

Hello Free Minds family,

May 22, 2020

We are all a week closer to the end of Covid-Quarantine-Craziness... Please know that we miss you and are with you in spirit--always. Thank you to those who have sent us letters and poems. Receiving your mail truly lifts each one of us up at a time when we can use a bright spot in our days. We often share your brilliant writing, poems and messages with each other via email and when we do, the subject line usually reads "Feel Good Letter!" (For real!)

We value your feedback and want to provide content that helps you get through the day. Let us know what you enjoy the most and find valuable in these mailings...(BTW, we have been calling these "Lockdown Worksheets." Does anybody have a suggestion of a better name? Quarantine Quizlets? Pandemic Pages? Corona Curriculum? No??? Ideas???)

As you know, we love to include puzzles and games. Sometimes they might seem silly, but there are literally hundreds of studies out there that prove the benefits to the human brain (no matter your age) of doing these kinds of mental exercises. All you need to know to jump on the puzzles and game bandwagon is that they can improve your memory! (Kelli does crosswords every single night because it's proven to help prevent Alzheimers!) Just know that you are doing critical brain calisthenics!

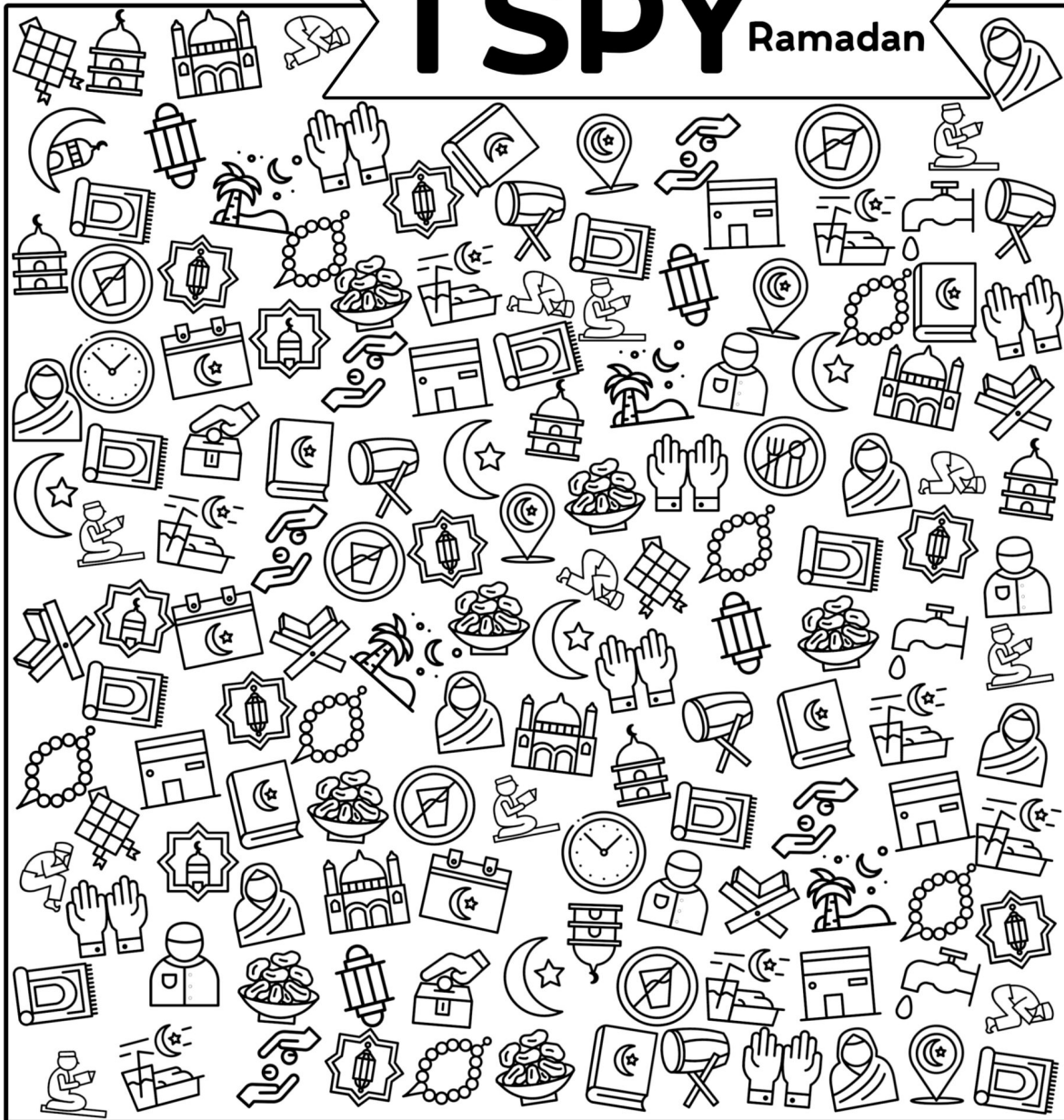


Enjoy this week's edition ☺ Stay safe, stay read, write, and keep your mind forever free!!!

~Your Entire Free Minds FAM!

RAMADAN – As many of you know, Ramadan is celebrated by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community. It begins during the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar, when the new crescent moon can first be seen. This year that's from Apr 23, 2020 – May 23, 2020. Free Minds members come from all backgrounds, and practice numerous different faiths. Some don't practice any. We believe it's not just valuable, but vital to learn about different religions and cultures. Education creates understanding and tolerance while ignorance too often leads to hatred and violence. Okay, that's a pretty deep introduction for an I SPY puzzle! Check out the illustration and see how many of the symbols you can find! On the next page are a few facts on Ramadan. We would love to hear from any of our Muslim members who might be able to identify/explain the different symbols in the puzzle!

