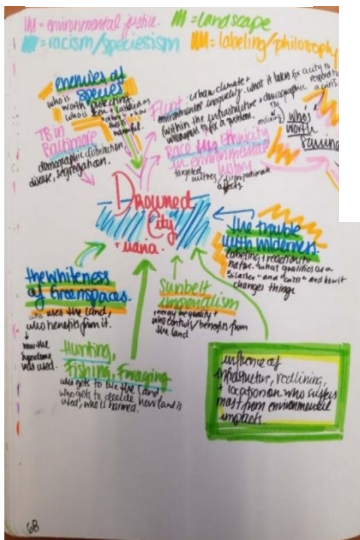


# Journaling for Academics



## Example of an Academic Journal:



Via [Insider Higher Ed](#)

- Journaling can be used for academics not just for therapy and feelings. According to the Inclusion Lab, when children write in journals, they examine, express, and keep track of their reasoning, which is especially useful when ideas are too complex to keep in their heads. By you, the teacher, reading their journals, you can evaluate their progress and recognize their strengths and needs.
- The 3 main ways to implement this strategy in your classroom include:
  1. Access the students' current repertoire: access their current skills and what you may need to teach in writing before getting started.
  2. Make writing meaningful: no matter what course the journaling is for, make the topic meaningful. Ask your students what is important and have them begin writing on that topic.
  3. Provide Editing and Revision instruction: You can help improve the quality and clarity of student writing by prompting them to check their own work.

## Students with Learning Disabilities:

- They may struggle with:
  - illegible handwriting
  - incomplete sentences
  - errors in syntax, grammar and spelling
- The best way to help students with LDs is to provide daily instruction that directly teaches word formulation, spelling, grammar, idea organization, evaluation, and revision (MacCormack & Hutchinson, 2019).
- Steps to teaching students with LD's how to journal:
  - present the task as a process
  - teach each step in the process
  - provide feedback for each step.
- When assigning an essay or other writing project, be specific and clear about what you expect.
- To help students understand how to organize their written thoughts, teach them mind mapping. A semantic mind map for an essay may include major nouns, verbs, and adjectives, as well as phrases to use in writing each paragraph. Some introductory and transition sentences will also come in handy. Another step after mind mapping is advanced outlining. Begin and end the initial outline with the words "Intro" and "Conclusion" as placeholders. Then have students expand that outline on their own.

## Different Types of Journals:

- **Dialogue Journal** – Write back and forth with your student, or assign your students dialogue partners.
- **Goal or Progress Journal** – Have students write down a weekly goal at the beginning of the week. At the end of the week they can comment on their achievements.
- **Gratitude Journal** – Students write down things they are thankful for. Beginners can write journals in list form.
- **Fictional Journal** – Have students take on the persona of a famous person or a fictional person. This can be useful for students who don't want to write about themselves.
- **Reading Journal** – Have students write about what they are reading.
- **Vocabulary Journal** – Students choose one new word per day and try to use it as many times as they can in a journal entry.
- **Photo Journal** – Students choose a photo and write about it. Useful for online blogs.

## How to teach Journaling (MacCormack & Hutchinson, 2019):

1. Teach strategies for every step of writing and reading summaries.
2. Encourage cooperative writing activities.
3. Explicitly teach the goals of writing.
4. Encourage the use of assistive technology.
5. Teach students to write complex sentences.
6. Provide teachers with professional learning opportunities.
7. Use examples of good writing to teach style.

## ESL Learners:

- Learning to write for fun in the form of journaling can be amazingly beneficial to language learners. Not only can it accelerate fluency, it can be a tool that brings more self-awareness to the process of learning English.
- Benefits of ELL Journaling:
  - Journaling can help reveal areas of vocabulary that are weak or missing in a student's mental database
  - It makes the vocabulary personal, which increases retention
  - Journaling brings multiple skills together
- ESOL Journaling Activities:
  - Encourage your students to use their ESL journal like a diary. They may write down their routines and personal observations each day.
  - Students can use their journal as a way to record their goals (for language learning or for other areas of their life) and the specific actions they will use to achieve them.
  - Encourage true freewriting, in which students write about the first thoughts or ideas that come to their mind.
  - Have students recall an incident or situation that held significance for them.

Information from (Bolen, 2020)

## English/Language Arts

- Improves reading and writing skills
- Reflective self-dialogue helps the student find their own voice
- The students will keep a Writer's Notebook to record ideas, words, thoughts as they come to mind. It is an essential tool for the writer.
- Idea's for the Writer's Notebook:
  - Capture what is important. Encourage students to write about their experiences, feelings, and emotions.
  - Describe your world. Using the five senses as a framework for writing helps to add depth and complexity to student writing.
  - Include drawings or sketches. Don't feel limited to writing.
  - Write to a specific audience.
  - Make an anchor chart. Each day that you find a new way to use a writer's notebook, make a record of it on an anchor chart or display board for future inspiration!
  - Write, share, and write again! Encourage students to share their work, reading aloud in pairs, small groups, or to the class.

Information from (Teach Starter, 2020)

## Math

- ✚ Use the journals daily during lessons to keep notes and do problems.
- ✚ Teachers might ask children to write entries at the end of math class, describing what they did and what they learned, including things they're not sure about, or questions they have.
- ✚ First-grade teachers can make journals out of stapled sheets of paper. On each sheet, children responded to two prompts:  
Today I did.. and Today I learned..
- ✚ Upper-grade teachers can ask students to elaborate in their journals on the following prompts:
  - What I know about \_\_\_\_\_ so far is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - What I'm still not sure about is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - What I'd like to know more about is \_\_\_\_\_.

Information from (Burns & Silbey, 2020)

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## History

- 6 basic guidelines for using writing to help students learn history:
  - Have students write to specific assertions rather than to general topics
  - Require more than one draft of any writing assignment
  - Instead of one long term paper, assign several short papers, each of which expands and explores on those preceding it
    - Have students write to different audiences and from different points of view
  - Require students to rewrite their assignments
  - Use writing to advance the study of content

Information from (Beyer, 1980)

## Science

- Students can write out their current beliefs and understandings of scientific processes *before* you teach the material and (mis)conceptions of science.
- Images and illustrations are an important aspect of the science journal
- Here's a list of topics that are applicable to a broad range of scientific topics, and will enhance the inquiry process for your students:
  - "Isolate and integrate." Define all the variables and consider how they interact with one another.
  - Students who have difficulty explaining their thoughts in written form can excel if given the opportunity to use a manipulative form of showing what they know.
  - The scientific journal is one place where the sentence and paragraph structure of written language has limited appeal. (It's not, however, totally absent.) Remember to include lessons in graphics creation and analysis if that's appropriate for your class.
  - Think of this as a pattern to follow when your students write in their journal:
    - What do/did you see/hear/feel?
    - What did it look like?
    - What do you think the function(s) are?
    - How does this (thing) relate to others you've seen?

Information from (Kavanagh, 2005)