

These tasks will help you prepare a piece of writing to enter the Orwell Youth Prize 2025, on the theme of 'Freedom is...'



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. Essays
- C. Journalism
- D. Fiction

No.	Quote	Form
1	"Maybe I have a rebellious soul... I'm just documenting the truth. Why can't I show the truth?"	A B C D
2	Sometimes we drug ourselves with dreams of new ideas. The head will save us. The brain alone will set us free. But there are no new ideas waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human.	A B C D
3	If large numbers of people are interested in freedom of speech, there will be freedom of speech, even if the law forbids it; if public opinion is sluggish, inconvenient minorities will be persecuted, even if laws exist to protect them.	A B C D
4	fail to see the story within fifteen seconds & the whole event dies. when the phone rings I know exactly who it is. in this new decade the battle is logging off for good.	A B C D
5	Freetown would never be the same again. At the earliest sign of trouble foreigners said it was none of their business and secreted their accounts away.	A B C D
6	For all the warnings that X would cease to exist under Elon Musk, a variety of different users are continuing to post - including many world leaders and prominent political figures of all stripes.	A B C D
7	At least I have the flowers of myself, / and my thoughts, no god / can take that	A B C D
8	He thought again of those hours this morning—the empty misty roads, the feeling of freedom and adventure, of having the whole day and the whole country before you in which to wander at will.	A B C D

Answers on p.4! Turn to p.2 for the next exercise...

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 have a personal perspective I can bring to 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.

2)

A	What I feel about the topic is complicated, difficult to put into words.
B	I have strong views and opinions on this topic.
C	This topic would benefit from dispassionate analysis.
D	This topic could be explored through the actions and thoughts of one main character.

3)

A	The sounds and rhythms of the language of this topic are interesting, suggestive, provocative.
B	I want to include some humour, or some personal anecdotes and experiences.
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.

4)

A	As I think about the topic, images and associations occur to me.
B	I want to use a personal voice and focus to talk about this topic.
C	I want to know more about 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.

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

3. Try out two forms

Check your answers to Task 1: Recognise the form (on the next page).

Using the examples in the table as a guide, write the openings to two pieces of writing about Freedom, in two different forms of your choice – e.g. one poem and one piece of journalism. 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	"Maybe I have a rebellious soul... I'm just documenting the truth. Why can't I show the truth?"	C	– ‘Worry as Wuhan blogger's release remains unclear’ - BBC article about a woman named Zhang Zhan who was detained in China - 16 th May 2024
2	Sometimes we drug ourselves with dreams of new ideas. The head will save us. The brain alone will set us free. But there are no new ideas waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human.	B	Poetry is not a Luxury by Audre Lorde –1985
3	If large numbers of people are interested in freedom of speech, there will be freedom of speech, even if the law forbids it; if public opinion is sluggish, inconvenient minorities will be persecuted, even if laws exist to protect them.	B	‘Freedom of the Park’ by George Orwell – 7 th December 1945
4	fail to see the story within fifteen seconds & the whole event dies. when the phone rings I know exactly who it is. in this new decade the battle is logging off for good.	A	Text Message by Anthony Anaxagorou – June 2020
5	Freetown would never be the same again. At the earliest sign of trouble foreigners said it was none of their business and secreted their accounts away.	D	<i>Moses, Citizen and Me</i> by Delia Jarrett-Macauley - 2005
6	For all the warnings that X would cease to exist under Elon Musk, a variety of different users are continuing to post - including many world leaders and prominent political figures of all stripes.	C	‘What is Elon Musk’s Game Plan?’ by Marianna Spring – 7 th August 2024
7	At least I have the flowers of myself, / and my thoughts, no god / can take that	A	‘Eurydice’ by H.D.
8	He thought again of those hours this morning—the empty misty roads, the feeling of freedom and adventure, of having the whole day and the whole country before you in which to wander at will.	D	<i>Keep the Aspidistra Flying</i> by George Orwell – 1936