# Promptd

A creative writing prompt app

By Sandy Du 29679982

## Application Concept

### Introduction

Promptd is an IOS application that allows users to practice their creative writing by responding to generated writing prompts.

One of the biggest barriers to writing is the initial dread of putting pen to paper and not knowing where to start. A writing prompt can help solve this by sparking an idea and will guide writers in harnessing their imagination to create something exciting. The app aims to help remedy writer's block or catalyse new ideas.

Writing can also be daunting to many people because it is typically associated with following a rigid structure or reaching a word limit. Promptd strives to remove these roadblocks by providing a platform where users can just pick up their phone and write for as short or long as they want. There are no rules with Promptd – just pick a prompt and start writing. This encourages free-writing and is a perfect and nonintrusive way of building a habit for those wanting to write more.

The focus of Promptd is to foster creativity and make writing an enjoyable activity. Users will be able to generate writing prompts and respond to these. These can be saved as drafts or, if one chooses, shared with friends who also have an account on the app. Whether these responses were saved as drafts or posted, users can go back in and edit their writing however they want if a new idea sparks. Users are also able to add their own original prompts. In addition to this, users will be able to favourite generated prompts they come across for later use if they are not ready to start on them yet.

### Target Audience

The intended target audience for the application, Promptd, is writers and readers interested in practicing their creative writing. This does not limit to just those who are avid writers or readers, but also include those who are beginners or looking for a creative outlet to express themselves.

For beginners and those who want to write but lack the motivation and guidance to start, writing can be scary because of the vast number of resources out there or the numerous rules around how to write. There are websites that list thousands of writing prompts and usually involves scanning through and finding the perfect one before copying it down into a physical notebook or writing application like Microsoft Word before they can get to writing.

Promptd aims to centralise all this by allowing users to easily shuffle through writing prompts as well as providing a simple and intuitive interface to write their stories based on these prompts.

The app is also ideal for writers wanting to develop their imagination and creative writing skills as it’s an easy to use and pick up. Promptd has a simple interface and is perfect for all ages and does not require any special expertise to use.

## Key Functionality

*Generated writing prompts and responses*

- Users will be able to generate random writing responses and ‘favourite’ the ones they like to respond to. Each response will have a title and date of when the response was first written and can be saved to drafts to be edited and viewed again later.
- An example of a prompt will be “Write a short story based on these three words: exuberant, mask, revenge”.

*Add original prompt ideas*

- Users may have an excellent idea for a prompt which they would like to write about. The app allows users to record their own writing prompts and save it to a list where they can then later respond to it.

*Share stories with friends*

- There is an option to sign up for an account on the app which allows users to add other friends who also have an account on Promptd.
- Stories can be posted from the drafts and will be displayed on a feed for your friends to see and read. Similarly, if your friends have posted their stories, you will be able to view them from the community feed.
- All stories you have posted will also be shown on your profile page

*Local notifications to help users build a writing habit*

- Local notifications will remind users at a certain time every day to write in the Promptd app. This will encourage users to flex their creative muscles daily and help them get into a habit of writing.

## Competition and Innovation

There are few apps on the Appstore that provide a platform to write stories based on prompts. However, in comparison to other types of apps, this market is not as saturated.
I will be discussing two apps that I believe are the closest competitors to my app, Promptd.

Daily Prompt Writing App by Daily Prompt Ltd

- This app provides users with a few prompts that change daily which users can respond to. Users can choose to post the stories and see stories by other people on the app and can give feedback by leaving comments.
- Strengths
    - Users can give feedback to each other's stories, and this is a great way to grow as a writer.
    - Users can also enter writing competitions in the app which adds a fun and motivational element to writing.
    - Intuitive design and friendly user interface
- Weaknesses
    - Once stories are posted, anyone on the app can view it. Some users may only want to share their writing with their friends as they feel like their personal stories should not be shared we strangers.
    - A limited number of prompts which are only updated daily. Once the prompts have been answered for the day, users must wait for the next day to answer new ones. This may discourage users from using the app as they cannot always rely on it for new prompts.

