

ACADEMIC JOURNALING

Journaling is a kind of window into how students are thinking about what they are learning. Student journals can be an important source of information about learning difficulties, misconceptions, strengths and weaknesses, and metacognition. The act of transferring thoughts, ideas, and feelings into written words also encourages students to examine their own thought processes. It is a private record of students' thoughts that provides a safe way of communicating with the teacher, and giving teachers insight into those thoughts. Journal writing works because every time a person writes an entry, instruction is individualized.

It's encouraging to write about how you learned a concept. Write about connections you make in a class activity or a lecture.

"Writing is more than living. It is being conscious of living."

Ann Morrow Lindbergh (1965)

Benefits:

- Journals are a way students can process their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and emotions on paper, and it promotes reflection to see growth or decline and what possibly caused the rise or fall.
- Students develop metacognitive skills by reflecting on what they learned and how they learned it.
- Journaling in mathematics helps students use more precise mathematical language to express their ideas. It encourages students to reflect on their own knowledge and their own ways to solve problems and how they remember steps.
- Journaling in science can help students activate their prior knowledge and make better hypotheses by drawing a process or cycle etc.
- Journal writing also helps students become more fluent in expressing their ideas in writing or speaking.

Journal Guidelines

Below are guidelines to follow when keeping a journal in class.

- If you are having trouble thinking about what to write in your journal, think about what you would possibly write as a status update on a social media site. Use this as your starting point.
- Journals are not meant to be published. Remember that this is a place where you can explore your thoughts and ideas without any concern of someone's criticism.
- If you like to write stories, or poems, it is OK to write them in your journal.

- It's OK to break all of the rules in spelling and grammar. There is no right or wrong way to write something in your journal.
- If you don't know how to spell a word, use this time as a learning strategy. Write the word as best as you can, or underline the word that you think you misspelled.
- Write with a pen, marker, colored pencil, or whatever it is that you like. You can also add a drawing if you want to enhance your journal entry.
- Date each journal entry, and write in your journal every day.
- It's OK to go back and revise or add on to a journal entry if you feel you need to add a detail.
- If you feel comfortable, be willing to share your journal entry with a friend, or classmate.

SEE AN EXAMPLE BELOW AND TRY IT FOR YOURSELF.

Date	Actions	Reactions	Action Plans
Sample	<p>Completed 15 Algebra problems on page 55. Distributive property.</p> <p><u>Example:</u></p> $2(X + Y) = 0$ $2X + 2Y = 0$ <p>Remember to multiply everything inside the parentheses by the outside number. Helps to highlight outside number.</p>	<p>At first, my hands were sweaty and shaking; my heart was pounding; I felt dizzy. After I checked my answers on the first few problems, I calmed down.</p> <p>Note: I put the kids to bed before starting my homework so the house was quiet. This helped.</p>	<p>Meet tutor at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow. Review Chapter 2 and 3 for test.</p> <p>Ask instructor to go over distributive property in class.</p> <p>Do 5 more problems for practice.</p> <p>Bring highlighter to class.</p> <p>Preview page 56 in textbook.</p>
Sample	<p>Completed draft of English Essay in Word. Spell checked. Received individualized writing help in the Writing Center.</p> <p>Main problems were run-on sentences and fragments.</p>	<p>At first my mind was blank, but after I brainstormed for about 2 minutes, I was able to write the opening paragraph ok.</p> <p>I read my essay out loud to edit after it was written because I get confused when I write.</p>	<p>Revise essay according to proofreader's tips.</p> <p>Meet with instructor to go over essay before due date. Revise if needed.</p> <p>Do Student Success Lab lessons regarding sentence structure.</p> <p>Turn in essay on time.</p>

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