

# Journal Writing

*This document explains the purpose and procedure for teaching and assessing journal writing to Kindergarten children. The teacher's role is explained.*

## Supporting Kindergarten

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A journal contains children's thoughts, feelings and reflections on various topics or experiences. Journal writing is rarely done to communicate with others. It is used to explore ideas and to communicate with oneself. Journal writing is often referred to as personal or free writing. This activity is appropriate for writers at all levels of development. As individual children become interested in "writing" and putting their thoughts down on paper, the teacher should introduce the idea of journal writing to that particular child. In Kindergarten, journal "writing" is not a whole-class activity, as it is used to meet the interests and needs of individual children.

### Purposes

- to use "writing" to explore ideas and record observations, experiences, and understanding.
- to encourage children to take risks in manipulating language and in structuring meaning.
- to provide opportunities for children to reflect upon their growth and development as "writers".

### Procedure

- As children express an interest in writing, encourage individual children to put their thoughts down on paper by giving them a book to use as their journal. This may take the form of drawings, scribbles, letter-like symbols, or actual letters.
- Expect that the entries of emerging writers may contain more drawing than text.
- Model journal writing for children, demonstrating the process of reflection, idea exploration, and writing.
- Date journal entries or make a date stamp available for the children to date their work.

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2220 College Ave  
REGINA SK CANADA S4P 4V9



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- Children should “read” their journal entry to the teacher, who can record in the journal what the child said.

### Assessment

- Review journal entries with children to identify their interests and concerns, their “writing” abilities, and the skills and knowledge needed for further growth and achievement.

### Teacher’s Role

- Create a classroom environment that stimulates thought and wonder, and collaborates with children to develop ideas and topics.
- Recognize a child’s interest in writing and encourage that individual to “write” in a journal.
- Acknowledge that not all children in Kindergarten will be interested in, or ready to, “write”.
- Model journal writing skills such as left to right progression, exploration of ideas, and personal reflection.
- Transcribe the child’s oral version of the journal entry.
- Understand that prior to “writing”, children often need time to discuss ideas with peers, to draw, or to contemplate.