Call of writing – Daily Prompt y Streetwriters LLC

- This app generates writing prompts which users have a limited time to write a response. Users can choose how long they must write a response e.g., 1 minute. Users must then write for 1 minute straight or else all progress will be lost.
- Strength
    - Interesting gamification of writing which encourages writers to be fast on their feet.
    - The longer users write, more features are unlocked in the app which gives users incentive to continue writing and complete more stories.
- Weaknesses
    - The UI is not very intuitive as there are too many avenues of navigation on the home page e.g., generate a prompt, challenge mode, stealth mode.
    - There isn't too much room for 'free-writing' as the urgency of the timer of the 'games' disrupts users from letting their ideas develop further.

My application, Promptd, although striving for the same goal as both the above apps – to help users improve their creative writing, deviates a bit in its fundamental purpose.  My app focuses on the idea of 'free-writing' which is to write freely with no limitation of time, ideas, or structure.

With this in mind, there are a few features of my app that stands out.

- The unlimited prompts that can be generated to be used for story writing. Users are not restricted to a certain quota of prompts per day.
- The ability to add original prompts by the user which can also be used for writing. This allows user more control over their writing if a new idea sparks their eagerness for a story.
- Allowing sharing of stories with only friends that have been added on the app. This limits who can view the stories that are written and give users a sense of privacy.

## Feasibility and Technology

The application will be developed through Apple's UI Kit and will be designed for IOS systems on iPhones. To implement its feature, there are numerous technologies that will be taken into consideration.

***Generated writing prompts and responses***

To generate writing prompts, webservices will be utilised to fetch data from APIs. In general, this app will have two types of writing prompts: images and written.

- For image-based writing prompts, we will utilise the Unsplash API, a free online website of high-quality images, to get a random photo. Unsplash has an option to narrow down the selection of generated photos with parameters such as 'topics' to ensure that the generated images are imaginative and related to the purpose of creative writing.
- For written prompts, we will be utilising a number of free APIs to generate random words and a short phrase from random nouns, verbs and adjectives. For prompts where users are given 3 different words to base their writing on, 3 random words will be generated from the free Random Word API by RazorSh4rk (https://random-word-api.herokuapp.com/home). For prompts that are phrases, random nouns, verbs, and adjectives can be fetched from the Random Word Form API by dulldesk. A second call to the Linguatools Sentence Generating API will generate a simple sentence with the words and that will form the basis of our writing prompt.

To save responses and prompts, CoreData will be used to support persistent storage on the user's phone. Since the CoreData framework is readily available to be integrated into IOS applications, it would be suitable to be used for storing responses especially for offline purposes. Users will still be able to edit and continue writing their stories when not connected to the internet, and one of the main purposes of the app is that it can be used on the go, whether it be on the commute home from work or at the library where internet connection may not be available. The app is intended for writing short stories of about 100 - 300 words. The space occupied by writing on iPhones is also relatively less so there is no major issues with using local storage to save responses and prompts. Alternatively, writing can be stored with the Firebase database as outlined below.

***Share stories with friends***

This functionality will involve using the Firebase Cloud platform to implement the backend of login authentication, adding friends, and sharing stories written.

*Setting up an Account*
Through Firebase Authentication, we can set up and authenticate a user with their email and password. Usernames will also be setup.

