

Writing With Writers: Jack Prelutsky Poetry

Step 2: Brainstorming

Word Warm-Ups

Just as you would stretch before you go running, you need to warm up before you start writing poetry.

Here are some of my favorite exercises to help you stretch your mind:

1. Word Play

Pick a word, any word, and think of all the words that rhyme with that word. Try first with one-syllable words, and then with words of two or more syllables.

2. Object Observations

Pick an object — a pencil, a brick wall, a clock, a tomato — anything. Then write down everything you notice about that object.

3. Synonym Silliness

Think of an adjective, such as happy, soft, tall, or sleepy. Then write down all the words you can think of that have the same meaning as that adjective. This list will help a lot when you're trying to describe things.

Here are a few tips for you to follow that have always helped me with my writing. I recommend that you try them!

1. Write as often as you can. That's what writers do — they write.
2. Carry a notebook and jot down your ideas immediately.
3. Keep a diary or journal — and try to write at least a little in it every day.
4. Write first about the things closest to you — yourself, or your family, friends, and pets. It's a lot easier than writing about things you know little or nothing about.
5. If you're writing poems, don't worry about trying to make them rhyme. It's much more important to say what you really want to say.
6. Try writing two or three different poems about the same subject. Use different points of view.
7. Look in the mirror and write about the person looking back at you. Write about how that person is feeling at that moment.
8. Take a walk around your neighborhood — and write about the things you see there. Don't forget to take notes in your notebook.

9. Don't expect to get things right the first time. You do sometimes, but it's definitely the exception. Rewriting is an important step.
10. Sometimes, no matter how hard you try to write, nothing comes out. Forget about writing for a while, and go off and do something else. Then try writing again later.