

CREATIVE WRITING: *Abandoned Places*

9. SIX FLAGS, NEW ORLEANS

Nothing goes from fun to incredibly spool faster than an abandoned theme park. When monster Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, it caused widespread devastation to the city. The New Orleans Six Flags amusement park was destroyed and the location has been rebuilt.

The current status of the park is classified as a dystopian landscape or horror movie set. Water rose to six feet in the park, causing absolute havoc. Six Flags is currently in the process of restoring the park, but it's an expensive restoration project. Grime-covered rides and buildings are being replaced.



photo by Ken Marshall

If you ever visit, you'll find that not all of the adventurous people took to the design, and they do have a future after all.

7. ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, LUKOVÁ, CZECHIA

If you're interested in the supernatural, you should check out the so-called church of St. George in Luková, Czechia. The church disappeared in 1945.

ECHOES: *Abandoned Places*

If you're planning your own personal world tour, your trip might take you to the Eiffel Tower or to traverse the canals of Venice. You might want to marvel at the pyramids of Egypt. But there are a lot of very interesting (and creepastic) abandoned places that can be quite an adventure—if you're ever allowed to visit.

1. CENTRALIA, PENNSYLVANIA

A small coal town, Centralia, PA, looks more like a town that has been buried to the underworld.

Centralia was intended to be a controlled burn in a landfill. The residents know, the fire beneath their town



But the Winchester house is very real, and it belonged to Sarah Winchester. She was married to William Winchester of the Winchester Gun Company fortune, and the two had an infant daughter. Unfortunately, tragedy struck the family, with both her child and her husband passing away in a short time. Sarah moved from Connecticut to San Jose, CA, where she began construction on her home, which she never allowed to cease.

The house became a labyrinth that led to nowhere, hidden doors, and dead ends. The construction continued for years, when Sarah passed away. The house was approximately 100 years old at the time.

The Winchester House. It even has its own website called the *ECHOES: Abandoned Places*.

4. THE PARISIAN CATACOMBS

Try this for a real-life horror story: what if you found out your town was built over a graveyard? Now, imagine over six million bodies buried in the world's largest catacombs underneath one of the most constructed cities in the world: Paris. The catacombs were built over a graveyard.

ECHOES: *Abandoned Places*



The Winchester House



Nouvelle ELA

NONFICTION AS INSPIRATION

ECHOES: Abandoned Places

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1. CENTRALIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Once a small coal town, Centralia, PA, looks more like a gateway to the underworld.

The fire was intended to be a controlled burn in a landfill. Little did the residents know, the fire beneath their town would still be ablaze over fifty years later. The controlled burn ignited a coal seam, which quickly spread to the coal in the mines beneath the town. All efforts to extinguish the underground fire failed.

At first, residents complained of the smell. But soon, the underground fire began to have more grave effects. A sinkhole opened up underneath a young boy. Smoke rose from the ground, and the air became unsafe to breathe. Eventually, the city was condemned.

Today, only a few residents remain, and adventure-seeking tourists stop in to take photos of the smoke that is still rising from the ground and the split, graffiti-covered highway.



Centralia's Graffiti Highway



Empty Classroom, Pripyat

2. PRIPYAT, UKRAINE

While a nuclear meltdown might sound like something out of a movie about the apocalypse, it really happened in Pripyat, Ukraine, in 1986. The Chernobyl nuclear power plant experienced a meltdown, and due to the extremely high levels of radiation that resulted, the entire city had to be evacuated. The city was completely emptied in four hours.

Pripyat has been left exactly as it was the day after the disaster. The city, which was built to house the area, and Pripyat, once home to around 50,000 people, remains a true ghost town.

3. THE WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE

...to ... years, when Sarah ... feet. The real ... knew why Sarah continued building her home.



The Winchester House

Winchester House. It even has its own website called the

4. THE PARISIAN CATACOMBS

Try this for a real-life horror story: what if you found out your town was built over a graveyard? Now, imagine over six million bodies buried in catacombs underneath one of the most famous cities in the world: Paris, France. They were actually constructed in the 18th century. The catacombs were used as tombs because at the time the graveyards being closed due to public health concerns. They were later used during World War II as a headquarters for the French resistance. Ironically, everyone from aristocrats to peasants are all buried here with only the original cemetery names as labels. If you're interested in exploring the labyrinth of tombs yourself, they are open to the public.

...TO ... and of the ... famous ... in the trees ... and. Don ... island, ... and ... off ... ng ... lso ... the ... ave



Students read an article about ten abandoned places.

CREATIVE WRITING: Flash Fiction

Flash Fiction is a very short story that still has plot, character development, and conflict. Since you don't have pages and chapters to develop your ideas, it can be challenging to draw your audience into the story. The trick is to get right to the heart of what's important to the story you want to tell.

Choose one of the abandoned places you read about in the article and write a piece of flash fiction (1 page, handwritten) based on one of the following prompts:

1. You are trapped in this place. How do you escape? What obstacles do you encounter?
2. Surprise! You've won a vacation to...one of these creepy, abandoned places! It's time for survival mode. How do you make the best of it?
3. When you arrive in the abandoned place of your choosing, you realize someone is already there...and you aren't welcome. Who is this mysterious person, and why are they protecting this place?

Brainstorming

It can be helpful to come up with ideas before you get started. Many writers choose one element to focus on (plot, characters, conflict, theme, setting) as they write since space is limited. Fill out each of these boxes, but you don't have to use all of these ideas when you write - just choose the best ones!

Write three each

BRAINSTORMING: The Best Idea Wins

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YOUR ABANDONED PLACE:

Write three different one-sentence summaries.

