These challenges were designed by YWP writers, interns and staff to inspire YOU to write! The challenges are scheduled each week with a Friday deadline and are sent to schools as part of our publication process. ANYONE from ANYWHERE can respond to these challenges and will be considered for publication in YWP’s anthology and digital magazine, The Voice. We also publish in VT newspapers, on VPR.net and VTDigger.org. See these challenges on the YWP website at youngwritersproject.org/challenges18-19. YWP also has a new writing challenge every day on our site’s home page. More info? Contact Susan Reid: sreid@youngwritersproject.org

1 **General.** Write about anything in any genre. Due anytime.

2 **Nerves.** The first day at school, camp, a new job can be nerve-wracking. Write about a memorable first day experience of your own or make one up, whether funny, mortifying or sad. **Alternate: Education.** What improvements would you like to see at your school this year? Write a persuasive letter to your school officials, making a case for positive changes. **Due Sept. 14**

3 **Photo-1 Sunset.** Your character wanders off to this dock to watch the sunset. Something important has just happened and they need time alone. Tell the story. [YWP Library, photo by Nora Wooten] **Alternate: Afterlife.** Write about people in an unconventional afterlife. What is life like for the dead? **Due Sept. 21**

4 **Hey! Don’t ignore me!** Write from the perspective of a character that you wish you would see more often or more accurately in the media, TV and movies. **Alternate: Portrait.** Write a description of yourself or someone you love. Include as many details on appearance, personality, habits and behavior as you can. **Due Sept. 28**

5 **Greeting.** Write a poem or story that ends with a greeting. What is the backstory? Lead the reader along with you up to the point of the greeting. **Alternate: Almost.** “The scene in front of her was almost perfect. Almost.” Finish the story. **Due Oct. 5**

6 **Transition.** Fall is a time of transition in nature. What if it were for humans as well? Write a poem about someone who undergoes a biological transition every autumn. **Alternate: Photo-2 Guitar.** The man strumming his guitar says to you, “You’re a different soul, aren’t you?” What sets you apart from the crowd? [YWP Photo Library, photo by Holly Margulius; challenge submitted by Rowan Potzler, YWP] **Due Oct. 12**

7 **Winter/18.** Tell a story about a winter experience in short descriptive poetry or prose. The best will be selected for presentation by the Vermont Stage Company at its annual Winter Tales production at FlynnSpace in Burlington in December. **Alternate: Creature.** You’re a terrifying creature — everyone is afraid of you — but you feel completely misunderstood. **Due Oct. 19**

8 **Photo-3 Thinking.** What is this girl thinking? Write her internal dialogue. [YWP Photo Library, illustration by Zoe Maxwell] **Alternate:**

9 **Here.** Write a story or poem starting with the line, “It had been a long time, but now he was here.” **Alternate: Definition.** Pick a word and give it your own personal definition. **Due Nov. 2**

10 **Anticipation.** Write a story leading up to a major event or holiday and end it before it actually happens. Try to leave your readers wondering by playing around with ambiguity and cliffhangers. **Alternate: Photo-4 Friends.** Who are these two? What are their names and how do they know each other? Where are they off to? [YWP Photo Library, illustration by Ada Shookenhuff] **Due Nov. 9**

11 **Cooking.** Delicious meals are universally regarded as labors of love. Tell the story of a recipe from start to finish, and about how the experience affects the people who prepare and eat the meal. **Alternate: Fighting-Words.** Your character is having an argument with someone. They begin hurling insults at each other, but without the use of profanity, slurs or comments about appearance. Tell the story through their dialogue. **Due Nov. 16**

12 **Club.** You have been invited to join a club that you’ve only heard wild rumors about. **Alternate: Royalty.** Write about someone who is the ruler of something very strange or very stupid. **Due Nov. 23**

13 **Photo-5 Child.** Photographer Lewis Hine took this photo in Vermont in 1910. Find out more about America’s child laborers by researching his photos. **Alternate: Synesthesia.** Write about someone who tastes words, sees music and voices, and/or hears colors. **Due Nov. 30**

14 **Trees.** Write about a world in which trees can talk and/or move on their own. **Alternate: Fourth.** Write a piece with a character who’s aware they are fictional and directly communicates to their readers. **Due Dec. 7**

15 **Photo-6 Satire.** Try your hand at satiric comics, like this one from Burlington YWPer Connor Byam. **Alternate: Power.** A higher power decides to grant a superpower to all 7.6 billion people on planet Earth. But if any two people name the same power, it becomes ineffective. What unique power do you choose? **Due Dec. 14**
16 Snow. Vermont winters can be brutal and beautiful at the same time. Using descriptive language, write a story or poem that takes place in the dead of winter. Alternate: Location. Your character is immersed in an unsettling and unfamiliar setting. Describe the environment and the character’s reaction to it in a short scene. Due Dec. 21

