

WHEN

Loesje

COMES

**EVERYTHING
WILL BE
DIFFERENT**

P.O. BOX 1045 6801 BA ARHNEM HOLLAND

What Loesje is all about...

Loesje is a writers' collective, an international non-governmental organization, a poster activist group, a creative network, a contagious idea - many titles, call it what you want. The young Dutch girl Loesje has given her name to this growing group of world constructors and dreamers, people who are helping her to conquer the world with creativity and posters. Black texts on white paper, inspiring observations on the world, something humorous that makes you think, reflect and react, an exchange of opinions in the public space.

Through Loesje, people get the chance to express themselves, and become inspired to act and react to the world around them. Writing texts together is one way to express opinions and to exchange ideas. Loesje is the voice on the posters and therefore you'll find her signature under each text.

Loesje believes in the power of people and supports self-initiative, creativity, independence, freedom, acceptance and peace. She is fighting in her own creative way for freedom of speech and other human rights. Loesje is open to anyone with humanistic values and is politically and religiously independent.

Loesje groups all over the world write and spread posters. Local groups write and spread texts that are relevant to them and the country, region or city they live in. Usually texts are written in the language(s) of that country. They are thought-provoking, inspiring, sometimes critical, and often try to highlight something from a different perspective. Most texts are open for many interpretations, which reflect reality as it is: complex and many-layered. Loesje is not trying to tell people what to think or do, but hopes to inspire people to make up their own mind about things.

As Loesje is a person, she has values that shape her opinion and what she says. While being open to different ideas, these core values determine what she may or may not say, and can be a good guide for new groups on whether the message of a text fits the ideas of Loesje.

These values are: Showing solidarity, being Anti-authoritarian, being Sexually free, Showing Initiative, being Decisive, being A-religious and being Independent.

Solidarity:

**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY**

**IS NOT A DAY
TO TRUELY
CELEBRATE**

**UNTIL ALL
OUR FIGHTS
ARE WON**

Anti-authoritarian:

**LET THEM
SILENCE
THEIR EGOS**

**NOT YOUR
VOICE**

www.loesje.org/berlin
berlin@loesje.org *Loesje*

Sexually free:

HELP WANTED

**I DON'T HAVE
PRONOUNS
FOR MY GENDER**

Loesje

www.loesje.org/berlin
berlin@loesje.org

**ARE YOU
A GENDER**

OR

AGENDER

berlin@loesje.org
www.loesje.org/berlin

Loesje

Showing initiative:

**IMAGINE
A WORLD
WITHOUT
EXPLOITATION**

**AND THEN
MAKE IT**

Loesje

berlin@loesje.org
www.loesje.org/berlin

Being decisive:

ACTIVISM

**THEY SAID
WE COULDN'T
CHANGE ANYTHING**

WE DO IT ANYWAYS

www.loesje.org/berlin
berlin@loesje.org

Loesje

A-religious:

MY MORAL VALUES

**NOT HERE
TO PROVOKE
YOU**

Loesje

www.loesje.org/berlin
berlin@loesje.org

Being independent:

