

These tasks will help you prepare a piece of writing to enter the Orwell Youth Prize 2024, on the theme of 'Home'



## LESSON 5: FIND YOUR FORM

Now that you have chosen a topic you want to write about – and done some reading or research about it – you need to choose a form.

For the Orwell Youth Prize, you can write in any form you want and that can seem a bit daunting at first. You can use our 'Form Guides' on the 'Find Your Form' webpage (under 'For Entrants' on our website) to help you choose.

And the following three exercises will help you.

### 1. Recognise the different forms.

Read the eight openings below and see if you can match each one to the correct form.

**Circle the letter** of the form you think it is in the column on the right – and then check the table of answers on page 4 to see whether you were right. There are two examples of each, as follows:

- A. Poetry
- B. Drama
- C. Journalism
- D. Fiction

No	Quote	Form
1	And if I speak of Paradise, / then I'm speaking of my grandmother / who told me to carry it always / on my person, concealed	A B C D
2	It takes around five minutes. Then it is over. Civil servant Prudence* has lost her rented house in south London where she lives with her son, a teenager who is working hard towards his GCSEs next year. *names changed to protect identities	A B C D
3	Of course birds saw me, everyone saw me walking along but nobody knew why, I could have been on a mission, everyone's moving about and no one knows why... and I don't see why I can't have one day and then go back, I'll go on to the end after this.	A B C D
4	The idea really came to me the day I got my new false teeth.	A B C D
5	Look, I'm sorry Humphrey, genuine commiserations and all that. Politics is a cruel sport, second place gets you naff all.	A B C D
6	On the eve of South Africa's first democratic elections I slept at the home of a family in Soweto so I could accompany them to the polls the next day.	A B C D
7	The day Somebody McSomebody put a gun to my breast and called me a cat and threatened to shoot me was the same day the milkman died.	A B C D
8	Welcome to my house, this stately home / where, below stairs, my father rules as chef	A B C D

## 2. Which form best suits your topic?

Now think about how you respond to the reading you have done. For each of 1-4 below, circle the letter beside the statement that most closely fits how you feel. Then count how many of each letter you have chosen. This should give you an idea which way you are tending. Even if you have one each of A-D, just thinking about it will help you decide.

1)

A	I feel intense, personal emotion on this topic
B	I can hear two characters arguing about this topic
C	A neutral, balanced tone and approach are ideal for this topic
D	I could best explore this topic through characters and perspectives other than my own
E	The most effective way to explore this topic would be to make it interactive, as in the games I enjoy

2)

A	What I feel about the topic is complicated, difficult to put into words
B	This topic can be explored through people making speeches
C	This topic would benefit from dispassionate analysis
D	This topic could be explored through the actions and thoughts of one main character
E	This topic raises the typical gaming challenge of making choices and decisions

3)

A	The sounds and rhythms of the language of this topic are interesting, suggestive, provocative
B	I want to explore this topic through action and speech rather than description
C	This topic will be well served by precise factual information
D	This topic might be best explored through imagining a world different from the 'real' world – or the world we're in now
E	I have a strong sense of how I want an audience to feel as they navigate the challenges of this topic

4)

A	As I think about the topic, images and associations occur to me
B	I imagine this topic being played out in one or two scenes
C	I want to know more this topic after further research and explain it to others
D	I can imagine a key event or turning point on which I could centre my writing
E	I want my audience to help shape the narrative themselves – and for me to provide different options for the direction of a story on this topic

Check the next page to see which form might be best for you, based on your answers!

Mainly As: try Poetry  
Mainly Bs: try Drama  
Mainly Cs: try Journalism  
Mainly Ds: try Fiction  
Mainly Es: try Game Design

### 3. Try out two forms

Check the answers to Task 1: Recognise the form (next page). Using the examples in the table as a guide, write the openings to two pieces, in two different forms of your choice. Then show them to someone in your class, a friend or family member.

KEY QUESTIONS: Did they recognise which form you were writing in? Did they think it was effective?

DECISION Which form do you now wish to write in? When you have decided, you are ready to plan and draft your entry to the Prize.

(Next page for the answers – and examples of each form.)

1	And if I speak of Paradise, / then I'm speaking of my grandmother / who told me to carry it always / on my person, concealed	A	'A Portable Paradise', by Roger Robinson (2019)
2	It takes around five minutes. Then it is over. Civil servant Prudence* has lost her rented house in south London where she lives with her son, a teenager who is working hard towards his GCSEs next year. *names changed to protect identities	C	'Homeless in five minutes – the devastating impact of the UK's cost of living crisis', by Vicky Spratt (2022)
3	Of course birds saw me, everyone saw me walking along but nobody knew why, I could have been on a mission, everyone's moving about and no one knows why... and I don't see why I can't have one day and then go back, I'll go on to the end after this.	B	<i>Far Away</i> , by Caryl Churchill (2000)
4	The idea really came to me the day I got my new false teeth.	D	<i>Coming Up For Air</i> , by George Orwell (1939)
5	Look, I'm sorry Humphrey, genuine commiserations and all that. Politics is a cruel sport, second place gets you naff all.	B	<i>This House</i> , by James Graham (2013)
6	On the eve of South Africa's first democratic elections I slept at the home of a family in Soweto so I could accompany them to the polls the next day.	C	'I have no problem being regarded as a Black writer, but I won't be confined by it': Gary Younge on race, politics and pigeonholing (2023)
7	The day Somebody McSomebody put a gun to my breast and called me a cat and threatened to shoot me was the same day the milkman died.	D	<i>Milkman</i> , by Anna Burns (2018)
8	Welcome to my house, this stately home / where, below stairs, my father rules as chef	A	'A Doll's House', by Patience Agbabi (2013)