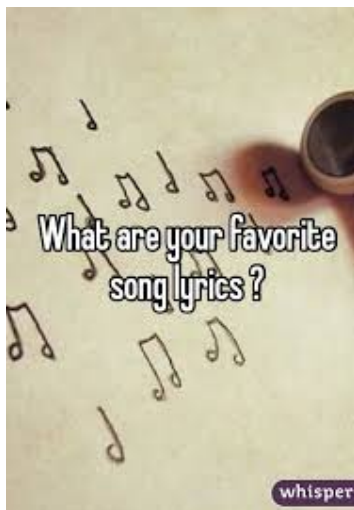
I SPY Ramadan



- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 2 | | 4 | | 4 | | 5 | | 4 | | 5 | | 7 | | 4 | | 6 | | 5 | |
| 1 | | 6 | | 7 | | 1 | | 3 | | 6 | | 7 | | 4 | | 7 | | 5 | |
| 3 | | 3 | | 4 | | 6 | | 2 | | 7 | | 5 | | 9 | | 6 | | 3 | |

So for those who don't know much about Islam's holiest month, here are some quick facts:

1. During Ramadan, Muslims fast every day from sunrise to sunset. Young children, women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or on their periods, the elderly, and people with health problems, aren't expected to fast.
2. For many, it is a time to feel closer to God, pray, spend time with loved ones, support charities and remember those less fortunate while they're fasting.
3. By the end of Ramadan, adults who have more food than they need must pay [*Zakat al-Fitr*](#) – a contribution to support people in need.
4. Muslims consider fasting in Ramadhan a core part of their religious beliefs. Before dawn, people eat a meal called the *suhoor*. The dusk meal is called the *iftar* and is often shared with others.
5. During the last 10 days of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate the *Laylat Al Qadr*, the holiest night of the year. It commemorates the night that the Quran, the Muslim Holy Book, was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.
6. You can express well-wishes for Ramadan by saying "Ramadan Kareem" ("Have a generous Ramadan") or "Ramadan Mubarak" (which can translate as "Happy Ramadan). After the last day of Ramadan, on *Eid-al-fitr*, the greeting changes to "Eid Mubarak" which means "Blessed Feast/festival."



WRITING PROMPT

My Jam! What is your absolute favorite lyric from a song? Take that line and use it as the first line of a poem about your life...

(***Send us your poem. Make sure to identify the lyric and song that it's from!)



Who Sang That?