#OCCUPY MYSELF

**I AM MY OWN
100%**



Loesje creative text writing workshops online

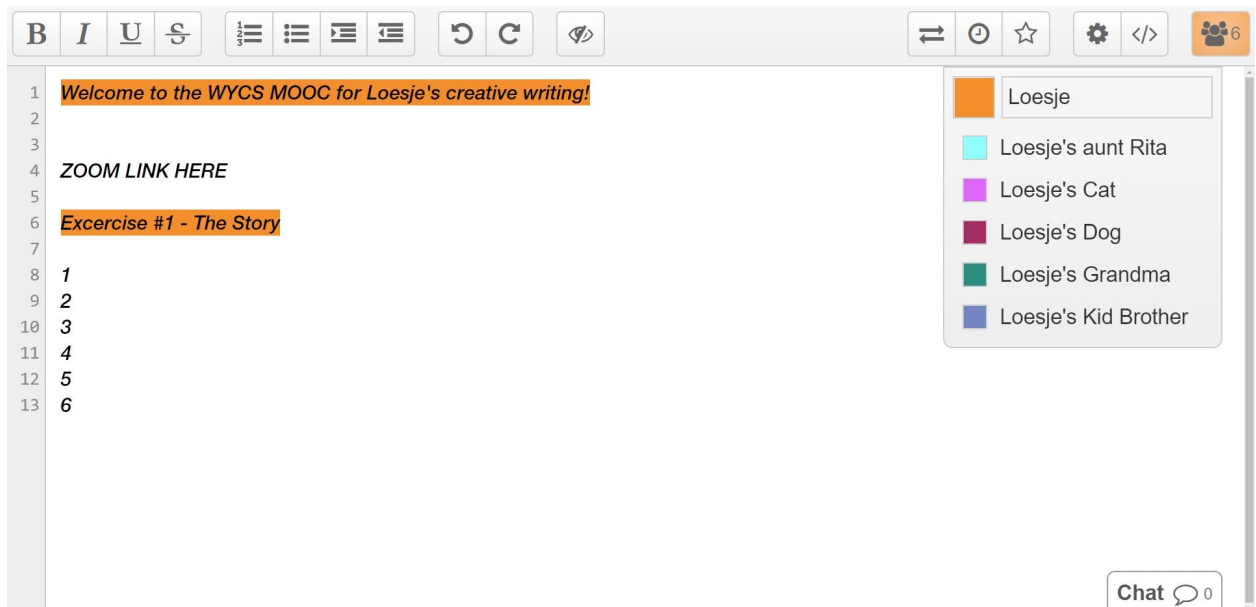
Generally, Loesje workshops are made by a group of people, all meeting in person, in a comfortable place with a lot of space for people to sit together and write. However, when much of school and work life was moved online due to the Corona pandemic, the Loesje workshops were also adapted to take place online. A Loesje creative text writing session is normally done by using pen and paper, so finding a tool to simulate that process is one of the first things to figure out. We recommend using “Etherpad”, which is a free web application that allows multiple users to work on a text document simultaneously. Using Etherpad, combined with a video conference tool such as Zoom, has been the way for the Loesje Berlin team to do online creative text writing. Give yourself and your participants time to get acquainted with the tools and apps, to make the writing experience as smooth as possible.

1. Preparation -

After setting a time and date for when your group will meet online, you can create a writing pad here: <https://etherpad.servus.at/>. You can auto generate a new pad name or name the pad yourself. Once the writing pad is generated, you can share the link with all your participants. Along with the etherpad link, you will need to share a link to the video meeting. We usually use “Zoom” to do our video calls, but you are free to use the video call platform that best works for you. Through the video call, you as a facilitator will have an easier time giving instructions to what your participants will write on the Etherpad. Make sure that these links are shared with the participants before the agreed time and date of your online creative text writing session.

2. The Beginning -

When doing the online creative text writing session, make sure to give yourself some extra time for any technical difficulties that arise, while the participants connect (especially if it is the first time facilitating the workshop). You can always encourage the participants to enter the Etherpad link and Zoom call, 10-15 minutes before the designated meeting time. When the participants enter the Etherpad, instruct each person to write their name on the top right hand corner, by clicking on the icon with figures of people. (*Show Screen recording*)



Once all participants are connected, you can begin the workshop by doing a quick round of name sharing and introducing yourself. You can continue by explaining what Loesje is and the outcomes of the workshop: to write text proposals of which some will become Loesje posters. Explain what will happen during the workshop and make sure to clear up any doubts or questions from the participants. If you know there are people new to Loesje or who haven't participated in a Loesje workshop before, introduce a bit about Loesje's way of writing texts. All posters are created through topics that the participants bring to the table and relate to. The posters present a positive way of thinking about the world and aim to change disappointment into initiative and action. You and the participants can write about anything and "there are no rules" when it comes to writing, for the warm-up games and writing about the subjects the participants select.

3. **Warm-up activities**

Examples of warm-up activities and games: There are many variations to the games you can play to get the creativity flowing with your participants. Remind the participants that they can all be creative, even if they do not believe it. Here are a couple ways to get started.

A story:

The goal of this game is to make up a story with a group of words, having the participants associating to each other's input.

Like previously mentioned, these activities are usually made with pen and paper. Each person would have a piece of paper, which they would write on and pass to the person next to them. Since it is not physically possible to pass a piece of paper through the computer screen, you can start by numbering rows on the Etherpad matching the amount of participants. In an online setting an ideal number of participants is between 6-8 people. You as a workshop leader are taking part in all the steps, together with the participants.