PLOT

Write three adjectives to describe each of your characters.

CHARACTERS

What does the narrator

THEME

Write two different character could

CONFLICT

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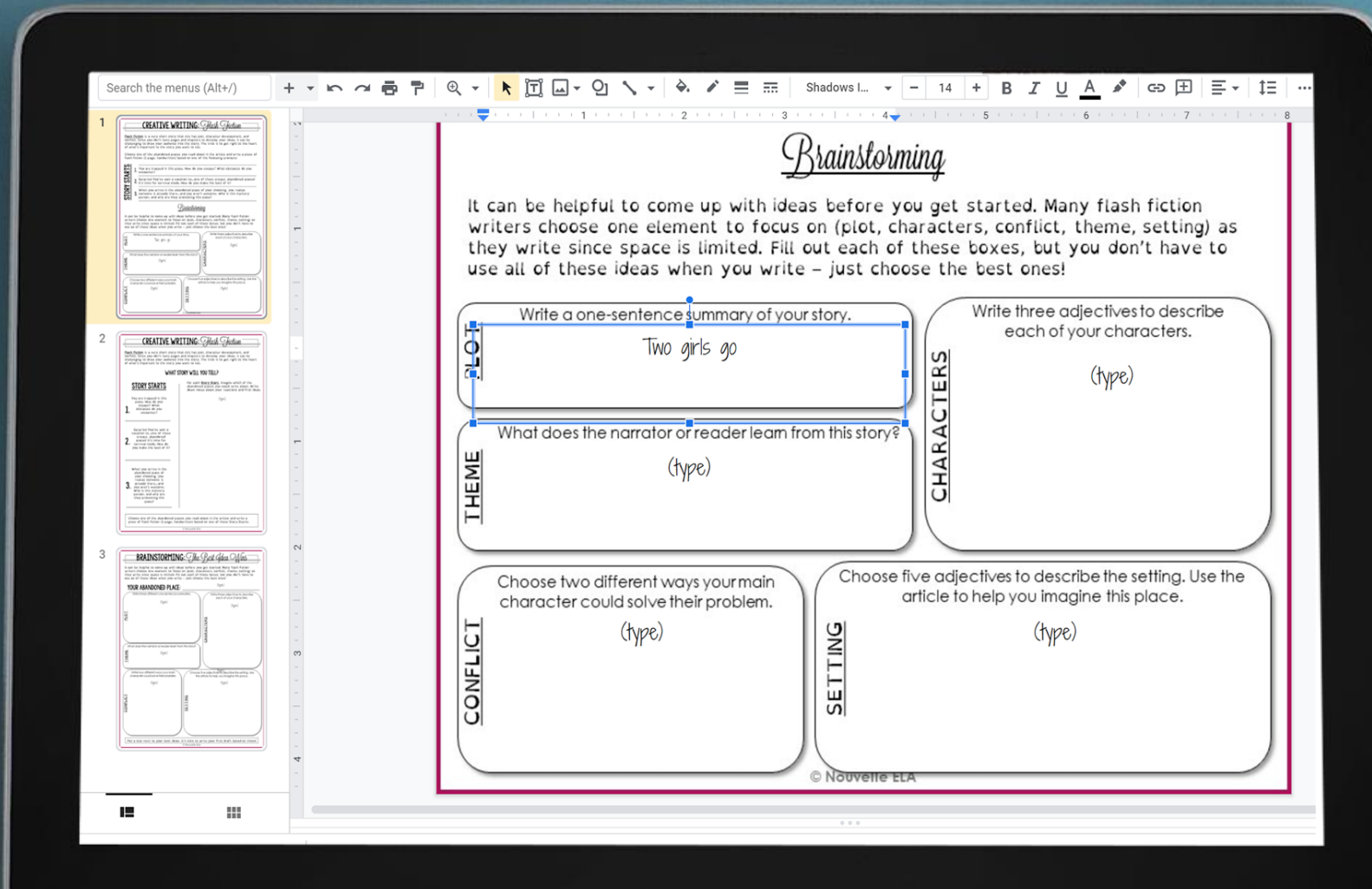
STORY STARTS

WHAT STORY WILL YOU TELL?

1. You are trapped in this place. How do you escape? What obstacles do you encounter?

For each Story Start, imagine which of the abandoned places you could write about. Write down notes about your reactions and first ideas.

They choose one place as the setting for a piece of Flash Fiction. Differentiate with a condensed version (left) or an expanded version (middle and right).



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Write a one-sentence summary of your story.

PLOT

Two girls go

Write three adjectives to describe each of your characters.

CHARACTERS

(type)

What does the narrator or reader learn from this story?

THEME

(type)

Choose two different ways your main character could solve their problem.

CONFLICT

(type)

Choose five adjectives to describe the setting. Use the article to help you imagine this place.

SETTING

(type)

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INCLUDES DIGITAL VERSION
Worksheets presented in fillable Google Slides

WORD WORK: *Close Reading*

The author uses a made-up word, creeptastic, to describe these places. Why do you think they made this choice? Is it effective?

CREEPTASTIC

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

The author writes that the fire in Centralia began to have grave effects. Why were residents forced to evacuate?

WORD WORK: *Close Reading*

Why is it ironic that the skeletons of French aristocrats, or noble persons, are now mixed in with those of poor people?

IRONICALLY

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

In your opinion, why did Don Julian Sanata think that dolls would ward off evil spirits? How did his attempts end in tragedy?

CONDEMNED

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Centralia event were

WARD OFF

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Includes a vocabulary in context activity!
Also includes a Teacher's Guide and sample writing.