17 Kites. There is a new sport that’s growing in popularity: people fly kites that attack each other in the air. Alternate: Babysitting. You’re babysitting two children who have finally gone to bed. You’re drifting off to sleep on the couch when you hear this sound. Listen to the audio clip on youngwritersproject.org/challenges18-19. Due Jan. 11

18 70°. Imagine if 70° Fahrenheit weather — that pleasant, almost perfect temperature — was a person. Alternate: Memory. What is your earliest memory, and how old were you? Are the details hazy, or do you see and feel it clearly? Due Jan. 18

19 Photo-7 Circus. Use this photo, taken at Shelburne Museum, as inspiration to write a story about a circus or carnival touring the country. [YWP Photo Library, photo by Hazel Civalier] Alternate: Persuasion. Use your best persuasive skills to convince your teacher or another adult to do something or believe something. Due Jan. 25

20 Stuck. Write as a person trapped in the form of an animal. Alternate: Luck. Write the story of someone with extraordinarily good luck or excurciatingly bad luck. Show the character in action. Due Feb. 1

21 Decision. The pet store is closing in five minutes and you have to make a choice — which pet to take home, and which ones to leave behind. Alternate: Cover. You’ve been commissioned to illustrate the cover of a new edition of your favorite book from your childhood. Submit the illustration to your YWP blog (and tell us the title of the book). Due Feb. 8

22 Lost. You wake up slowly, your eyes gradually adjusting. Suddenly, you’re on your feet, looking frantically in every direction. You don’t recognize a thing. Alternate: Title. Pick one of your pieces that you think has a perfect title — or rename the piece after giving it some more thought. In a short essay, explain how the title relates to the piece it introduces. [Challenge submitted by Hazel Civalier, YWP] Due Feb. 15

23 Beautiful. Begin or end a poem or story with the phrase, “She was beautiful, but in a different sort of way.” Alternate: Alert. An official phone alert wakes you up from a deep sleep. It says, “We are under attack. Lock your doors and bar your windows.” Hundreds of random numbers are sending, “Let me in.” Due Feb. 22

24 Photo-8 Cat. You adopt a cat from the shelter that you think is pretty ordinary... but when you bring it home and start talking to it absentmindedly, it responds to you — and only you — with the most expressive facial expressions. [YWP Photo Library, photo by Abigail Harkness] Alternate: Alone. What happens at your house when no one is home? Write a whimsical tale. Due March 1

25 Hurricane. Write about a family experiencing a hurricane. What do they say to each other while they’re huddled in the basement? Alternate: Woods. Imagine a talking forest where the trees’ dialogue reflects their characteristics. Due March 8

26 Pal. Write about the relationship between a child and an imaginary friend from the perspective of the child or the friend. Alternate: Twist. Write a story that leads your readers to believe it’s about one thing, but it turns out to be about something else entirely. Due March 15

27 Dye. You finally got up the nerve to dye your hair, but something has gone terribly wrong. You never read the fine print on the bottle. Alternate: Replaced. When you go to wake your child one morning, you immediately sense that the baby in the crib is not yours. While they look the same, you know in your heart your own child has been replaced. Due March 22

28 Frost. Read the Robert Frost poem “Design.” Choose a simple plant or animal and create a poem in the style of Frost. Find a link to the poem on youngwritersproject.org/challenges18-19. Alternate: Prophecies. Classic stories and myths are full of prophecies. Write about a character who is warned about a future event. Due March 29

29 Home. Read the poem “Home” by Balkisa Omar, a member of the Vermont slam poetry group Muslim Girls Making Change. Write about your own experience of home. Find a link to the poem on youngwritersproject.org/challenges18-19. Alternate: Problem. “They were almost ready to leave, but now there was a problem.” Using this phrase as inspiration, what happens next? Due April 5

30 Photo-9 Swing. What are the dynamics in this group of friends? Imagine their dialogue as they swing. [YWP Photo Library, photo by Alexandra Contreras-Montesano] Alternate: Awakening. Write a poem or story about a plant, animal or creature, real or imagined, coming to life. Due April 12

31 Song. Listen to a favorite song and either write your interpretation of the lyrics or use them as inspiration. [Challenge submitted by Hazel Civalier, YWP] Alternate: Journal. Write about a character who discovers someone else’s journal and realizes something very strange or alarming about the writer. Due April 19

32 Epistolary. Write a story as a series of letters or diary entries. Alternate: Sounds. Listen to the sound file provided on youngwritersproject.org/challenges18-19. Write the opening scene for a play, inspired by the sounds. Due April 26

33 Photo-10 Vacation. You’ve just won a dream vacation, and you can pick the location and one traveling companion. Alternate: Senses. Take a walk and stop for a moment. Use as many senses as you can to describe what you see, hear, touch, smell, taste. Due May 3