Step 1:

Everyone gets a number (which will be imagined as the paper) on which they write the first word that comes to their minds, along with a "comma". Then, they move down to the next number where each person now writes another word next to the word already on the line. This second word should be a free association to the first one. Everyone moves down to the next line. The last number will go up to #1. The participants continue going down the numbered lines, writing down one word at a time, always associating on the last one on the numbered line, until each participant has returned to the number they started on. Then, every person underlines 3 words from their numbered line - the three words they like best or find most interesting - and they go down to the next number.

Step 2:

Now you ask them to write down the name of a famous person, and to again go down to the next number, where they should write down the name of a kitchen tool / household item, and repeat the process of moving to the next number. Here they write the name of a place or location (Paris, beach, the cupboard under the stairs). As they move down to the next numbered line each participant writes a problem, big or small.

Step 3:

Everybody gets the task to write a story involving:

- the 3 words that have been underlined,
- the famous person
- who uses the kitchen tool
- in the chosen place/location
- to solve the problem.

The participants can write on their own devices and copy the result into the Etherpad, or write directly on the Etherpad. You might need to monitor the time here, asking the participants if they need more time, since some participants will finish before the others.

Voilà! Hopefully both you and the participants had fun and tickled your imagination.

Step 4:

After the group has finished writing, read out (some of) the stories. Always ask for volunteers and if no one wants to start, do it yourself.

Variations on the story:

4. **Newspaper article** - You can follow the same instructions as above, and instruct participants to write a newspaper article with the collected words.
5. **A postcard** - For the postcard variation you can follow the instructions above for the story, adding an extra step of adding a second famous person. In this scenario one famous person writes a postcard to the second famous person, using the 3 underlined words, including the place, and using the tool/object to solve the problem. A benefit of the postcard format is that it should be short, which can be practical if you have limited time.
6. **Hulkie-kulkie or ("My grandma always says...")**
Similar to the first writing game, you can start by numbering rows on the Etherpad with the amount of participants. In this game the participants begin to play with techniques that Loesje uses in her writing. You can explain the techniques as you go through the activity. Begin by choosing a topic with the whole group. Once a topic has been collectively chosen, have every participant write a statement about it, which starts with the phrase, "My grandma always says/said...". When everyone has finished writing their phrase, everyone can move down to the next line, and will work the statement that is on that line. Now people will use this phrase and turn it around. Meaning they can say things in a different or the opposite way. For example, they can switch the subject and object in the sentence or turn the context around, small becomes big, positive becomes negative. When all participants have finished, they can move down to the next line. This time the participants will work with the following statement and they will turn it into a question. When finished they can move down to the next line. With the next task, they will turn the question into an exaggeration. The statement no longer has to be a question. What is important is to make the subject and what it implies, as big as possible. A small scrape or bruise becomes an amputated arm or leg, a gust of wind becomes an intense tornado. When all participants have finished writing their last sentence, every person can take a turn in reading all four statements written, starting from the original statement. Make sure the participants read slowly to see how the statements changed as a different technique was applied.

7 techniques used by Loesje:

Association:

Think of and find as many words and ideas as possible that relate to the subject or make a chain of associations. What kind of feelings are provoked through these associations of the topic?

Contradiction:

Look for a contradiction or what is opposite of the subject. At times this can prove a strong image.

Comparison:

Compare the (opinion of a) topic or something that is new to you (and others) to something that is well-known. That can help with clarifying a meaning or consequence of a topic.

Exaggeration:

Make the topic or subject and what things it implies, bigger. For example a puddle becomes a lake, a drizzle becomes a thunderstorm with hurricanes.

Stimulation/Suggestion:

Motivate others to take action. Allow them to see things in a different way, rather than telling them what to do. Make people read things in a different way and show them how rewarding doing things in an unusual way can be.

Turnaround:

Swapping the subject and object in a sentence or switching the context can sometimes facilitate a new perspective. Make strong aspects into weak ones and vice versa.