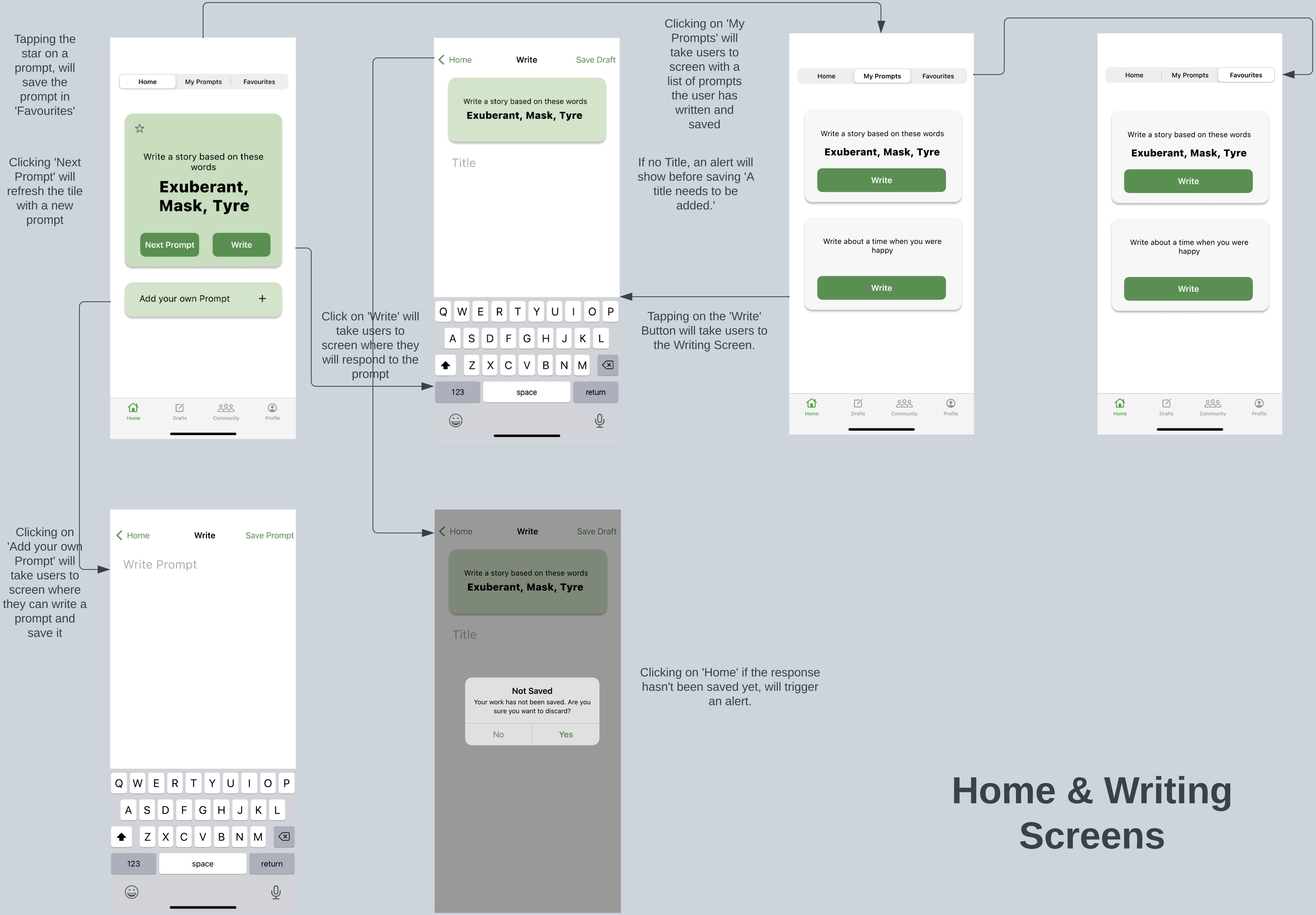
*Adding friends*
Firebase Realtime Databases will be used to set up the functionality to add friends. Users will be stored in the database with unique usernames and Firebase will keep track of friend lists and friend requests.

*Seeing posts from friends*
Viewing posts from friends will also be managed by Firebase Realtime databases. Posted stories (including the title, response, prompt & date of post) for each user will be stored in the database and will be displayed on the community feed in chronological order of when they first posted the story.

***Local Notifications***

To create local notifications which will remind users at a certain time every day to write, we will use the Swift's Notification objects/classes. The process would be the following:

1. Populate the title and body properties of the UNMutableNotificationContent object with what we want to notify the users. In this case, the title will be "Promptd – Reminder" and the body will be "Don't forget to write and flex your creative muscle today!"
2. Specify that the notification will be delivered a certain time and date through UNCalendarNotificationTrigger.
3. Finally, create and register the notification request through UNNotificationRequest



Tapping the star on a prompt, will save the prompt in 'Favourites'

Clicking 'Next Prompt' will refresh the tile with a new prompt

Clicking on 'Add your own Prompt' will take users to screen where they can write a prompt and save it

Click on 'Write' will take users to screen where they will respond to the prompt

Clicking on 'My Prompts' will take users to screen with a list of prompts the user has written and saved

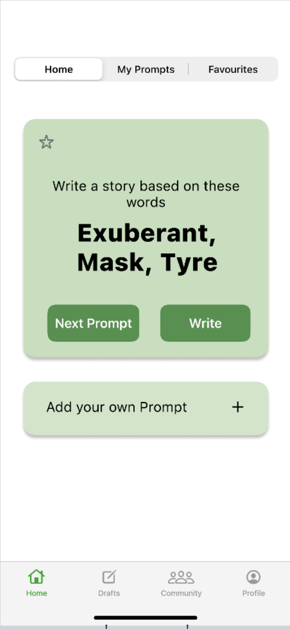
If no Title, an alert will show before saving 'A title needs to be added.'