Read the lyric and name the artist and the song title! (see page 5 for answers)

1. I been movin' calm, don't start no trouble with me / Tryna keep it peaceful is a struggle for me / Don't pull up at 6 AM to cuddle with me
2. I was born like this, since one like this, immaculate conception / I transform like this, perform like this, was Yeshua's new weapon
3. I got the horses in the back / Horse tack is attached / Hat is matte black / Got the boots that's black to match / Ridin' on a horse, ha / You can whip your Porsche / I been in the valley / You ain't been up off that porch, now
4. All excited but we don't know why / Maybe it's 'cause we're all gonna die / And when we do, what's it all for / Better live now before the grim reaper / Come knocking on your door (HINT: This one's old school!)



**“He could
sell ice to an
Inuit...”**

Have you ever heard this old saying about someone who can sell anything to anyone? (NOTE: the original saying used the word “Eskimo” which is now considered a racial slur.) Do you have what it takes to be a creative marketing pitch man/woman? One of the first steps is knowing how to come up with a “tagline” for your product. For example, Lays Potato Chips tagline is: *“Betcha Can’t Eat Just One,”* (which, of course, is true with most potato chips...)

Check out the taglines below and see if you know which brand/product is being advertised??? (ANSWERS – see page 5)

1. “Shave Time. Shave Money.”
2. “Can You Hear Me Now? Good.”
3. “There is No Finish Line.”
4. “Because You’re Worth It.”
5. “The Quicker Picker Upper”
6. “American Runs on _____”
7. “I’m Lovin’ It”
8. All the News That’s Fit to Print”
9. “Like a Good Neighbor, _____ is There”
10. “The Few. The Proud. The _____”

According to several popular marketing blogs, here is what makes a successful tagline for a product:

It's memorable. People should only have to spend a second or two thinking about it. A brief but strong few words can go a long way in advertisements, videos, posters, swag, and other places. Nike's "Just Do It" tagline will probably be in your head for the rest of your life, right?

It includes a key benefit. A great slogan makes a product's benefits clear to the audience. Consider KFC's "Finger Lickin' Good." If chicken is so tasty it's going to have you licking your fingers, that's a good sign about their product, right?

It differentiates the brand. Does your light beer have the fullest flavor? Or maybe the fewest calories? What sets it apart from competitors?

It gives positive feelings about the brand. The best taglines use words that are positive. For example, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups' slogan, "Two great tastes that taste great together," makes you feel good about Reese's, whereas a slogan like Lea & Perrins', "Steak sauce only a cow could hate," uses negative words. Reese's leaves a better impression on the audience.

THE TAGLINE CHALLENGE:

We want you to come up with a brand name and great tagline for each of the following products: 1. COLOGNE/AFTER-SHAVE; 2. CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES; 3. DIAPERS; 4. CAR; 5. BBQ RESTAURANT We can't wait to see how you'd sell these products! Who knows, this may be the beginning of your marketing career 😊

ANSWERS

WHO SANG THAT?

1. Drake "God's Plan"; 2. Kendrick Lamar, "DNA"; 3. Lil Nas X "Old Town Road"; 4. Prince, "Let's Go Crazy"

TAGLINES

1. Dollar Shave Club; 2. Verizon; 3. Nike 4. L'Oreal make up; 5. Bounty paper towels; 6. Dunkin'; 7. McDonalds; 8. New York Times; 9. State Farm insurance; 10. US Marines

We'd love to see your poems, taglines, ideas, and just plain old letters.

WRITE TO US @:

Free Minds 1816 12th Street NW Washington, DC 20009

Dear Free Minds Brothers & Sisters:

June 26th, 2020

Have you been following the unfolding story on monuments to the Confederacy in America? The debate about whether such memorials are appropriate in a country meant to be a beacon of freedom and democracy to the world has been going on for decades. A majority of the statues were put up during the era of Jim Crow laws (1877-1964), supposedly to “honor” southern history. Many believe their true purpose was to glorify white supremacy and intimidate African Americans. A few cities have already officially removed them. But the strengthening momentum of the Black Lives Matters movement has now empowered people to take matters into their own hands—literally. For weeks protesters have been tearing down memorials to Confederate leaders and others with sketchy pasts across the country arguing that they were born out of our nation’s awful legacy of slavery and racism, and as such, their presence is an insulting slap in the face to all people of color.

According to an NBC News website, as of today, more than 60 such statues have already come down. And at least that many more have pending requests and/or plans for removal.

