



Advent Calendar – 2023

Thank you for being part of my writing prompt advent calendar. Below are all 24 prompts from the 2023 program.

Day 1

For me, the start of December is when I start putting up my decorations, usually the first weekend in December.

Most of my decorations have some sort of meaning. They were purchased for a specific purpose, were a gift from someone, or hand made by my kids.

Writing Activity:

Choose a Christmas decoration and write the story behind it.

The story could be the real story or a completely made-up story, and you are welcome to create and design your own decoration if you don't have one that you'd like to use.

Day 2

I don't know about your family, but when my kids were younger, they started writing out their Christmas wish list as early as possible and kept changing it right up until Christmas day. There was always a mix of gifts they were likely to get as well as ones that were impossible as they didn't exist (one year the list included a Komodo Dragon!).

Wish lists can be a great way to get an insight into a person, and writing lists like this can be a great way to get an insight into your characters.



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Writing Activity:

Write a Christmas wish list for a fictional character.

This could be for a character you have created, or one that you enjoy in books, television or movies. If you don't want to write a list, you could also write a story about a character sharing their list with others, or even Santa reading some lists that have been sent to the North Pole.

You could write this as a list, or in another, creative way.

Day 3

Every year, for as long as I can remember, my mum writes and sends a family newsletter to her network. This is a highlight of things that have happened during the year. On my 21st birthday, my parents presented me with copies of all the newsletters, along with photographs, and it is a great record of significant life events. Over the years, she experimented with different styles and formats to share the family news.

Writing Activity:

Write a Christmas family newsletter.

This could be a real newsletter that you may want to send to family and friends, or one for a fictional character you have created or one that you enjoy from books, television or movies. You can also have fun creating a design for it to make it look special.

Day 4

This is the season for Christmas movies. I admit that I quite enjoy those cheesy Christmas RomComs, they're great when I want to watch something that I don't have to think about. As well as those, there are some other great movies including *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (one of my favourite movies) and *Elf*.



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Writing Activity:

Imagine you wake up and find that you are in the middle of a Christmas movie! Write a story about your experience and how you get back to 'real life'.

This could be any Christmas movie, or even Christmas special of a television show. If you don't watch movies or television, imagine you've woken up in a Christmas book. (And if you say *Die Hard* is a Christmas movie so you can use it for this activity, go for it!)

Day 5

My kids are now adults, and the 'Elf on the Shelf' wasn't around when they were small. In many ways I'm glad as I'm not sure I could come up with a new thing for the elf to do every day, however some people are really creative with it. I do enjoy seeing the photos that other people post.

Writing Activity:

Write something that features the Elf on the Shelf.

It could be something to explain why the elf isn't coming this year, a list of ideas for your elf to do, a story of one of the shenanigans the elf gets up to, or something else. Be creative and have fun.

Day 6

Disaster stories are always fun to read and create. There is the lead up to the disaster, the disaster itself, and the aftermath. What constitutes a disaster can be different for different people. It could be anything from an explosion to things simply not going the way the character wants it to.

Writing Activity:

Write a story about a disaster in Santa's workshop!



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This disaster could be anything you want it to be, as well as something that happens at any time of the year. It could be the workshop at the North Pole, or even a shop called 'Santa's Workshop' or something else entirely. Use your imagination and have some fun with a disaster story.

Day 7

Growing up, Christmas in my family was primarily about the Nativity story, the story of the birth of Jesus. Whether or not you're a Christian, the story is lovely and features a lot of animals! There are the obvious ones such as a donkey, camels, and sheep, however there would be others along the way.

Something I enjoy doing when I write is to look at a story through a different point of view. Even in my book *Swallow Me Now*, I had fun writing a scene from the point of view of the bully and it helped me see her in a completely new light.

Today's activity combines both these things.

Writing Activity:

Write a version of the Nativity story, from the point of view of one of the animals.

You can use any aspect of the story, after all, an animal would only see a snapshot based on where they are. It could be one of the obvious animals, or it could be something like a rat who lives in the stable or a lizard the wise men pass on their journey. If you're not familiar with the story, do a search and you'll be sure to find a version to help you.



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Day 8

There are many tools to help you find the start of your story. These could be first line prompts or activities like we've had so far. Today is going to be a little different.

