

2022 Idaho Youth Writing Challenge: In Right Relationship

Idaho middle school/ junior high and high school students are invited to enter the 13th Annual Idaho Youth Writing Challenge: In Right Relationship.

Being in right relationship feels like you have space to grow and learn about yourself and each other without fear of judgment. When you are in right relationship, you can care for each other and have empathy, while sharing power and decision making.

When you are in right relationship, you are able to have open and honest conversations about respecting boundaries and consent with an equal amount of responsibility.

Being in right relationship, creates the conditions for everyone to recognize the healthiest option in a relationship, even if it means having difficult conversations or breaking up.

When we are in right relationship with ourselves, each other, and all living beings, we can create a future where we can thrive together.

Time to write!

Create an original poem or story in **100 words or fewer** exploring what being in right relationship means to you. Use all of your senses. Think about your relationships with others, with the earth, and with all living things.



Getting Started

Once you choose from one of the prompts below on the theme of *In Right Relationship*, think of an image and describe it, or turn what you imagine it's like to be in right relationship into a poem and write it, or settle in and tell its story.

2022 Writing Prompts — In Right Relationship

Care for Each Other: In what ways do you show you care for other people? How do you care for yourself and someone you are in a relationship with?

Authenticity: Write about what it means to you to be your whole self, unapologetically. What does it feel like, look like, taste like, smell like, and sound like when you are being yourself and celebrating your individuality?

Consent: What does consent mean to you? What does it look like to practice setting boundaries in a relationship and the power to choose, in any setting or situation?

Shared Power: What does it look like to reclaim your own power while still honoring others' power in a relationship? How do you share power and decision making in ways that support our collective thriving, such as being vulnerable, kind, or compassionate?

Moving through Conflict: Describe a time you leaned into discomfort to solve a conflict. What was it like to come to a solution that was best for everyone involved, despite disagreement or differing viewpoints?

Writing tips!

To find inspiration, read other poems or stories about being in right relationship in the Appendix. Choose a prompt that's meaningful to you. When it comes to choosing a specific prompt, write about what lights you up the most — focus on what matters to you. Which of the prompts has the most energy for you to write?

Start by writing down the first words that flow through your brain. Keep in mind that for your first draft, you don't have to get it right—you just have to get the words down. Don't be worried about the word limit for the first draft. It's easier to take out words to be below the 100-word limit. We want your original work. Trust your own voice. We're interested in reading what you have to say, not what someone else has already written.

Add specific details and avoid clichés. Increase your awareness about everyday life. Pay attention to the world and conversations happening around you. Drawing from wisdom passed through generations, use all your senses to imagine what it looks like to live in right relationship. Take several minutes to "time travel" to this place or moment. Is this idea something that only exists in your imagination, or have you experienced it in some way? What could you do to fully realize what right relationship could be like? What needs to happen? What was the struggle on this journey? What is it like once you're there? What does it smell, taste, sound, feel, and look like?

Submission Rules and Guidelines

Rules: The work you submit must be your own original work. Writing must be 100 words or less (title does not count) of your original work related to a prompt. You can submit up to three original poems or stories. Write in the language in which you can best express yourself.

Who is eligible? Student authors must be in Idaho middle school/junior high school or high school — public, private, alternative school settings, or youth groups — or be a 12- to 18-year-old home schooled student residing in Idaho.

Writing Selection Committee: All of the submissions will be read by adult and youth writers. Idaho's 2019-2021 Writer in Residence, Malia Collins, will assist in the selection of the final top ten submissions.

Deadline to submit: midnight Monday, February 28

How to Submit Your Work:

- 1) Log on to www.engagingvoices.org and enter your submission online, or
- 2) Mail your writing submission, name, address, cell phone number, school name, grade, and teacher's name to the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, Linen Building, 1402 W. Grove Street, Boise, ID 83702. Only one submission per page.

Questions? For questions, contact Dalton Tieg at dalton@engagingvoices.org at the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence.

Awards

\$250 awarded to each of the top 10 selections for middle school/junior high school and the high school categories.

\$25 awarded to each of the 100 selections for middle school/junior high school and the high school categories.

All authors selected for publication will also receive a book of the selections to be released in April 2022.

All published works will list the author, teacher, and school. A book of the published works will be distributed to Idaho's middle/junior high schools and high schools. Make sure your school is represented!

Students published in this year's books will be invited to share their writing at the *In Right Relationship* virtual or in person reading event in April 2022.

Poetry to Inspire

What You Missed That Day You Were Absent from Fourth Grade

By Brad Aaron Modlin

Mrs. Nelson explained how to stand still and listen to the wind, how to find meaning in pumping gas, how peeling potatoes can be a form of prayer. She took questions on how not to feel lost in the dark

After lunch she distributed worksheets that covered ways to remember your grandfather's voice. Then the class discussed falling asleep without feeling you had forgotten to do something else—something important—and how to believe the house you wake in is your home. This prompted Mrs. Nelson to draw a chalkboard diagram detailing how to chant the Psalms during cigarette breaks, and how not to squirm for sound when your own thoughts are all you hear; also, that you have enough.

The English lesson was that *I am* is a complete sentence.

And just before the afternoon bell, she made the math equation look easy. The one that proves that hundreds of questions, and feeling cold, and all those nights spent looking for whatever it was you lost, and one person add up to something.

From *Everyone at This Party Has Two Names* by Brad Aaron Modlin. Copyright © 2016 by Brad Aaron Modlin. Originally published by Southeast Missouri State University Press. Used with permission of the poet.

This poem was originally read in the *Poetry Unbound* episode "A Poem for What You Learn Alone."

Praise the Rain

By Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate

Praise the rain; the seagull dive
The curl of plant, the raven talk—
Praise the hurt, the house slack
The stand of trees, the dignity—
Praise the dark, the moon cradle
The sky fall, the bear sleep—
Praise the mist, the warrior name
The earth eclipse, the fired leap—
Praise the backwards, upward sky
The baby cry, the spirit food—
Praise canoe, the fish rush
The hole for frog, the upside-down—
Praise the day, the cloud cup
The mind flat, forget it all—

Praise crazy. Praise sad.

Praise the path on which we're led.

Praise the roads on earth and water.

Praise the eater and the eaten.

Praise beginnings; praise the end.

Praise the song and praise the singer.

Praise the rain; it brings more rain.

Praise the rain; it brings more rain.

Joy Harjo, "Praise the Rain" from *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*. Copyright © 2015 by Joy Harjo. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings* (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015)