On Monday, a group of several hundred protesters gathered across the street from the White House, tying ropes to the statue of President Andrew Jackson and attempting to bring it down. While not a Confederacy symbol, Jackson is notorious for his forced relocation of more than 100,000 Native Americans from their homes. Their journey west is known as the “Trail of Tears,” during which more than 15,000 died. The protesters clashed with the police and were fired upon with tear gas and rubber bullets. Ultimately, they were moved out and the statue still stands...



In a video released this week, historian Ken Burns (he’s made several big documentaries, including an award-winning PBS Civil War series) explains why he believes “These monuments were efforts to reimpose white supremacy and rewrite history...They are racism memorialized in our public spaces.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK? We want to know! Please, please, write to us and share your opinions!



Police clash with protesters trying to bring down statue in Lafayette Square this week

- What role do memorials play in perpetuating myths over facts?
- How should we determine which memorials come down?
- How do you think we should mark and remember the ugliest parts of American history so that it is never repeated?

Now is the time for us to be thoughtful, listen, and learn from each other! We miss you all and send wishes for peace and growth always!

Your Free Minds Family 4EVER

ERASE IT & EDUCATE! By Shannon, member of FM Leadership Board - I believe the removal of racist statues and anything that reflects and represents the hatred stemming from slavery and the systematic bias that remains hundreds of years later should be erased from public view. It should be recorded or archived for the education of future generations to know the full history of our country and the impact it had on everyone from Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr to George Floyd. The miseducation of too many generations is one of the primary reasons so many people act in such ignorant ways. Knowing the full history will afford us the opportunity to receive what the educational systems of the past lacked and that is the whole truth.

TIME TO DEAL WITH THE TRUTH, By Jameon, member of FM Leadership Board- Greetings to all the comrades behind the wall!!! As African Americans we had to play along to get along in our past-- a sacrifice that those pioneers were making to open the doors of the future. We didn't get taught the true history behind slavery, and the Jim Crow south in our educational system. No one acknowledged the racial divide that exists in our judicial system. The white-washing of our history was a form of denial, just like white supremacy is a form of fear, and racist images hid their insecurities. Now is the time to begin the conversations for equality and continue to build on the blocks of change. Let's learn from the past and not hide from our joined history. The best way we can heal as Americans is by addressing the past truthfully and openly.

WRITING PROMPT: Build Your Own Monument

What person that is alive today do you believe is worthy of a statue/memorial? What should it look like? Draw a picture and write a poem honoring this person. Note: This doesn't have to be someone well-known. You can design a statue for your Grandma if she deserves it!



GUESS WHO?

Did you all ever play this boardgame guess who when you were little? Where you would ask your opponent "Does your guy have glasses?" and if he/she said "no" you would flip down anybody wearing glasses? That game was the BEST! Okay, we're going to do something kinda/sorta similar...Read the clue on the left and match each of them with the correct name on the right. GUESS WHO?

1. I am a composer, lyricist, rapper and writer who created a Tony award winning smash hit musical with color-blind casting which debuted on Broadway in 2015.
2. I am a Grammy award winning artist known for my four-octave range and use of "the whistle register"...the highest register that can be achieved by the human voice.

A. Anthony Fauci

B. Giannis Antetokounmpo

C. Prince

3. My popular morning show ran for 17 years on WPGC!
4. I was the drummer in the Beatles.
5. I am the son of a notorious DC drug dealer. I published my memoir and am a community leader and activist
6. I am an African American senator from California who is a former prosecutor and people think I'm a possible VP pick for Joe Biden.
7. My first name is Martin, I sell insurance and have a British accent.
8. I'm a DC hip hop and go-go Icon, who graduated from Eastern High School. There's a good chance you know me from my 1993 mega-hit single "Let Me Clear My Throat."
9. I am one of the most successful [African American](#) drivers in the history of NASCAR. Last week, after painting the Black Lives Matter slogan on my car, a noose was found in my garage. Some people claim it was there long before I took over that garage, but it's being investigated!
10. I am an American civil rights activist, Baptist minister, talk show host and politician. Side note: I once weighed more than 300 lbs and now weigh 130.
11. I once said this about the football team I own: "We'll never change the name. It's that simple. NEVER—you can use caps."
12. I was a self-taught musician, and played piano, guitar, drums, and bass by the age of six. Sadly, I died at 26 from an accidental drug overdose.
13. I'm from the Midwest and my favorite color is purple.
14. I was one of the original Freedom Riders protesting with MLK for civil rights in the south when I was beaten by an angry mob. I am now an enormously influential and beloved US Congressman.
15. I secretly filmed and recorded an entire visual album which I dropped to surprise my fans in 2013.