Tapping on the 'Write' Button will take users to the Writing Screen.

Clicking on 'Home' if the response hasn't been saved yet, will trigger an alert.

# Home & Writing Screens

# Draft & Community Screen


Home | My Prompts | Favourites

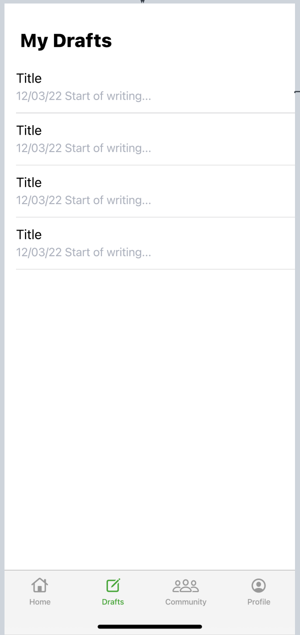
☆

Write a story based on these words

**Exuberant, Mask, Tyre**

Next Prompt | Write

Add your own Prompt +


**My Drafts**

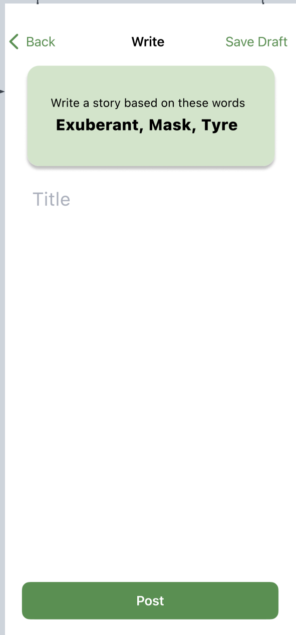
Title
12/03/22 Start of writing...

Title
12/03/22 Start of writing...

Title
12/03/22 Start of writing...

Title
12/03/22 Start of writing...

Clicking on a draft entry will take users to the editing screen


< Back | Write | Save Draft

Write a story based on these words

**Exuberant, Mask, Tyre**

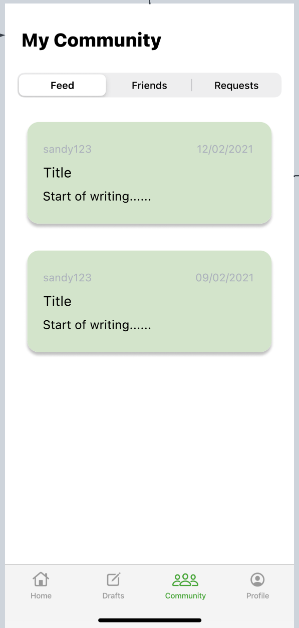
Title

Tapping on Save Draft or the back button will take us back to the My Drafts screen

Users can post their drafts from here by tapping the 'Post' button

On the 'Requests' page, it shows all the friend requests the user has received.

This screen has a list of all stories posted by friends in chronological order of posting, from most recent to least recent.

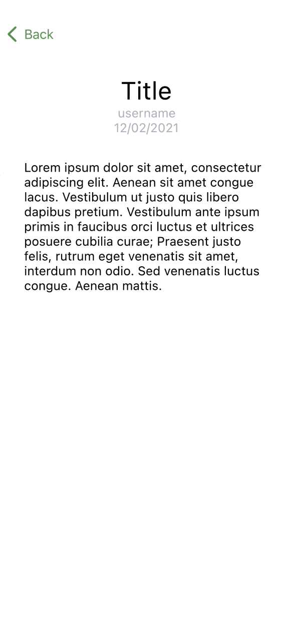

**My Community**

Feed | Friends | Requests

sandy123 12/02/2021
Title
Start of writing......

sandy123 09/02/2021
Title
Start of writing......

