

An Australian Menu of Writing Ideas

Restaurant attendees: You must choose create a “meal” from this menu that includes: 1 appetizer, 1 soup, 1 entrée, and 1 dessert. Write them down in your “Australian notebook”. This menu will be due at the end of the week on Friday.

Appetizer Choices: (Select one of these **writing trait-inspired** activities to record in your notebook.)

Skewered Crocodile Bites with Lime and Ginger Sauce: “It tastes just like chicken” is said about a lot of unusual foods—like crocodile. Pretend there was a “chicken spokesman” whose job it was to convince the human public to quit comparing weird foods to chicken—in order to draw everyone’s attention away from eating poultry. Write a 30-second speech this “spokes-bird” could deliver on television in a public service announcement. Be convincing! Trait focus: VOICE (writing from another’s perspective & using appropriate humor to engage a reader & persuading a reader)

Coconut Prawns: Brainstorm a variety of famous historical figures (like *Eva Braun* and *Thomas Jefferson*) that you can substitute a similar-sounding food or product name into their names (like *Eva Prawn* and *Thomas Jeeperson*). How many can you come up with in ten minutes? Could your friends guess which historical figure inspired each new name? Put a star next to the character name you create that you could compose the most interesting story about later in your notebook. Trait focus: WORD CHOICE (playing with language) and IDEA DEVELOPMENT (brainstorming creatively)

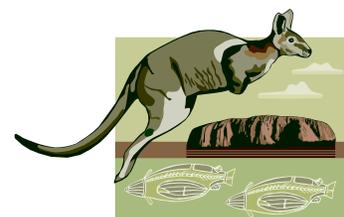
Salt & Pepper Calamari: In five minutes or less, create an original graphic organizer that could be used to compare two very different things that always seem to go together—like salt and pepper. No circles and Venn diagrams here. Be original. It might help you to think of two contrasting things to compare first. Then, for five minutes, fill in your graphic organizer with details that show you’re comparing/contrasting the items thoughtfully. Trait focus: ORGANIZATION (developing an organizational tool) and IDEA DEVELOPMENT (focusing on specific details)

[Alphabet] Soup Choices: (Select one of these **word-play activities** to record in your notebook.)

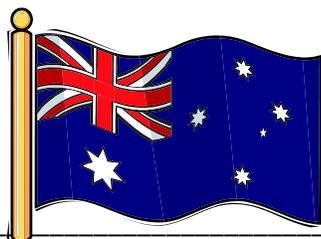
Mutton Broth: Goody-Twoshoes High School (in Niceville, Nebraska) needs a new school cheer because their PTA decided the “Fight song” they used to shout at sporting events focused on too many violent words and terms. Create a cheer or chant that avoids all words and phrases their PTA might object to but still would be fun to chant from the bleachers.

Kumara (Sweet Potato) & Crab Bisque: *The Butler Didn’t Do It*—Pretend this is the title of a brand new book that just came out. In ten minutes, can you write the synopsis or summary of the book that would appear on the book jacket? Can you make the book sound like the must-have book of the season?

Maori Boil-up Soup: A *portmanteau* is when two words are blended together to form a new word: smoke + fog = *smog*; guess + estimate = *guesstimate*; Brad + Angelina = *Brangelina*. For ten minutes, invent as many portmanteaus as you can and provide their definitions (chocolate + later = *chocolater*—*a piece of chocolate you hide for a rainy day*). Be prepared to share your best portmanteau with the class.



AUSTRALIA



Entrée Choices: (All “entrées” are actually three-step writing tasks. Make sure you complete all parts of the task.)

Disappointing Vegemite Sandwich Stories: We’ve all experienced disappointment at some point in our lives. Sometimes it’s as minor as not being allowed to go to the movies with your friends. And, other times it’s major—like when you don’t make a team or are not invited to a party that everyone else is going to. Disappointment can make us sad and feel badly about ourselves. One of the best ways to deal with any difficulty is to write about it as a personal narrative.

- Make a page with three columns. For ten minutes in the first two columns, list some events from your life—both major and minor—that caused you to be disappointed. Next to each event, write what you did to deal with the disappointment or what detail you remember the most about the experience.
- Now, in the third column, write down what you *wish* you had done differently as you look back on this event. What does what you wished you did versus what you actually did tell you about yourself? Record some observations.
- Now, write a short story (at least 1 page hand-written) about one of these events. Could your first paragraph focus on what might have happened if you had done what you wrote in your third column?

Kangaroo Steaks...and Rules to Eat them: Everywhere you turn, there is an adult telling you what rules to follow, yelling at you when you break a rule, and even inventing new rules on the fly! Jeez, it probably feels like some adults in your life are making rules just for the sake of inventing rules. Think about rules in your life. Sure, some of them are reasonable, like *Look both ways before you cross the street*. Some make life easier and more enjoyable for everyone, like *Be home on time for dinner*. For this persuasive prompt you need to think of a rule that you feel is unreasonable.

- List all the rules you follow both at school and at home that—in your opinion—don’t serve a purpose or that are unfair. Think about all of the rules and find the ONE rule that, if eliminated, would make your life so much better.
- Write this rule at the top of a piece of paper—create three columns below it. In the first column list all the reasons why you disagree with this rule. In the second column, describe how eliminating the rule would make life easier for the rule’s enforcer. In the third column, list real reasons why this rule is probably in place.
- Compose a letter (at least 1 page hand-written) to the authority figure (parent, principal, teacher, etc.) using the information in the chart you created to convince them to change this rule. Start the letter by acknowledging their side of the argument.

How-to Make a Hamburger “with the Lot”: What’s something interesting that you wish you knew how to do. Think of an activity that doesn’t require a lot of expensive supplies to do. Taking fingerprints off a surface and growing a vegetable garden require very few supplies. Learning to fly an airplane—on the other hand—is an expensive venture. For this expository, you will research something you don’t know how to do but you wish you did; then, you will explain to another how to do this. You must choose something you don’t already know how to do, and it must be affordable to learn.

- Start with a ten-minute brainstorm, creating a list that fits the topic: things I wish I knew how to do that don’t require a lot of money to learn. Circle the three best ideas on your list. Ask a friend’s opinion about which one you should research. Print out some research.
- A good expository essay is organized. Look over the research you printed and ask yourself, “Can I break down this activity I want to learn to do into three or four steps?” In your own words, write a simple synopsis or summary of what each step will begin and end with when you are making paragraphs for your rough draft.
- Write an essay (1 page hand-written) explaining what you have learned about how to do the activity. Remember to include an introduction and conclusion as well as body paragraphs explaining the steps. Remember, it is critical that you put all research into your own words.

Dessert Choices: (Choose one dessert from the menu and create a notebook entry that also includes a funny illustration or a picture that can be taped/glued next to your writing. Have fun! Dessert should be fun!)

Anzac Biscuits! Find a picture of someone with an interesting face in a magazine that you can cut out. Tape it into your writer’s notebook. Write an interesting monologue the person might say and connect it to their face with a dialogue bubble.

Pavlova Meringue! If you think about it, there are some violent-sounding verbs in a cookbook: *beat*, *whip*, etc. Write instructions for making something in the kitchen that only uses actual recipe verbs that sound a bit scary. Draw a picture too.

Lamington Cakes! Bring in a photo from home that features another person you are fond of. After taping the picture into your notebook, create a “Top 5 (or 10)” list that shares that person’s very best qualities. Add a dialogue bubble near the photo too!