

Literacy Activity Inventory: Journals

See our [General Information and Classroom Management Suggestions](#)

Curriculum Continuum - Expectations:

Activity Expectations based on the Grade 2, 4, & 6 curriculums.

Students will:

- 1. Writing** (2e1)... communicate ideas (thoughts, feelings, experiences) for specific purposes;
(4e2)... begin to write for more complex purposes (e.g., to present and discuss their opinions and viewpoints, to pose questions, to record information);
(6e2)... use writing for various purposes and in a range of contexts, including school work (e.g., to develop and clarify ideas, to express thoughts and opinions);
- 2. Writing** (2e2)... organize ideas in a logical sequence;
(4e3)... organize and develop ideas using paragraphs (e.g., to tell a story);
(6e3)... organize information to convey a central idea, using well-linked paragraphs.

Activity:

To become good writers, students must have daily opportunities to write for various purposes and audiences. Writing competence develops along with reading and other language skills. As students read a variety of texts by numerous authors and respond to their readings, they broaden their own vocabulary, learn to vary their sentence structures, and begin to develop their own literary voices.

Journals not only allow students to state their own opinions, original ideas and personal thoughts, but also provide a purposeful context in which to practice the basic conventions of writing. A journal is an on-going record of a student's literary maturity, and writing development. By perusing student journals, teachers can get very accurate pictures of their students' sentence structure, clarity, spelling, punctuation, word use, and grammar to date, along with a history of their personal development in a variety of areas.

Writing is a complex process involving many skills that need to be developed and encouraged in interesting and meaningful ways. The beauty of an on-going journal, aside from its use as an assessment device, is the ability to use it as a teaching tool. Not only can teachers develop certain skills in students by providing different journals for various purposes, but they may emphasize or focus on whichever writing expectations are important or appropriate at any one time ... within the context of a child's real writing continuum.

Types of journals are many. Here are just a few:

1. **Reading Response Journal** - contains thoughts about and personal evaluations of, books read
2. **Character Journal** - journals written in role
3. **Reading Journal** - lists of books read, responses to comprehension and related skills work
4. **Cooperative Response Journal** - entries composed and written by members of the class - individually, with a partner, in small groups or whole group interactive writing. (Works well with all ages, but especially helpful for younger students.)
5. **Writer's Journal** - place to store potential writing ideas, snippets of great language, and wonderful words
6. **Learning Journal** - information, useful strategies, ways of approaching certain tasks that one wishes to remember, reflections on what has been learned in class, and ways to improve in certain areas
7. **Personal Journal** - private writing and reflecting, not for evaluation, students may decide if they wish to share any entries with others