D. Kamala Harris

E. Bubba Wallace

F. Beyonce

G. Mac Miller

H. Lin Manuel Miranda

I. The Geico gecko

J. Al Sharpton

K. Donnie Simpson

L. John Lewis

M. Dan Snyder

N. Ariana Grande

O. Tony Lewis, Jr.

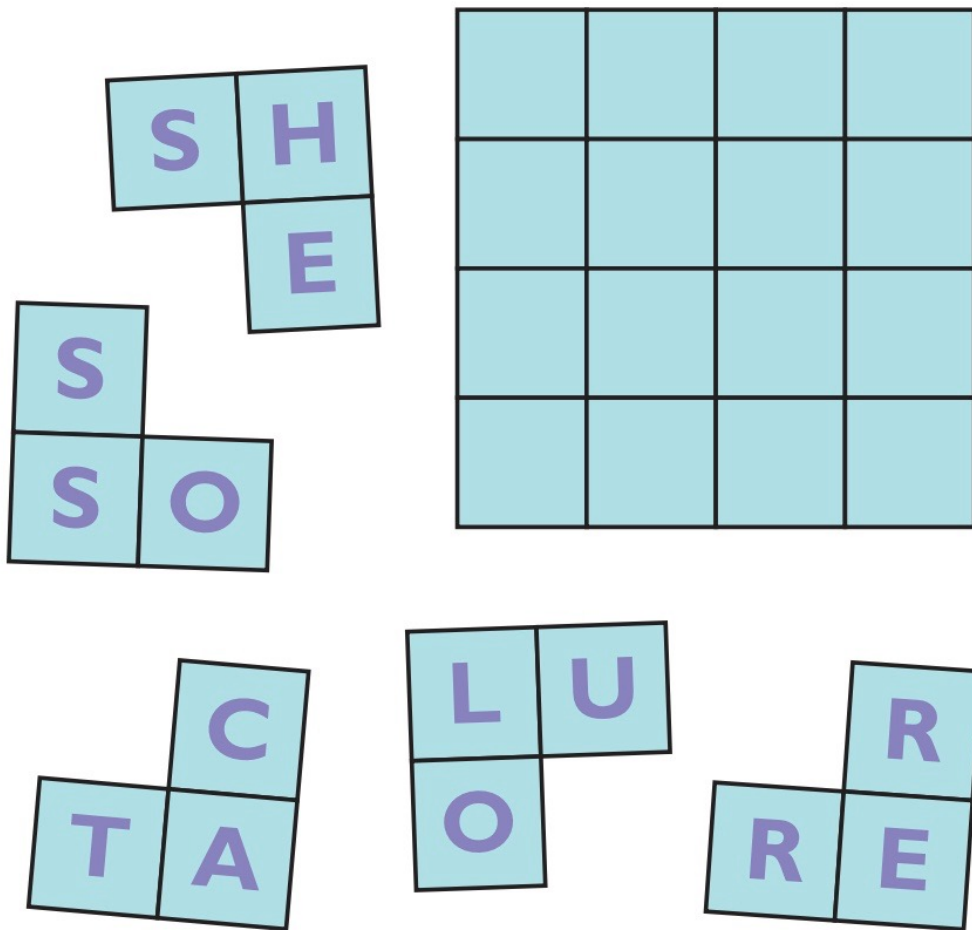
P. DJ Kool

Q. Ringo Starr

16. I'm 6'11, have a wingspan of 7'3" & was born in Greece to Nigerian parents.
17. I am a doctor and one of the world's leading experts on infectious diseases and made major contributions to HIV AIDS research. I am now on the White House task force for COVID-19, though my relationship with President Trump has been tumultuous.

REARRANGE IT!

