



Disastrous Directions Contest Entries

Ashlyn G., 14, Texas ~ 1st Place

Busted

My phone dinged, “Hey, want to come hang out tonight?” my friend asked. “Sure,” I replied. Later that evening I arrived at her house and we started planning what we would do that night. We decided to sneak out to go buy some fireworks from the local gas station. Why we thought the gas station would be open at 1 in the morning to sell us fireworks I’m not sure, and why I ignored all the doubts in my mind I’m not sure of either, but we did try to sneak out and suffered the consequences for doing so.

“Shh,” my friend whispered, “we can’t let them hear us.” Her parents thought we were asleep in my friend’s bedroom, but in reality, we were climbing out the window and headed to

the gas station. I jumped off the window sill and my feet landed on what I thought was the ground, but what turned out to be a sheet draped across two clotheslines. As you can probably guess it didn't work out too well for me and I immediately fell flat on my face in the mud and made enough racket to wake the neighborhood. "Hush!" My friend hissed, "Can't you be quieter than that?" I apologized and helped her down.

We set off through the woods so that we wouldn't risk being seen on the street. As we walked, I heard a noise that sent shivers down my spine. "Did you hear that?" I asked my friend. "Yes... It sounded really creepy," she answered in a quavery voice. "I wonder what it was," I whispered. "You don't have to wonder anymore; look!" My friend practically yelled.

I followed her gaze and straight behind me lurked a huge slimy snake with big, yellow eyes. It coiled and started towards us, and we bolted away as fast as our feet would carry us. We ran so fast we weren't even watching where we were going, which ended up being straight into the stomach of our local sheriff. We tried to get away but weren't fast enough, and the sheriff grabbed us by our collars and demanded to know what we were doing out so late. We were able to convince him that we were running from a big snake and we took advantage of the opportunity to run when he went to investigate our story.

Now at this point, one would think that we'd have enough sense to go straight home, but of course, we didn't and we proceeded on our mission, mud-covered and everything. We finally ran breathlessly up to the gas station, only to find that it was closed. As we trudged back to find our way home, we heard sirens wailing in the distance. Turns out that my friend's parents realized we were gone and called the sheriff, who in turn told them about his encounter with us. My parents were called and our sleepover ended pretty abruptly. I still blame the snake for everything.

Ruby S., 13, North Carolina ~ 2nd Place

Costa Rica was, so far, a totally tubular vacation. I had just finished my sunbathing on the beach when and I decided to go back to the hotel. That would take a long trek back through the jungle, but I was prepared with directions from a local magazine, a compass, and a bottle of water, and I had researched, like, a ton of facts and stuff about the wildlife. I confidently started into the jungle with a smile on my newly tanned face.

Just a few steps into the trees I was greeted with a dinosaur. A real one. It had to be at least two feet tall. I had just read Jurassic Park, and there was a girl in a situation like this, and she ended up almost getting eaten by a dinosaur. Ignoring the directions, as my life depended on it, I ran far away from the dinosaur, as well as... the path.

I stumbled for about an hour through the vegetation until I found... another path. Or maybe the same one? The directions were no help. I took out my compass and started towards north. I knew from pirate books to always go north.

In the distance, I saw some tourists. Tourists! I ran to them and tried to calmly warn them about the dinosaur without scaring them.

“THE DINOSAURS ARE ESCAPING!” I screamed as I violently shook them by the shoulders. “THEY’RE GOING TO EAT YOUR BABIES!”

A woman sprayed a can of bug spray in my eyes. When I could see and breathe again, they were nowhere to be seen. My pack was too heavy so, as the directions said nothing against it, I set it down by a mossy tree so I could continue forward. In the tree, I saw a sleek furry animal. A kitty! I have kitties at home, and they have no claws. So surely, I deduce, all kitties

have no claws. What kind of idiot would follow directions that say not to pet any big kitties? Not me. I reached up and stroked the kitty.

The kitty scratched my arm with huge claws. I ran from the bad kitty.

In the distance, I saw a clearing and went towards it. A parking lot! I had made it without those useless silly directions. An officer stared at me quizzically.

“HELP!” I yelled at him. “This jungle is filled with tiny dinosaurs!”

His expression grew ever more confused. “Do you mean the little basilisk lizards? They often walk on their hind legs.”

“No! Compys! Baby-eating prehistoric monsters!” I made scary claws with my hands.

After he assured me multiple times that they weren’t going to eat any babies, I got in my car to get back to the hotel, take a hot shower, and sleep in my plush, white bed. When I reached into my pocket to pay for parking, I realized my wallet was in my pack. The same one I left by the mossy tree, back with the dinosaurs.

