

Writing for Pleasure: Keeping a Diary

Part 1

“I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn.”

— *Anne Frank*

Contents

1. Introduction
2. How this resource links to the English national curriculum
3. Guidance for parents and carers
4. Guidance for learners
5. Useful websites
6. a-f diary extracts

1. Introduction

We are living through unprecedented times; a phrase that has been used a lot, in the past couple of months, but is very true. These are times that we will look back on and recall with various memories depending on our experiences. One way to record our memories, is by writing a diary. Apart from being a written record of events, it can be a personal and safe space to express our feelings and thoughts.

It can also be an easy way for children to start writing as it is about real life and they do not need to make-up characters and stories. They can also be written in different ways: shop bought diaries with dates already printed; blank note books; sheets of paper stapled together - handwritten, typed, pictures, no pictures...

Writing a personal diary may inspire writing a fictional one, or make other writing easier. There are also mental health benefits of being able to write down worries and questions, which may lead to working through problems or feeling able to ask others for help.

This resource is aimed at less confident writers, but the resources will be useful for anyone who wants to write a diary. Part 1 includes some diary extracts to read for you and your child to enjoy and familiarize yourselves with different layouts and the sorts of things people write about.

Part 2 ,to follow, will include tips and advice on how to write a diary.

Jo Davey
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Writing for Pleasure: Keeping a Diary

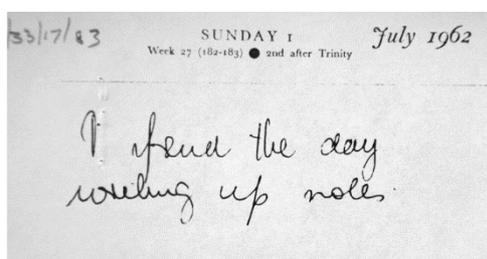
Part 1

2. How this resource links to the English national curriculum

A solid education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and, through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. All the skills of English language and literacy; speaking, reading and writing are essential to participating fully as a member of society.

The English national curriculum aims to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and it is important that pupils can write clearly and accurately for different reasons and types of writing including personal texts, such as a diary.

3. Guidance for Parents and Carers



'I spend the day writing up notes'

Conversations with Myself

-Nelson Mandela

The aim of these resources is to inspire your child to write using their own experiences. Please look at the resources and encourage them to do the same and talk to them about writing a diary. Discuss the examples of famous diaries – fiction and non-fiction – and talk about which ones they like and why; do they like the way they are set out, the words used and do they like ones with pictures or without?

Ultimately, the diary should be set out as they wish - the idea is to encourage writing freely and often but to not insist on how much they write a day, or even if they write every day. We want writing to be pleasurable and not a chore.

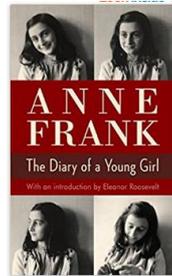
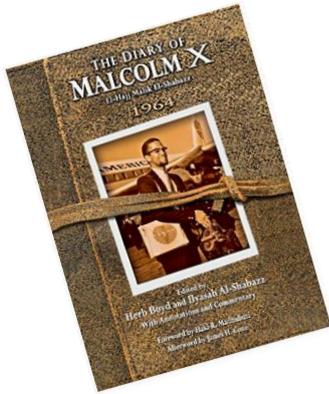
There are many books and audio versions of diaries available online which apart from influencing your child's or children's writing can style can also offer inspiration, comfort and support from reading them.

Please note: some of the resources have been adapted from information on external websites and these have been acknowledged where appropriate, and several websites are also suggested below. These websites are not endorsed by The London Borough of Hackney or Hackney Learning Trust and you should view the websites and the resources to make sure that they are suitable for your child to use and that you are happy with the content and any advertising or cookies required on any sites.

Writing for Pleasure: Keeping a Diary

Part 1

4. Guidance for Learners



12 JUNE 1942

I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support.

COMMENT ADDED BY ANNE ON
28 SEPTEMBER 1942:

So far you truly have been a great source of comfort to me, and so has Kitty, whom I now write to regularly. This way of keeping a diary is much nicer, and now I can hardly wait for those moments when I'm able to write in you.

