

Good High School Journal Topics and Activities to Improve Self-Expression

Journaling that is for the purpose of simple expression should never be edited, critiqued, or in any other way corrected. When you're looking to give students the opportunity to simply practice, assign one of these topics.

- Describe something you did this past summer.
- What is courage?
- Describe a hero. It can be either someone you know or simply qualities of a hero.
- What was your most difficult or most joyous life experience?
- List one of your pet peeves and write about why it annoys you.
- What is your favorite activity? Who do you do it with? Why do you think you enjoy it so?
- Write about a good book you've read recently.
- What is something that you appreciate about your parents?
- What will you do differently when you're a parent?

Good Journal Topics to Encourage Creativity

As our society becomes more inundated with [electronic toys](#), it gets harder and harder to get kids to think outside of the box. Sometimes, taking a journey through writing is one way to encourage creative thinking.

- Write a month-long diary from the perspective of another person, character, animal, etc.
- Re-write the ending of a historical event. For example, what if Columbus had never sailed the ocean or what if he had landed where he intended?
- If you were going to write a book, what would the main character be like?
- What do you think should be invented and why?
- List one major world problem and how you think we should solve it.
- Do you think that there is or ever was life on another planet?
- Do you think that we can ever sustain life on International Space Stations? Why or why not?
- What would happen if it suddenly started raining spaghetti and meatballs?
- Is it important that a President not lie? Why or why not?
- What is the most important issue facing teens your age today? How should they deal with it?

Journaling as a Response to Literature

Having students keep a journal of their impressions, thoughts and ideas while reading a book is a very effective way of teaching. In addition, it lets you know whether they are truly reading the book. One way to use journaling effectively as a means of assessment is to assign journals along with chapters and then randomly collect a few every day. Be judicious in spreading out long assignments and shorter ones.

- Summarize each chapter, listing the characters and what the book was about.
- What do you think the author is trying to communicate through the book?
- Which character is most like you? Make sure and explain your answer.
- Choose a situation and tell what you would've done differently.
- Re-write the ending.
- If you were to bring one of the main characters to school with you tomorrow, what would they find surprising about your day?
- What problems do the characters have that you also have?
- What is the main conflict in the book?
- Do you like the book? Why or why not?
- What is the setting of the book? Would you like to live in the setting? Why or why not?

Journaling Through Time

One way to help your students really grasp history is to encourage them to view the time period from a historical, rather than present-day, perspective. Use these prompts for any time you want to reflect on historical events, people, and eras.

- Choose a period of history and write a diary of what your day was like from that person's perspective.
- Write a journal entry as if a major historical event didn't happen. For example, what if Abraham Lincoln hadn't given the Emancipation Proclamation? What if Britain had won the Revolutionary War.
- What role do women play throughout history?
- What if Julius Ceasar had a social media profile? Describe what it would be like, and share a few of his most recent posts. (You can choose any historical figure.)
- Live tweet any event from the 1900s to modern times.
- Write a letter or memo to a President from the last 50 years explaining what he should've done differently.

- Write a journal entry from the perspective of a historical figure's pet. From Paul Revere's horse to Bo, the Obama's dog, describe the things you see and feel.

Silly Journal Prompts

- Declare your undying love for your favorite food in the form of a love letter.
- Write a break-up letter to an item of clothing that no longer fits.
- The expression, 'You are what you eat...', turns out to be true. What have you turned into? Write about your day as your new food item.
- You have the opportunity to receive one superpower. What is it and what do you do with it?
- Write a letter to your teacher with your best excuse for not doing your homework.
- Your parents suddenly become kids. What rules do you insist they have?
- Find the last photo on your cell phone. Caption it and explain the story behind the photo. You can write anything you want, as long as it's not true.
- Explain to a college why they shouldn't take you.