Kira C., 11, California ~ 3rd Place

A Time-Traveling Trip

Today I found an ad in the newspaper. It said that a fabric store called ClothWorld was going out of business. Now if I know anything about shopping, I know that if a store is going out of business, it sells most items at half price. It didn't seem too hard to go. I grabbed my wallet and asked my mom (who was on the phone) if I could take a little trip. I'm sure it sounded like she said yes, though I never knew if that yes was meant for me.

I found some directions on the back of the newspaper. The address was 43720 Burnt St. in Charred City. My mom must have written them down. Anyway, just as I was getting my wallet, a gust of wind ripped the paper out of my hands! Oh, well. I decided just to try to remember the directions.

I decided to go to ClothWorld on my electric scooter. I do remember that the directions said to turn left at the sign that said Fabric Store- 40 miles. However, I had been going for over an hour and had still not seen a sign. To top it off, it began hailing hard about ten minutes after I started.

After riding for about ten miles, I noticed a metal sign lying face down on the ground. I halted and flipped it over. Sure enough, the sign read "Fabric Store-40 miles". 40 miles. If I travel about 20 miles an hour on my scooter, it should only take me about...2 more hours to get there. I was so excited!

The rain finally stopped, but the overgrown road I had been traveling had turned into a river of muddy water and grass. My scooter would simply not carry me, so now I had to carry

my scooter. This was getting frustrating. At this rate, I'd be lucky if I got to ClothWorld by nightfall!

I began looking for a sign- "Fabric Store-2 miles". Also, I didn't have a signal on my phone. I was stranded out in the wilderness...

I found the sign in an interesting way. I was carrying my scooter when I felt the ground drop out from under me, and a sharp pain shot up my left ankle. I fell face-first into the muddy water. My ankle felt like it was on fire. I think I twisted it. As I struggled to my feet, my hand hit a sharp piece of metal. It was a sign. "ClothWorld- ¼ mile".

Well, I got excited. I was close to my destination. I hobbled into a small clearing and gasped. Instead of a beautiful building with yellow signs taped up on it, I stared at the charred remains of ClothWorld. Suddenly I tripped and fell. A piece of paper blew onto the ground near me. I recognized it as the ad about ClothWorld. A few words near the top caught my attention. December 1973.

What have I done now?

Brennan D., 13, Oregon ~ Honorable Mention

The Tilikum Trauma

One day, I left home to go to Tilikum for their summer camp. Of course, there is nothing strange or out of the ordinary about that, and there shouldn't be, in my book. It should have been a pleasant drive right outside town to the camp.

It was when I turned onto N. College St. that it all started. I turned the corner, a little heavy on the gas pedal, and had to slam on my brakes to stop from driving in front of the train that was speeding towards me. My head jerked forward and hit the window. The next minute the train had passed on - and so had the dizziness and nausea - so I continued.

I turned onto the next road and got a text. I glanced down to see what it was, and had to slam my brakes again because of it (and whacked my head again too). The traffic on W. Illinois St. was phenomenal, and took fifteen minutes to get past.

To make up lost time, I stepped on the gas a little more, and yet again I regretted it. The bridge had fallen down...sort of. Half the bridge had fallen, really. Only one lane was open, so that accounted for another three minutes of lateness, another bruise, and a unfortunate crack in the window.

Yamhill highway was mostly clear, and I added another five mph to my last speed. That was about the only time I wasn't immediately punished for my impatience.

In a minute, I came upon some people gawking at a goat from their car. They were from somewhere called Texas or something. Luckily for me, the road was clear and I saw them before it was too late. I eased around them, but it still took me a minute.

Suddenly, at the crossing of NE Ribbon Ridge Rd., there was a Hay Accident. Another thirty minutes of head bruising, window cracking, cow herding, and sitting.

As soon as I was past the final bale, I took off, easily twenty mph faster than I should have. I rounded the final bend, I shot past pastures and farms, and then I could see the entrance. I was almost there, twenty yards, sixteen, ten, DUCKLINGS!!!

I smashed my foot against the brakes. I was thrust forward, but the window couldn't take it. I hurled out onto the street, my foot leaving the pedal. My car rolled right over me.

In the end, it was the poor ducklings, not my thirty seven broken bones, that kept me from speeding again.

Daniel L., 12, British Columbia ~ Honorable Mention

I was driving down 188 Street to get to the more arable ground. Country places have better access, so I parked by a field. This looked like a good location.

It smelled like old fertilizer, mighty unpleasant. All of a sudden I heard a gravelly shout. I turned and saw a huge gray beast waving a large equally gray boulder at me. I left him alone; I wasn't going to argue with him! I found the perfect size of cloud described by the instructions. I shot it with my silver revolver to get its attention. The sound was deafening. Next I was supposed to help guide it down.