Can you arrange these groups of tiles on the grid to create eight different four-letter words running vertically and horizontally? One letter has been left out. Can you identify it?





Do you know someone who died during the Covid-19 pandemic while behind bars?

A non-profit organization called *Mourning Our Losses* is working to memorialize all lives lost to the virus and related causes in jails and prisons across the country. If you would like to write a poem or essay in tribute of someone you know that has died while incarcerated during the pandemic (even if their death was not due to COVID directly), please mail them to us! *Mourning Our Losses* will post them to their website at www.mourningourlosses.org to ensure their life is remembered and celebrated!

ANSWERS TO “GUESS WHO?”

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. H | 4. Q | 7. I | 10. J | 13. C | 16. B |
| 2. N | 5. O | 8. P | 11. M | 14. L | 17. A |
| 3. K | 6. D | 9. E | 12. G | 15. F | |

ANSWER TO “REEARRANGE IT!”

The missing letter is “N.”



Write to us at:

FREE MINDS / 1816 12th Street NW / Washington, DC 20009

April 28, 2020

Thinking of YOU!

Dear Free Minds Members,

We hope this letter finds you healthy and safe. We wanted to write and let you know that we are thinking of you and sending you positive energy as you go through this tough time of the coronavirus lockdown. We also wanted to let you know that Free Minds is still operating at full speed during the required stay at home order from DC's Mayor Bowser. So, while our physical office is closed and we are all teleworking at home, we still pick up your mail every day, respond to your letters, and type your poems. We love seeing your Connect submissions! Keep them coming.

We have transitioned to virtual programming in many areas—for example, Kelli is putting the Book Club sessions on electronic tablets that most of the Book Club members have at the DC Jail. Our weekly Letters Writers Circle has more volunteers than ever as we are holding it over Zoom teleconferences. Last week we had writers all the way from Boston and San Francisco. Though we are physically apart, we are together!

We also are holding our Write Night poetry feedback events online too with this very cool software that allows everyone to read and write comments on your poems at the same time. Some of you might have already gotten feedback in this new digital form. It's so exciting seeing hundreds of volunteers all united, reading and responding to your words together. The power of technology is truly amazing.

We are doing what we know you all do when faced with challenges—turning them into opportunities to learn, grow, and try new things. We want you to know there is a large community of people who are aware of what you are going through and thinking of you. There is a lot of support for you and we have received many more volunteers wanting to help out. Let us know how you're doing mentally, emotionally, and physically during this hard time. We really appreciate your concern for our wellbeing and all of the messages of care and support. We hear you and it makes us feel very good. We are all well and healthy. We've included some writing prompts and other activities that hopefully will "free your mind" for a bit. Stay strong.

In Solidarity,

Your Free Minds Family

In honor of **National Poetry Month (April)** we've included some writing prompts. Let us know if they sparked your imagination and jumpstarted you to start words flowing. Send us your favorite writing prompts that we can share in the next Connect!

Thinking of You Writing Prompt

With the recent pandemic causing changes in so many ways around the entire world, everyone is in need of a little extra support! Use this writing prompt to create a letter to someone you feel needs more support. Try starting each sentence with a letter in the phrase "Thinking of You!"

Courage and Fear

A poem by _____ (your name here)

In my life I've known Courage.

We met when I _____

Nowadays Courage is _____

I find Courage when _____

In my life I've known Fear.

We met when I _____

These days Fear is _____

Fear finds me when _____

I've learned that Courage and Fear are different.

When Courage tells me _____

Fear says _____

Usually I listen to _____

I wish _____

I wish _____

WRITING PROMPT - The Weather Inside of Me

"I can't say how the weather is today, but I know that inside me, it is raining" - Buck by MK Asante

This is a great example of descriptive writing. How is the weather inside of you today? Is it raining? Tornado? Hurricane? Sunny and breezy? Blizzard? Sunny and blistering hot? Lightening? Why is it this kind of weather? And what does it feel like? Describe it in detail...What is the forecast for tomorrow?