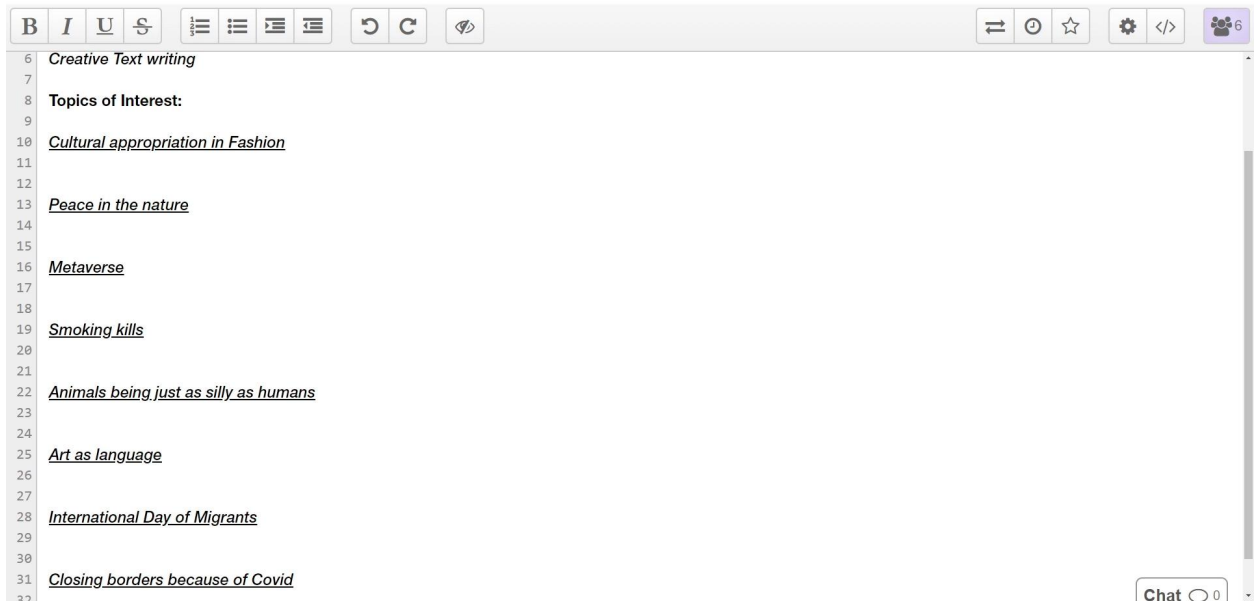
Question:

By asking a question people have a chance to reassess or think about a topic they could have taken for granted.

7. Collect subjects/topics and writing

Now that you have made some warm-up games together with your participants, you can move on to the second part of the online creative text writing workshop. In between the warm-up and actual writing, it can be a good moment to take 10-15 minutes for a toilet break, stretching, coffee / tea before you move on to the next part. When all participants are back, begin by explaining the next part of the session. In this process, you will write phrases and texts. They can write whatever comes to their minds, it does not need to be their own opinion. If they see other's opinions that they do not agree with, that is fine, they are encouraged to write something else in addition. It is important to emphasize that at this stage it is still not necessary to write a "Loesje poster", because the aim of this part of the writing is to share, exchange, and associate to each other's ideas. Work on expressing yourself and encourage the group to do the same. If you have new participants that are not familiar with Loesje, this would be a good moment to provide some insight on who Loesje is and the values she upholds. By presenting Loesje, the participants will have a better idea of how texts can be written.

Move onto collecting and discussing topics that people have on their minds, are curious about, or simply just a topic they like. As you discuss the topics people bring up, make sure they are written down on the Etherpad.



It will be easier to write on the topics afterwards, if they are more specific than broad. If someone suggests writing about “racism” you can suggest that they write down an aspect of racism that they are extra curious to write about today, for instance “racist incidents in public transport”. Each participant should ideally propose at least one topic, and from this you create a list of topics. You might need to moderate the discussion, since on one hand it is important that all participants understand what is meant by each topic, but on the other hand, you want the discussion to take place during the writing on the Etherpad, and not spoken before.