Turns out the monster with the rock was calling all his friends. I didn't wait to be flattened; I jumped in my car for extra protection. The beasts just acted like my car was some kind of bouncy castle! What could I do? I ran.

The cloud was my hope of escape. I beckoned eagerly to the cloud. I needed to go home. After much prodding it flew to another group of fluffies. I jumped from cloud to cloud trying to get home. A few clouds decided to let loose water and soak me to the bone. One even zapped me with static electricity and singed me all brown! I was wet, cold, and battered to the core. Soon after, I realized my previous error: rock monsters hate loud noises! I should have used a net, not my revolver. I had almost gotten home when I realized a little cloud wyvern was chasing after me in a hostile manner. I shot it and ran the rest of the way home.

I don't think I'll find my perfect cloud again. I need to discover another cloud. And better instructions.

Audrey T., 13, Indiana

'How to get to the end of this book'

Okay, you want a good grammar book but you can't seem to find the right one. You might want to try Daniel Schwabauer's "Cover Story". If you do, here are the steps you are going to take.

First, when you have the book in your hands, involuntarily you look at the cover. But since the rule is don't judge a book by its cover, you open it.

In the first section you will encounter some basic stuff like, starting a really weird journal and brainstorming for a main theme for the year, "themestorming".

In the second section, you come up to mainly poetry like Limericks, Acrostics, Haikus, and Cinquains. Here are some examples of what poetry you will be learning:

Limerick: (A poem that has a rhyme theme of 1,1,2,2,1.)

Grammar is sometimes boring,

Once I caught myself snoring.

I sat up straight,

Saw I was too late,

Some bad points for myself I was scoring.

Acrostic: (A poem with a structure on a special word.)

Dude

Academic

Not normal

Interdisciplinary

Educational

Lasting

Haiku: (A poem with the syllable structure of 5,7,5.)

This book is not lame

It is mostly good and fun

But then again, school.

Cinquains:(A poem with the syllabic structure of 2,4,6,8,2.)

Cinquain

A cool poem

Rhythm isn't key

But are very different

Cinquain

So that is the second stage of the book. Now we move on to the third section which is full of changing yourself into a character. There are Letters that you have to write, and short heroic stories. That part of your book is fun... but remember, if you use any adverbs, you won't win anything... ever!

The rest of the book is not terribly... Oops! I mean it's not that complicated, there is just a whole lot of writing. This is good for people who love writing (not that many people). If you feel like you don't like writing when you start a short story that's okay, when I started a short story, I was not excited, but when you get into it, you may still not like it, but I always say, the important thing is to make the end better than the beginning.

Avery W., 14, Indiana

I slowly opened my eyes to the bright sun shining into my bedroom. I rolled over and squinted at the clock. It read 9:45 a.m. I jumped out of bed and bounded into my closet. I snatched the closest dress and sweater. There was fifteen minutes to be out the door. I took a lightning fast shower then looked into the mirror and groaned. I saw wet stringy hair hanging limply over a tired face. My eyes floated down at my clothing choice; an orange dress, a hot pink sweater, and red sandals.

Soon, I was peeling out of my driveway. In my hurry, I accidentally turned left out of my driveway instead of right and had to make a quick Uturn. I rolled down the window hoping that would help dry my wet hair. Just as I was starting to relax, a bird flew over and pooped. Of course, it went through my window and landed on my arm. Finding something to wipe it off with, I didn't notice my speed. When I looked up a police car with its lights on, was behind me. I pulled over and he asked for my license and registration. I had been going 80! In the end, he let me off with a warning.

I finally got on my way, hoping the troubles were over. Coming to my next turn, I splashed into a huge puddle. Mud and water flew everywhere making my outfit even more ugly. One more turn and I was at the church driveway. When I started to slow down, a person rammed into me from the back! I jumped out of the car to see how much damage there was. The back of my car was pretty smashed up. The older gentleman was just as terrified as I was.

"I just need to get to church!" I said pointing, "I'm late so don't worry about the damage!"

I jumped into the car and flew up to the parking lot. But nobody was there. Then I thought to look on the church website. There I found out that there was going to be no church service due to flooding. All of that for nothing.

Christiana P., 10, Alaska

A Trip to the Park

It all started one boiling hot summer day in Jacksonville, NC. My brothers Nathan and Zachary, and myself were playing outside in the front of our house. Nathan, who was five years old at the time, asked, “ Can we go to the park?” He forgot we never had permission to go anywhere without an adult’s supervision.

I made a decision that an adult would usually make, and since I liked feeling like I was in charge, I said yes. So we hopped on our scooters and started our journey. When we got to the stop sign, which was just at the end of our road, I had one last time to choose if this was a good idea. Of course, I kept on going for the fun of it. We went across the bridge just around the corner from our neighborhood, and then we went back on the sidewalk. We were going on our own jolly little adventure!

