

You're My Inspiration

Have you ever wondered where great authors get the ideas for their stories? Would it surprise you to learn that some of the most creative, entertaining, and artfully crafted literature in history has been inspired by everyday, ordinary objects and events? Inspiration is everywhere!

Here are a few examples:

- Frank Baum, the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, claims that he came up with the name of the magical realm from his famous story when he looked at his file cabinet drawer, which was labeled "O-Z".
- Jules Verne is said to have been sitting in a café when he got the idea for his novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* from a newspaper advertisement that he saw for a tourism company.
- Suzanne Collins, author of the *Hunger Games* series, was flipping the channels, watching young people compete on a reality TV show on one channel and news coverage of a warzone on another. She then merged what she saw on both channels into a compelling dystopian tale.
- Ransom Riggs' novel *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* was inspired by a collection of Victorian era photographs that Riggs acquired over the years. He eventually used the images to piece together his popular story about unusual children.
- J.K. Rowling has explained that several of the characters in the *Harry Potter* series were based on people she met in real life who had unique personalities. She used her imagination to transform those people into the wizards and giants that populate the pages of her books.

Now It's Your Turn!

What kinds of everyday objects can you find that might spark some ideas for stories to write? Keep an open mind as you look around your home, yard, or neighborhood for things that could possibly serve as inspiration. You never know when or where a great idea might strike! You might get inspired by the names on a street sign, a random piece of junk in your garage, an old article of clothing in the back of your closet, or something you find in the kitchen cabinet. When you're seeking it out, you might encounter inspiration just about anywhere.

Once you've located an object that gives you some ideas to work with, create an outline for a story or write a short piece of flash fiction to capture the inspiration you've found. Have fun and let your creativity shine as you take that inspiration and run with it!