If you want, you can start your poem: *I can't say how the weather is today / But I know that inside of me it's...*

More Writing prompts:

- I (she, he, we, they) awoke that morning knowing that everything had changed.
 - Pick one of the five senses. Write about a memory it invokes.
 - Write a poem or story with the phrase “I wish I could touch.”
 - Write about a color that has made a lasting imprint on your life.
-

Invictus by William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
**I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.**

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
**And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.**

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
**I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.**

How to Meditate by Elvin Dantes

1. Sit comfortably. Maintain straight but relaxed back. Relax your shoulders, arms, legs.
2. Focus on breath by paying attention to your nose, mouth, lungs, or abdomen.
3. Feel the breath going in & out. Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth. Notice the rise and fall of your chest.
4. Notice thoughts that arise. It's natural for the mind to be full of thoughts. Do not fight them. Instead, observe them.
5. Gently return to the breath. Calmly let the thoughts pass and come back to the present by focusing on the breath. In & out.
6. Start with one minute. As meditation becomes easier with practice, aim to work up to 5 minutes.
7. Practice every day. Be more concerned with making this a habit as opposed to how well you think you're meditating.
8. Make progress patiently. Try longer sessions. All there is to do is notice what you notice and relax in the present, unburdened by thoughts.

Riddles:

1. What has to be broken before you can use it?
 2. I'm tall when I'm young, and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?
 3. What month of the year has 28 days?
 4. What is full of holes but still holds water?
 5. What question can you never answer yes to?
-

African American History

O O K J O G C N H C F W G N O T R U G U U P H D
Z O U J S M A I L L I W E L A H L E I N A D W G
Q Q B E Y E N O H A M A Z I L E Y R A M H G M G
S G E H J U O P W F E J X A E F X B X N X M S F
C Y N V U V L T I S A B E L W I L K E R S O N X
G M J L A I F A B F L N E O Q C Q B Z Z L G U Q
K L A P N V D L N O S I R R O M I N O T C D D Q
K L M D I I L T A N O T W E N S U I R T E M E D
H P I R T A K H P U O D P X M A E J E M I S O N
A C N O A N C E L P S H A F X H M E S U N M A G
T Y S F H M N A L J C O D K U P K V L Z V E E A
T W T I A A M G E B S K R A P I R O L N A Z U S
I W E T L L Y I W T U J Q Z L A P H V S V F I V
E W R T L O F B E S R X J E F L T B I T K J S T
M H L E M N L S S P B O L G Z C B T P N I X N G
C W I P A E D O I I N Q F N Z P R O S P A N E R
D B N R L J O N R Y B V Z D B Y I K P E Z I A P
A D G M G O X R R B E N J A M I N S C A R S O N
N T T A O N C J E J B M T R V F U O G L N O G U
I B U I O E P Y T M V O U D X A I C U C Q Y M O
E Y R L D S W V B O N N I E S T J O H N B V M U
L P N L E V P H Y L I C I A R A S H A D O B Z Y
I P E I B C A S R E W O L F A T T E N O V Q R E
L G R W Q V T Y C U L E N I R E H T U A D P T S

Toni Morrison	Isabel Wilkerson	Mae Jemison	Bonnie St. John
Althea Gibson	Vonetta Flowers	Phylicia Rashad	Suzan-Lori Parks
Hattie McDaniel	Juanita HallMal Goode	Daniel Hale Williams	Benjamin S. Carson
Mary Eliza Mahoney	Autherine Lucy	Vivian Malone Jones	Benjamin Sterling Turner
William R Pettiford	Demetrius Newton	Terri Sewell	

			8	5				7
3	8	2						
9		7		3		1	8	4
	2	8			6		3	
4		9				8		1
	3		9			4	7	
7	1	3		6		2		8
						5	1	6
2				9	8			

Sudoku is played on a grid of 9 x 9 spaces. Within the rows and columns are 9 “squares” (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square (9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square.

Fun Fact: Before the invention of color TV, 75% of people said they dreamed in black and white. Today, only 12% do. Do you dream in color? If you speak another language do you ever dream in that language? Let us know!

Optical Illusion: How many animals do you see in the image below?



(Look closely, you should be able to see a rabbit and a duck.)

Riddle Answers: 1. An egg 2. A candle 3. All of them 4. A sponge 5. Are you asleep yet?

Write back to us at Free Minds Book Club, 1816 12th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.

We hope to hear from you soon!