Instead of giving you a place to start, I am going to give you the last line for your story. If you have never done a last line prompt before, this gives you the destination for your story and try to work backwards to see how you will get there.

Writing Activity:

Write a story using this last line: To this day, Aunt Mildred has never been allowed to cook prawns for Christmas dinner.

You can change the name and gender of the character if you wish. Be creative and have fun.

Day 9

A couple of days ago, we looked at writing from a different point of view. Today, we're going to look at another point of view, and this is a favourite in the Virtual Writers' Groups.

Writing Activity:

Imagine you are an alien, and your job is to investigate Earth and report back to your superiors about what you have observed.

Write a story or report back regarding the strange Earth tradition of 'Christmas'.

You can choose any aspect of Christmas, the whole thing or something small like a candy cane or Christmas tree. You can also invent any planet or alien as your intrepid explorer.



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Day 10

So many Christmas songs were written for a winter Christmas. Here in Australia, it's always felt a bit odd singing *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* in the middle of Summer!

Writing Activity:

Choose a Christmas song that features winter and rewrite it for a Summer Christmas. Or use that song to inspire a Summer Christmas story.

You can choose any Christmas song and tweak it in any way you like to reflect an Australian Christmas.

Day 11

When I was a kid, my mum would bake up a storm around this time of year. We would then plate up the biscuits and give them to just about everyone - teachers, family friends, people in the milk bar, the postie. When my kids were small, my mum would make gingerbread houses and get the grandchildren to decorate them. If you watch any Christmas movie, baking seems to be a big thing too.

I don't enjoy baking, especially as we have an oven that is hotter at the front than at the back, although I do enjoy eating the results of baking, and not much beats the smell of biscuits and cakes baking in the oven.

Writing Activity:

Write something that features Christmas baking in some way.

It could be an ode to a gingerbread house, a baking disaster, a gingerbread person who comes to life, a crazy recipe, or anything else your imagination can dream up.



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Day 12

Living in Australia, most houses don't have chimneys. When I was growing up, we lived in a home with a fake chimney. It may have worked at some point, but it had been blocked up many years before we lived there and we wondered how Santa would come down the chimney.

A few years ago, I saw a fun song by Adrian Darakai called 'Santa we have ducted heating', and this inspired the prompt for today.

Writing Activity:

Write a story about the 'real' way Santa gets into houses to leave presents on Christmas Eve.

Day 13

Bonbons or Christmas Crackers are seen on many tables at Christmas. They can be either home made or bought from a shop and usually have a hat, joke, and something else inside.

The jokes are usually incredibly cringy, and that just adds to the fun.

Writing Activity:

Make up your own joke for a Christmas cracker!

You could make a joke and be done, or use your joke to weave into a story. If you get really creative, you could even come up with a collection of jokes and make your own Christmas crackers for Christmas day! Get creative and have some fun.



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Day 14

I have a number of friends doing an acrostic poem challenge, and some are really clever.

If you don't know what an acrostic poem is, it's a poem where certain letters of each line spell out a word or phrase. Usually it's the first letter of each line, though it can be other letters. Each line can be a single word or a sentence, or even part of a sentence.

Writing Activity:

Write a Christmas acrostic poem using one of the following words - Candy Cane, Christmas Tree, Present, Jingle Bells, Decoration

If you aren't feeling the poem today, you could use these words to inspire a story (though we will be doing a random word prompt as another prompt)

Day 15

I may be in the minority these days, but I love to receive Christmas cards, and to send them. They add to the decorations around the house, and many have heartfelt messages inside from friends and family. Some come from unexpected sources.

Writing Activity:

A Christmas card arrives in the mail addressed to you, but it was sent 50 years ago! Who sent it to you and why?

A fun extra thing to do today is to have a look at the way Christmas card designs have changed over the years. The clue to the sender and the purpose of the card may have something to do with the design, or it may be completely irrelevant.



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Day 16

Today, we have a random word prompt. If you have never done one of these, I will give you some words and you use them in a story. You can use them in any way. They could be a major part of the story or words in passing. You can also use them in any way you like.

Writing Activity:

Write a Christmas themed story with the following random words: Blue, Fish, Fireplace, Blanket, Book, Teddy Bear, Alphabet

Day 17

Just over a week out from Christmas, and there are so many messages going around from my family about the menu for Christmas day. Today, we will have a look at Christmas food.

