him and where it came from.

When I got downstairs and found Grandpa I asked him, "Grandpa, why do you have old signed Babe Ruth stuff in your attic? Where did you get it?"  
"I got it from my grandfather. He went to one of Babe Ruth's first games. Always liked him," he replied as if it was no big deal. "He passed it on to his son, who was my father. And my father passed it on to me. And just maybe, if you clean my attic, that is, I might give it to you."  
"Really?" I said happily, "I'll be done by lunch." With those words I ran upstairs to finish my cleaning.

## 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.