Clicking on a post will show the response full screen

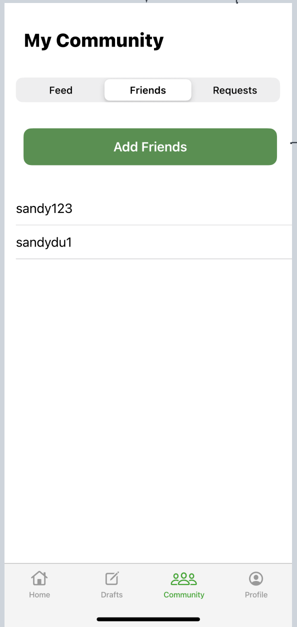

< Back

Title

username
12/02/2021

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean sit amet congue lacus. Vestibulum ut justo quis libero dapibus pretium. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia curae; Praesent justo felis, rutrum eget venenatis sit amet, interdum non odio. Sed venenatis luctus congue. Aenean mattis.

This screen shows a list of all the user's friends


**My Community**

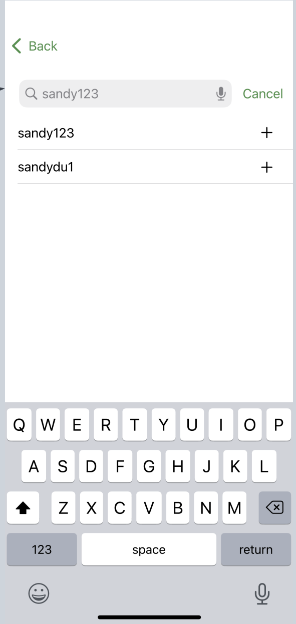
Feed | Friends | Requests

Add Friends

sandy123

sandydu1

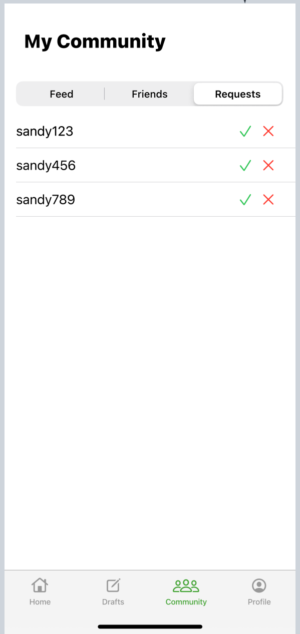
Clicking on the 'Add friends' button will take users to a search where they can search for friends by username


< Back

sandy123 | Cancel

sandy123 +

sandydu1 +


**My Community**

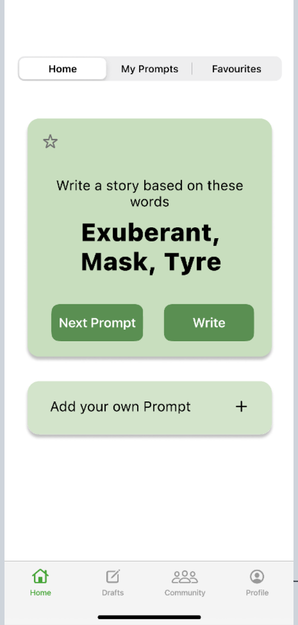
Feed | Friends | Requests

sandy123 ✓ ✗

sandy456 ✓ ✗

sandy789 ✓ ✗

# Profile Screens

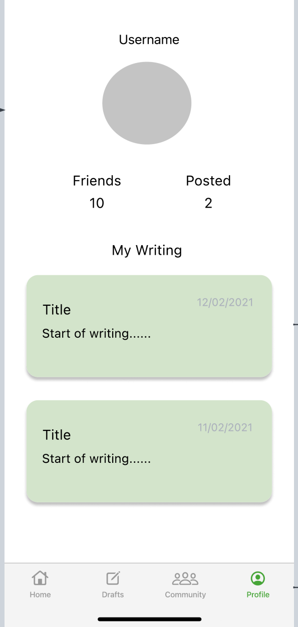


Write a story based on these words

**Exuberant, Mask, Tyre**

Add your own Prompt +

Tapping on the Profile icon in the Nav Bar will take users to the Profile Screen



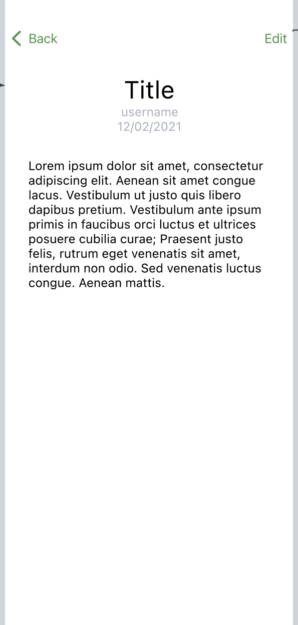
Title 12/02/2021

Start of writing......