After 10-15 minutes of collecting topics, you encourage all to write associations and phrases for each topic. They can each start on a topic which they proposed, and then move on to the other topics. The idea is that the participants feel inspired to start thinking and writing as if they were Loesje. Any ideas are allowed. It is a collective process, so everyone can play off of each other's ideas. There is no need to cross out anything someone else has written. Simply just respond to other people's texts by writing below them. Take time to write for each collected topic, and make sure that everyone has a chance to do the same. When you think people are done writing or feel tired, you can move onto the final part of the online workshop.

8. Voting, selecting texts, Final Editing

In this final step, have the whole group look at all of the written texts and select their favorite ones by adding a “+”. They can choose more than one text on each subject,

including their own texts. In the end you'll recognise the most popular texts by the number of "+" behind each text. To bring the workshop to a close, read out loud the texts with the most "+". Explain that the proposals that have been selected the most will be turned into a list. This list will be shared with a Final Editing group, which will discuss each text and will take the final decision on which texts will become part of a new Loesje poster series. Make sure to reach out to Loesje International or your closest Loesje group for support on the Final Editing process and the layout after you and your group have created texts. The Final Editing needs to be made by a Loesje group, who knows Loesje's identity. Not every text is suitable to become a Loesje poster.

9. Ending the workshop

As a way of ending the workshop, thank the group for joining and ask for feedback from your participants. Find out how they feel after the workshop: was it a process they enjoyed? Were they able to follow and clearly understand the steps of the workshop? Would they join another online creative text writing session?

In case it was an open invite, and you do not have the contact details of all the participants, collect the details of those who would like to be invited again.

We wish you luck with conducting your own Loesje creative text writing session!

Loesje Final Editing:

We will now go through the Final editing process. At this stage of the process it is important to keep in mind that this is a collective process that requires the perspective and input of every participant. There is no "good or bad" text. We only have texts which "work or don't work".

- From all the circled texts, a list will be created, divided by the topics.
- In a second step, you shorten the list by selecting the strongest and most fitting to the characteristics of Loesje and her values.
- Now you discuss and work with the texts from the short list. Is the text good enough how it is? Can we shorten it, or make it more clear by exchanging any word? Does it need a heading/title to be understood?

Now we will share with you some "points to think about" that will guide you to select Loesje posters.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF LOESJE TO KEEP IN MIND

Loesje Posters...

- **are innovative.** - She doesn't want to repeat or say things that have already been said before or are common slogans or phrases.
- have a **positive** view on life and gives things a positive twist. -She wants the reader to feel **empowered** and **motivated** by the text.

- are **progressive** (not just describing). -She wants readers to take initiative and have a plan of action, to mobilize. E.g. "War is bad" is a statement that we can all read and agree with, but there is no initiative or proposal for understanding why war is bad or action for change. Hence it is not suitable as a Loesje poster.
- are **inspiring**: makes people think, act, smile etc.
- there is **no judgment** by her statements. She **criticizes without judging or being moralistic**. So if you feel a "finger of judgment", it is more than likely that the text does not work as a Loesje poster.
- are **short and to the point**. -Keep in mind that posters are intended to be in public spaces, and people should be able to read and understand quickly what they read on the poster.
- can be **easily read in different ways** (but if one of those ways gives the wrong impression, it might be better to leave it out or rephrase it, especially in a diverse group of people with diverse backgrounds).
- Do not encourage violence or aggressive notions
- If Loesje can't say it, can another family member say it?

Loesje has a family

Sometimes you end up with great texts which just don't seem to fit Loesje's personality. Therefore you find Loesje's relatives on some of the posters. In her diary [from 1987], Loesje describes her family. The kid brother is the most frequently used so far. Use the family members if you want to, but don't use them too often: the organization is called Loesje, not Loesje's family. The rule of thumb is: only one relative per series.

The kid brother

He's a real adolescent. His opinions can be rather extreme and he explores the world in a provoking way. He is slightly selfish and pretends to be very tough, but he can also be rather pathetic and terribly annoying. Sometimes his views match his big sister's and sometimes he says things that she'd never say. Every girl who has a kid brother now his kind: sometimes he's great fun, but other times you just want to kill him. He can have great ideas and is good at twisting words, but he can also be very negative, sarcastic and irritating.

