



LETTERS TO A YOUNG INMATE

SHORT WORKSHOP ADD-INS & PROMPTS

1. Choose the last line of any letter in the booklet. Use it as the first line of your own piece of writing. This can be a letter, a poem, or a statement of any kind.
2. Imagine any of the letters as one half of a conversation, like listening to someone on the phone but not hearing the other end. Break the letter into chunks of a sentence or two at a time, and supply the other half of the conversation.
3. Pick a letter. Read the letter and then quickly make a list of what the writer of the letter wants you to take away from the letter. Go through the list and see if you agree or disagree with what the writer says. Write about why you agree or disagree.
4. Pick a letter. What can you tell about the person who wrote the letter? What facts do you know about the writer? What can you guess about the writer? Imagine the writer like a character in a story or a movie. What do you think they look like? Imagine—where could they have grown up? What could their life have been like before they were in jail? What do you think their life is like now?
5. Pick a letter. What would you like to say to the writer who sent the letter? How would you reply to their letter? Do you have any advice for them? What would you want the writer to know about you?
6. Pick a letter. Does the writer and what they have to say in their letter remind you of anyone you know personally in your life? If so, who? Write a little about the person in your life who this letter reminds you of. Is there anything you want to say to that person? Write a letter of your own (you don't have to send it) to tell someone what's on your mind right now.
7. Letter lottery – Pick any letter in the booklet, either by choice or randomly selecting one. Read the letter aloud. Discuss the letter as a workshop group. For example: What do you like about the letter? What is the author's main point? Do you agree with the author? After the discussion, take out your notebook or paper and write a response using the connected prompt as your guide.