Title 11/02/2021

Start of writing......

Tapping on a Posted story will take users to the viewing screen where they can choose to edit their Post.



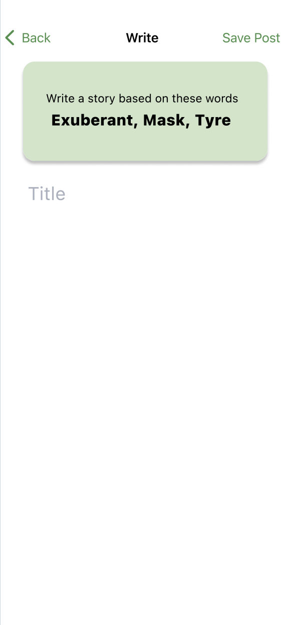
Title

username

12/02/2021

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean sit amet congue lacus. Vestibulum ut justo quis libero dapibus pretium. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia curae; Praesent justo felis, rutrum eget venenatis sit amet, interdum non odio. Sed venenatis luctus congue. Aenean mattis.

Clicking on the 'Edit' button will take users to the Editing screen.

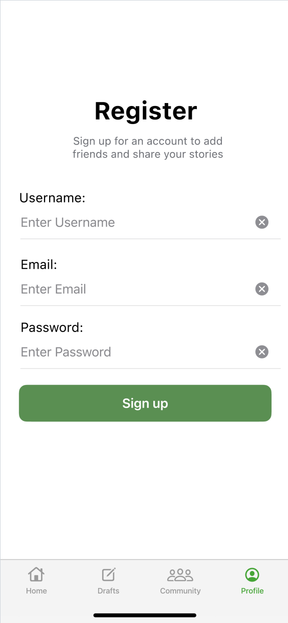


Write a story based on these words

**Exuberant, Mask, Tyre**

Title

Once done with changes, users can click 'Save Post' which the post will be saved and the post will be updated with the new changes.



**Register**

Sign up for an account to add friends and share your stories

Username:

Enter Username

Email:

Enter Email

Password:

Enter Password

When user has not signed up for an account yet, this sign up page will be displayed.

## Interface Design and Storyboard Mock-ups

The rough user interface design composes of 4 general screens:

- Home screen: this is where the generated prompts will be displayed. Users will be able to add their own prompts from this screen and will be able to see a list of their own prompts and favourited prompts.
- Draft screen: this will display a list of all the drafted stories. From here users can click on an entry and edit their stories.
- Community screen: This is where users can view friend's stories. From here users can also add friends and accept friend requests.
- Profile screen: This screen displays the works that have been posted by the user. It also shows some statistics on how many friends the user has, and stories have been posted by the user.

Using the Human Interface Guidelines, several considerations have been made to ensure that the user experience and interface is intuitive.

***Colour***

- The colour green has been used as the overall theme for the app since this colour is closely associated with balance and progress. Through this I have tried to encompass the brand of the application to promote a safe space for expressing ideas and relaxation.
- According to the HIG, differentiating which elements are interactive and which are not with different colours is important. For buttons and widgets that are interactive, I have used an accent colour of a darker shade of green to signify this to users.

***Navigation***

- The navigation of the app follows a combination of flat navigation and hierarchical navigation. Users are provided with a clear path of navigation starting at the home page, with the order of the icons in the navigation bar providing a logical sequence to traverse the app in.
- Within each main page of the app, it utilises flat navigation which implements hierarchical navigation within the subpages. For example, on the Home screen the user will select a prompt, write a response and then save the response in which they'll return back to the home screen. The flat navigation of the Home screen involves changing to 'My Prompts' and 'Favourites' screens which all are closely related with the feature of generating prompts to write stories on.

