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Sparking an Idea

(Excerpted from the Young Novelist Workbook)

Maybe you know exactly the story you want to tell, or maybe you have no clue. We can help! Let's get this rollicking, wild, totally-out-there brainstorm session started:

First, make a list of places and things that make you feel excited, inspired, or curious. Some of our examples are: dreams, ghosts, 1920s Japan, sibling relationships, road trips, dogs, elephants, mysteries, princesses, reality TV shows, bicycles, and cooking. Try to write at least 20!

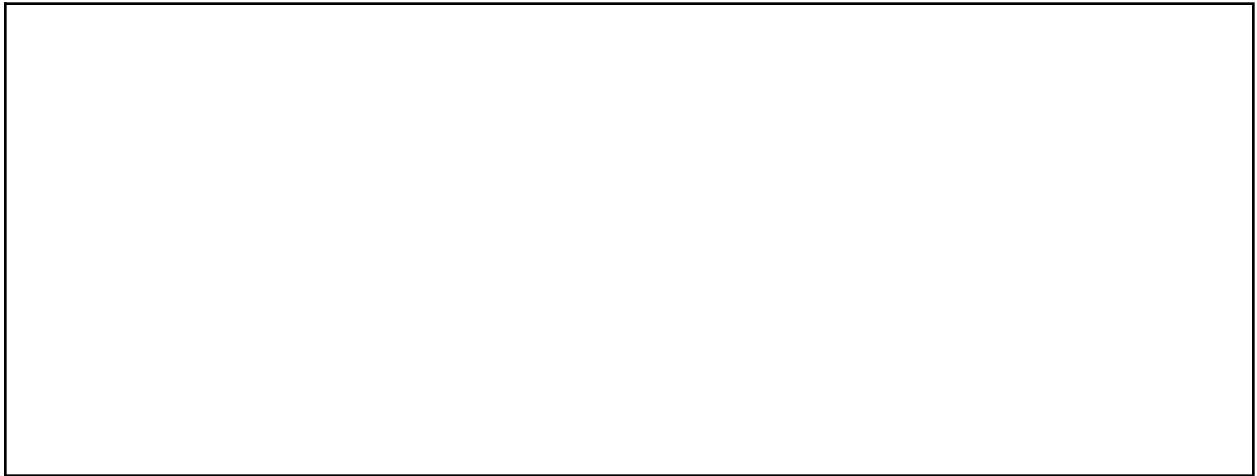
What you're drawn to in life is probably what you'll enjoy writing about. **So, circle nine things above you'd be excited to include in your novel. Then, write each thing you circled on one of the lines below.** To make it random, you can put them on scraps of paper and pull from a hat (or try this [random chooser](#)).

Novel Idea 1:			
Novel Idea 2:			
Novel Idea 3:			

Time to let your imagination go wild! Pick one of the "Novel Ideas" from the previous page, set a timer for 5 minutes, and freewrite to explore the idea and help it grow.

Use sentences like "I wonder..." and "What if..." and "It would be interesting/cool/super weird if..." For example, an idea that included "Ghosts, mysteries, and dogs" could lead to something like: "What if the ghost of a detective teamed up with a dog to solve a mystery? I wonder if the mystery is about how the detective ended up being a ghost. Can the dog talk? Or maybe it's psychic? That would be cool!"

If you get bored with an idea, try a different one! If you don't like the ones you wrote, try something else! This is your chance to experiment before you pick a direction for your novel.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to freewrite their novel idea.

More Support! If you're still not sure of an idea, you can try our ["Four Ways to Develop an Idea"](#) NaNo Prep activity.