We saw the road ahead of us. Cars speeding down the road. And we were ready. We went down the road when most of the cars coming slowed down. We sped down the road and found ourselves racing down the last bit of the way to the park. My brothers then dropped their scooters and raced to the playground. In the meantime, I was watching them as they had races down the slide and flew on the swings. I was feeling merry myself. It felt good being in charge. Then Zachary said he was hungry. So I called Nathan and we started our way back to the house to get some fruit. I grabbed a bag and stuffed apples in. The house seemed empty and rather spooky. I did not know that my mother was looking for me.

We started making our way back to the park. Just as we were crossing the street, a police car stopped right in front of us. We pretended not to notice him, and we kept on going on our little journey. Strangely so, the police officer kept following us until we steered around the corner. We went straight back to the park and the boys went back to their playing after their snack. I enjoyed watching them, but I also thought my own quiet thoughts. After about 20 more minutes or so, we grabbed our scooters and started our way back home.

About after a quarter of the way, we saw a familiar car turn down the corner, straight toward us. Our mother turned around the corner. She took our scooters in the back of her car and drove us home. I felt horrible. I knew that was going to be the worst decision of my life. When me and my brothers got home, we didn't get in trouble, but we did learn an important lesson. We now know to never do ANYTHING without asking permission.

Gabriella P., 11, Alaska

Dog Detectives?

One sunny day in North Carolina my sister Chrissi and me were playing in our backyard. We were trying to find rocks when I heard a rustling sound in the woods next to our fence and I said to Chrissi, "Chrissi, run there is a bear in the woods!" Chrissi and me started racing for the front gate. I told Chrissi that I was right next to the fence when I heard a loud rustling and started screaming. Chrissi said, "I don't believe you."

I said, "Lets ask if Klara wants to play," and Chrissi said, "Yes." Before we went to ask if Klara wanted to play we asked Nathan and Zachary our brothers if they wanted to investigate the woods with Klara and Alex (her brother). They both said yes and we walked one house over to Klara and Alex's house and rang the doorbell. Klara's dad came out and we asked if they could play outside for a while. Their dad said they would be out in minute. After we waited a little while Klara and Alex came outside and we told them about what happened in out in our backyard.

I told them that I saw black fur. Then I asked Alex if he had a pair of walkie-talkies or binoculars. Alex said he did so he ran inside for about five minutes and finally he came back outside with a pair of binoculars and walkie-talkies. We all decided that we would investigate near Klara's fence. Nathan, Zachary, Alex, and Klara would stay in the backyard while Chrissi and me investigated the woods. While Nathan, Klara, Zachary, and Alex ran into the backyard, Chrissi and me walked toward the woods. Once Chrissi and me were right next to the woods we heard an extremely loud clinking and suddenly 3 humongous dogs emerged from the bushes my sister and I started running so fast that we forgot that we left Alex's binoculars on the grass. I

started screaming and yelled to Alex, "Open the gate now!" The second we got to the gate Chrissi and me ran in the backyard and slammed the door shut.

I told Klara and everyone else, "We were just next to the woods and we saw six wolf eyes, but when they came out of the woods there were 3 humongous dogs. Then they started chasing us and that's when I yelled at you to open the gate. "After I told them what happened we heard the gate shaking and we also heard barking so we ran to the porch and knocked on Klara's back door. After we waited one minute Alex and Klara's dad came out. Klara started telling him about what happened and he said to us, "I will go over to look at the dogs." We all waited about a half hour, came out of Klara's yard, and started walking toward my house and went inside.

Nicholas M., 13, Texas

The Day Everything Went Wrong

It was a normal day. I woke up, fed my cat, and got ready to do the yard work. I went outside to get my lawn mower started up when all of a sudden the engine in it blew up. So now I had to put on some decent clothes and grab my money to go get a new lawn mower engine. I got in my car and I tried to start it, however, I was out of gas. So, I had to call a cab to come pick me up at my condo. The owner of the company said they were too busy to come to my house and the soonest they could be there is tomorrow. So, I decided to just walk. It took almost two hours for me to walk this fifteen minute car ride. When I arrived to the dealership and asked for the engine to my lawnmower they said they were out of stock.

I got back home and it was only noon. It felt like it should've been at least six by now. I got out of the shower I tripped over my cat and hit my head on the wall. I woke up and the first thing I saw was my body. I thought I'd died, I didn't know what to do. I felt short, fat, and hairy. I tried to look in the mirror but, I was too short. I jumped onto the toilet and then onto the sink. When I looked in the mirror I couldn't believe my little eyes, I was now my cat.