***Text fields***

- Overall, the app ensure that text is legible. Text fields used in this app are mainly used by users to write their stories. The app ensures that the text field is wide enough to allow for multiline text, enough for users to write without obscuring their text.
- Where possible, the text fields show a hint to help communicate the purpose of the text field. E.g., Title placeholders, Start your 'writing' placeholders and username, email & password placeholders.

Overall, the app strives to ensure consistency through well-known icons, text styles and closely implements the common system-provided interface elements many users using an iPhone would be familiar with. Since the purpose of the app is to provide users with an inviting environment to write their stories and express their creativity, the appearance and functionality is kept minimal and simple as to not intrude upon the user's thought process.

## Scope and Limitations

The Minimum Viable Product includes the feature to generate prompts, respond to these prompts, and save the prompts and stories. Because this app, first and foremost, wants to foster a platform for allowing users to write freely, these features are the necessary features that will allow Promptd to accomplish its goal.

The scope of this app is to generate prompts and allow users to respond to them. The ability to share stories with friends is a secondary goal that will motivate users to create a community in which they can learn from. Therefore, this feature will not be necessary to publish the completed app in a useful state.

Limitations should be considered because this app is to be completed within the semester with other ongoing assignments from different subjects and therefore no more functionalities should be extended upon. The app is not an app for writing long stories and novels and therefore will not be supporting that type of writing e.g., the space needed for storing that amount of writing. This app will stick to being a short story writing application. The app's main purpose of the 'adding friends' functionality is to give users inspiration from reading their friends' stories. The app will not be implementing any feedback functionality where users can communicate and give feedback to each other and will strictly be limited to only viewing and reading other's stories.

## Estimated Project Timeline

| **Week** | **Feature** | **To Do** |
|---|---|---|
| Week 5 | - | Set up the basic screens of the home, draft, community & profile page.<br>- This includes storyboarding the different view controllers & segues<br>- Create any view classes necessary<br>Complete planning/diagrams of how the different classes will interact with each other based on MVC |
| Week 6 | Generate Writing Prompts | Set up the UI of the home screen. Set up the use of webservices for:<br>- Image prompts (Unsplash API)<br>- Written prompts (Random word API, Linguatools API) |
| Week 7 | Generate Writing Prompts | Continue on implementing the webservices<br>Create my prompts feature page by adding in the segmented control.<br>Create the favourites page. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Ensure that navigation from each page is working.<br>Decide on how information is passed from these pages (delegates, segues) |
| Week 8<br>Milestone Assessed | Writing stories | Set up UI for writing screen<br>Set up CoreData for persistent storage of the stories.<br>Consolidate how data of these stories will be passed in the app and set up any necessary classes. |
| Week 9<br>Milestone Assessed | Draft Page | Set up the UI for the Draft page (story board & back end)<br>Integrate the page with the editing screen |
| Week 10<br>Milestone Assessed | Add friends | Conduct research into documentation of how to specifically use Firebase for account set up.<br>Set up Firebase and account authentication/ sign up page (story board & back end)<br>Set up the add friends functionality by setting up the Firebase Realtime database. |
| Week 11<br>Milestone Assessed | Add friends | Set up and create Profile page with posted stories functionality.<br>Ensure posted stories have editing screens connected to it. |
| Week 12<br>Milestone Assessed | Community page | Set up the community feed for viewing friends' posts.<br>Complete add friends functionality by implementing the friends list, and friends request. |
| Week 13 | Local Notifications | Implement local notifications to remind users to write daily |
| Week 14<br>Project Due | Testing & Completion | Test that the features work as appropriate.<br>Ensure that dark mode, app icons and assets are all accounted for. |

Some setbacks to consider is the knowledge required to successfully implement these functionalities. Since I am relatively new to Swift, I have tried to allocate enough time for me to learn and implement components such as Firebase and local notifications.

Exam period during Week 13 and 14 is anticipated to be very busy and therefore I've allocated less work to these periods to ensure that the app can be finished in time.
Lab exercises should also be taken into account for each week's work output as these exercises also take up significant of time.

# References

https://unsplash.com/documentation
https://random-word-api.herokuapp.com/home
https://developer.apple.com/design/human-interface-guidelines/ios/overview/themes/
https://firebase.google.com/docs