

Summer Writing

“Writers are pretty ordinary people, except for at least one important difference. Other people have daily thoughts and feelings, notice this sky or that smell, but they don’t do much about it. All those thoughts, feelings, sensations and opinions pass through them like the air they breathe. Not writers. Writers react. And writers need a place to record those reactions. That’s what a writer’s notebook is for.” ~Ralph Fletcher, *A Writer’s Notebook*

Throughout the school year, we published many pieces of writing (personal narratives, stories, essays and poetry). Each piece of writing grew out of an idea you collected in your writer’s notebook. Summer is a great time to collect ideas in your writer’s notebook for your fourth grade writing pieces.

Carry your writer’s notebook with you! Here are some places you can bring your writer’s notebook:

- The beach
- A special vacation
- Summer camp
- Holidays
- A long car or plane ride
- Something to do on a rainy day!

Writer's Notebook Strategies

Things You See and Hear

- Live wide-awake; play the “*that-looks-like*” and “*that-sounds-like*” simile game. Example: “That small leaf looks like a green star.” Play this game while you take a walk, driving in the car, and so on.
- Then you can write more about it by asking yourself, “What does this make me think? Why is this important to me?”

Memories

Person, Place, Thing Strategy

- Jot down a person, place or thing.
- Then list 3-5 memories having to do with that person, place, thing. Pick one of those memories and write about it.

Feeling Words Strategy

- Brainstorm a few feeling words (happy, sad, excited).
- List 3-5 times you felt this way.
- Write about one.

First/Last Times Strategy

- Brainstorm:
 - Jot down a list of things you do everyday.
 - Jot down a list of hobbies / things you do in your free time.
 - Lastly, jot down something you just learned how to do.
- Pick one activity from your lists. Try to remember the first or last time you did this activity and write about it.

Artifacts

- Surround yourself with inspiration in your writer's notebook. Try collecting:
 - Artifacts from special events: Ticket stubs, brochures, bits of wrapping paper from a holiday, photos, and so on.
 - Doodlings and drawings.
 - Clippings of stories and pictures from newspapers and magazines.
 - Favorite lines from a favorite movie, TV show or book.
- Tape these items into your notebook and think, "What is the story behind this object? Why is it important to me? What do I want to say about this?" and write about it.

Lists

Keep lists of...

- Interesting words (spelling or meaning)
- Inventions I want to make
- Books I want to read
- Character names for my next story
- Good ideas for stories, poems, essays news articles, etc.

Stories

Writers keep their ears and eyes open for a good story. You can summarize a good story you just read, a story someone told you (a great way to record family stories), or a current events story in magazines and newspapers.

More Writer's Notebook Strategies

We are writers. We write down our thoughts, feelings, observations and ideas in our writer's notebooks. When we need some inspiration, we can use these strategies to keep us writing.

Writing about personal artifacts (items that are important to you)

Write about a...

- ☐ Photo
- ☐ Object
- ☐ Video game
- ☐ Prized possession
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Ticket stub

Observing the world around you:

- ☐ Write about what you see out the window (car or home).
- ☐ Take a walk; write about what you hear, smell, see, feel.
- ☐ The outside world: write about anything outside.
- ☐ Change perspectives — get closer to the ground, look under furniture, look up at the sky — record what you see.
- ☐ Find a story in the clouds.
- ☐ Write about facial expressions.
- ☐ Create stories off of snippets of talk you hear.
- ☐ Write about animals, insects, plants, signs, houses you see.
- ☐ Write about a smell, sound, taste, or feeling.

Write about your reading:

- ☐ Write about a book.
- ☐ Reflect on readings.
- ☐ Write about sentences or phrases that you love (from book, magazine, poem...).
- ☐ Write about your favorite quotes-include quote in your writer's notebook.
- ☐ Write about song lyrics.
- ☐ Write about current events in newspapers and magazines.
- ☐ Write about a painting or picture.
- ☐ Write about a poem.

Write about places:

- ☐ Write about places you've been on vacation.
- ☐ Write about everyday places: your room, backyard, garden, mall...

Write about important people (and pets!)

- ☐ Write about a person in your family or your whole family.
- ☐ Write about friends.
- ☐ Write about a pet.
- ☐ Write about animals you wish were your pets.
- ☐ Record family traditions and stories.
- ☐ Interview family members and friends.

Creative writing

- ☐ Poems
- ☐ Short Stories
- ☐ Start your novel
- ☐ Write about anything in poem form
- ☐ In 100 years: describe what you think the world will be like in 100 years
- ☐ If I was president I would...
- ☐ Create fictional characters
- ☐ Create a fake holiday and elaborate on it
- ☐ Write a letter to yourself in the future
- ☐ Write about the personalities of animals
- ☐ List similes and metaphors
- ☐ Possible leads and conclusions for your story
- ☐ List possible names of characters for your story
- ☐ List possible titles for your piece
- ☐ List words you love and want to use in your writing
- ☐ Draw and write

Writing about you, your thoughts, your feelings

- ☐ Wonderings
- ☐ Write about a dream you had.
- ☐ List personal qualities you have.
- ☐ Write about your name.
- ☐ Write about your goals and dreams you want to accomplish.
- ☐ Write about your thoughts and feelings on a current issue in the news.

Your memories

- ☐ Most moments
- ☐ First and last memories
- ☐ Memories about a certain place or time

Your interests

- ☐ Write about your favorite number.
- ☐ Write about a hobby, activity, sport.
- ☐ Write about your favorite colors. Include colors in your writer's notebook.
- ☐ Fun and games: write about different games you play around the neighborhood.
- ☐ Write about your favorite author.
- ☐ Write about your role model.

Events in your life

- ☐ Write about events in school.
- ☐ Write about a favorite store.
- ☐ Write about birthdays or other parties.
- ☐ Write about your dance or music recitals, sports event, plays.
- ☐ Write about a special event.
- ☐ Write about any activity you do.

Free writing

- ☐ Write nonstop for a certain amount of time.
- ☐ Write about whatever comes to mind.

Other strategies you have invented!