Oh, I'm so glad I brought you along!

“I write songs that are like diary entries. I have to do it in order to feel sane.

Taylor Swift



Why keep a diary?

People have always kept diaries or notes of their daily lives for different reasons; some to record facts of the day for people to read in the future, such as Samuel Pepys, who wrote about the Great Fire of London; some to record this facts for their own use, to look back on similar to looking at old photographs. Significantly, most diarists talk about writing them as being a helpful and supportive thing to do.

Diaries are still kept today, in many different ways and in recent years this has been seen by people posting on social media and blogging and vlogging. However, these are very public spaces and different from keeping you own personal diary.

Having a personal space to write can be especially helpful at the moment while life is quite different. As well as writing down what you are doing each day, which will be interesting to look back on in the future you can also write down how you are feeling, which may help you to make sense of things or help you to ask others for support.

Writing a diary is also a great way to just do some writing! No one else has to look at it and you can write as little or as much as you want. It can help you become a more confident writer and lead to improving other writing you do.

Writing for Pleasure: Keeping a Diary

Part 1

Read others published diaries and pick up some tips!

It helps to look at diaries written by others to see how they have set them out and what words and language they have used. Have a look at the extracts of famous diaries in this resource and research others online if you can.

As you will find, some people use printed pages in diaries to write in and others use blank pages; some illustrate their diaries with pictures and some diaries are mainly pictures with a few words. You can try out different ways – remember your diary is personal and doesn't have to look exactly like any one else's.

What next?

You could make notes of anything you like in the diaries you read – perhaps the way they are set out or words they use. Do you like diaries that include pictures? Do you like the way some people sound as though they are talking to their diary as if it is a real person?

Part 2 of this resource, to follow, will include some tips and advice and writing frames to help you write your diary.

Have a think about how you may like to keep your diary - you may have a notebook at home you would like to use or you can use plain or lined paper. It really doesn't matter, but it would be great if you could keep your diary special, and take care of it – you never know who may read it in years to come to find out about life at this time!

Make sure your parents or carers are happy for you to look at the websites suggested here, and any others that you find.

Writing for Pleasure: Keeping a Diary

Part 1

5. Useful websites:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/hackney-central-library> You can also access thousands of e-books, audiobooks, newspapers and magazines for free through our digital library. Just use your Hackney libraries membership. Not a member? [Join for free now](#).

https://www.amazon.co.uk/b?node=21173577031&pf_rd_r=VQAH95PKNEYE9PKRM6QM&pf_rd_p=a5618163-2ef6-466e-b112-a4e9a5f8ffa3 Enjoy a selection of free Kindle Books for you and your family. 'On this page, we give an overview of some of the Kindle Books that are currently available for free download. This selection includes public domain titles as well as Kindle Books which publishers are providing for free download for a limited time. Start reading now on any tablet or smartphone with the [free Kindle Reading App](#). Conditions apply.*'

<https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/>

<https://www.pepysdiary.com/> In 1660 Samuel Pepys, an increasingly-important 26 year-old civil servant in London, began writing his diary. He stopped a decade later.

This site contains the full text of his diary, along with several letters sent or received by Pepys, plus thousands of pages of further information about the people, places and things in his world.

The diary entries were published on this site daily, in real time, from January 2003 until May 2012, with readers discussing events each day. From January 2013 the diary entries will again appear on the front page at the end of the day (London time), starting with 1 January 1660.

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/09/04/famous-writers-on-keeping-a-diary/> Celebrated writers on the creative benefits of keeping a diary

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zjdf82/revision/1> This site relates to the Scottish National 5 qualification but has some useful information about reflective writing

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/these-8-good-things-will-happen-when-you-start-writing-diaries.html> Article- These 8 Good Things Will Happen When You Start Writing Diaries

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/how-do-i-write-a-successful-diary/z4h9y9q> Article with accompanying video

Writing for Pleasure: Keeping a Diary

Part 1

<https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/history/historical-diaries-war-history-journal> History's greatest diaries - The most revealing, fascinating and harrowing personal diaries ever written, all of which offer a unique first-hand perspective of a momentous era in history, from World War Two to Apartheid.