Writing Activity:

Choose an unlikely food and write a story to explain why it's a traditional, and essential, part of your Christmas meal.

Day 18

I really enjoy a cosy mystery. These are mysteries where the detective isn't necessarily a professional. Stories like the Phryne Fisher Murder Mysteries, Father Brown, and Agatha Raisin are examples of a cosy mystery. Even The Inbestigators and Famous Five would fall under this category.

These have all the elements of any other mystery where a crime of some sort has happened, the main character or characters work to solve the mystery, and, in the end, they are key to solving the mystery. It could be a murder, robbery, or something else.



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Writing Activity:

You wake up on Christmas morning and all the presents that had been carefully wrapped and placed there are gone! Write a cosy mystery to work out what has happened to all the presents.

With a cosy mystery, the key is that the police are not the ones to investigate and solve the mystery, though they may be involved somehow. As it's your story, you can let your imagination run wild and the solution can be anything you want it to be (and yes, you can have aliens, dragons, elves, or other mysterious characters if you want to).

Day 19

Today, I am setting a challenge for you. This will likely result in a story that may or may not make any sense, however every time we do it one of the writers' groups, everyone has a lot of fun with it.

Writing Activity:

Write a Christmas or holiday themed story where each sentence starts with the next letter of the alphabet. You will end up with a story with 26 sentences.

If you've never done one of these stories before, your story will start with a word beginning with A. The second sentence will start with the letter B, the third with the letter C, and so on until the story ends with a sentence that starts with the letter Z.

For this one, you have permission to be silly as many of these stories don't come together in the way you may be used to.



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Day 20

Have you heard the saying 'a puppy is for life, not just for Christmas'? The writing activity today is inspired by that.

Writing Activity:

You have been given a new pet for Christmas – a baby unicorn! Write how will you care for it.

If you want to change the mythical creature to a dragon, minotaur, or similar, go for it. If you can't get your head around caring for a mythical creature, try a reindeer, donkey, or one of the animals that feature in the 12 Days of Christmas song.

Day 21

Did you know that even with fiction, there can be research involved? The amount of research depends on a variety of factors; however, it is especially important if you are writing historical fiction, or on a topic you know little about. Readers appreciate the attention to detail, although there are some books where the author hasn't done any research on the topic, and this has been met with mixed results.

Research could be hitting the library for books and resources, doing an Internet search, or interviewing people who were there or who have expertise in the topic you are writing about.

Writing Activity:

Write a story about Christmas in days gone by. It could be fiction or non-fiction.



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To do this, do some research. You could interview someone from a different generation about what Christmas was like for them or visit the library to find books about Christmas traditions in the past. Have fun doing some research, however, be careful not to be sucked into a rabbit hole and do so much research you don't end up writing something!

Day 22

I always have fun with stories where unexpected things happen, especially when they start out as something fairly ordinary and every day.

It's that time of year where so many schools, choirs, orchestras, drama clubs, and more have their end of year Christmas concerts. I remember them clearly as a kid and as a parent...

Writing Activity:

You think you are going to perform in the school Christmas concert, but instead you find yourself on stage as the support act for your favourite band. What band is it and what do you perform?

This could be any sort of concert, and the support act could be for anything. If you homeschool, imagine a concert for a local choir or similar, or even doing a concert with the band you've put together with some friends.

Day 23

One thing that I enjoy doing at this time of year is going for a drive to look at the Christmas lights in the area. There is such a wide variety of designs, from those who put up a couple of strings of lights on the fence to houses that go all out with amazing sound and light shows. There are also some streets where every house is decorated. Regardless of how the lights are displayed, they seem to add a bit of magic to the evening.



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Writing Activity:

Think about some light displays you have seen or something you design. Imagine these have a magic portal to another realm that will transport you any place or time. Write a story about how you are transported and where you go, and how do you get back again?

The transportation could be something that is done on purpose or it could be an accident. The only limit is your imagination.

Day 24

Today is Christmas Eve and the last day of our Advent Calendar. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have enjoyed putting together the activities. Tomorrow is the first day of the *12 Days of Christmas* program, so you can continue the writing fun.

One of the most famous Christmas Eve poems is 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'.

Writing Activity:

Write your own Christmas Eve poem or story.

You can write something based on your own experience or let your imagination run wild and be as fantastical as you like.

For more writing prompts and activities, visit melissagijsbers.com