Cousin Carl

Carl has succeeded in staying unemployed with the remark "unmanageable" from the unemployment agency for the last ten years. He lives on the dole. Every week he writes a job application to the King of the Netherlands since he's expected to apply for a job weekly, and in the time that remains he enjoys life. He has many ideas and ideals, but he just doesn't have the energy and the enthusiasm that Loesje has to do something with it.

Aunt Rita

She invented the word “comfy”. She loves tea with biscuits, hot chocolate and Wheel of Fortune. She enjoys her karaoke nights in the local pub at which she is occasionally found dancing on the bar at the end of the evening. She also organizes bingo evenings in the community centre and knows everybody in her neighbourhood as well as all the local gossip. She is concerned about the world in a bit of a naïve and maybe slightly superficial way. She reflects social problems on herself and sometimes she gets confused, but she’s always open for new things, especially on a spiritual level.

Grandpa

He is a walking history book. He thinks pragmatically, has a lot of life experience and nobody can fool him. He’s got a good insight into society and likes his granddaughter. He’s an old leftist who still celebrates the 1st of May.

Grandma

She lives half of the time abroad, does things nobody has ever heard of and lives a remarkable life. She’s an old rebel in her eighties and, as she puts it, ‘in the prime of her life’. Beautiful tanned men fall for her. Wherever she goes, she meets the most interesting and bizarre people. She’s critical about new things such as genetic manipulation, battery-powered toys and brown-bread-that-looks-like-white, but she tries to keep an open mind. She’s probably the first elderly person who hacked the files of the secret service through the internet.

Mother

Mothers want their children to become happy, but they also want them to have a ‘good job’ and ‘the right kind of friends’. However, a parent’s idea of ‘good’ and ‘right’ doesn’t always resemble the child’s views. Loesje’s mother is into good family conversations and used to fuss a lot, but she has become freer now that Loesje and her kid brother are not that little anymore. She has recently started learning Italian and has gone off on holiday on her own, leaving Loesje’s dad to take care of the house. She found her first hot flushes very exciting.

Father

He is a real father. He finds Loesje’s ideas great but he doesn’t really understand all of them. He’s a bit afraid of what the neighbours and his colleagues will say. In his youth he goofed up a lot but he tries to keep it a secret from his children because he’s afraid of being a bad example. He’s somebody who often says “Could you be quieter?” or “Is that really necessary?” and who can be found waiting outside the shops while his wife is buying clothes. And probably he always pays too many taxes because he can’t be bothered to sort out all the exemptions. He has a model railway in the attic.

Uncle Henry

Henry is a bit of a cynic who loves working on his allotment. He sticks to old habits: porridge for breakfast at 7.30, each day, every day; one biscuit with his tea at 11; at 8 pm a cup of coffee while watching the news and at 10 pm it’s time for bed, because the next day porridge will be served at 7.30 again. With Aunt Rita, his wife, he’s living a quite happy life. She is the one who tries out most new things, even though from time to time he can do surprising things as well

(such as taking up shamanistic dancing). He's a bit bourgeois, but he still can be surprisingly progressive and modern at times.

Lay-outing the texts

The main idea when lay-outing a Loesje poster is "keep it simple". In the flood of colourful ads, black text on white paper with a short message stands out.

Before you start with Loesje posters, you can play a bit with other texts to see how different layouts look. Choose one text (e.g. from a newspaper), write it down in capitals several times, cut out every word and manually layout the text in different ways on the page. Now that you have several versions in front of you, try to see which one captures the eye. You can ask other people to give their opinions too so you have a wider and more objective view.

Here are also some rules and tips that might come in handy when lay-outing Loesje posters:

- It is better to divide long texts into paragraphs.

- In each text choose the same line spacing between the units.

- The text must remain readable!

- If the text has a title (e.g. *dentists / the best cure is your smile*) you put one line space between the title and the rest of the text.

- If the text is in one sentence (e.g. *the world is more beautiful with you*), you don't have to do the graphic separation and you can center it.

- Use the contact info (www.loesje.org, loesje@loesje.org, or the address of your local group) to emphasize the message (e. g. with the text *show me the borders / and I'll show you how to cross them* put the whole info text in one horizontal line and put it between two parts of the text – we mark it with /).

- There is also a special font and fixed sizes for the texts, contact the international office for this info.

- And pay attention to spelling mistakes. Always let somebody else have a look at your posters.

Remember, just be creative!