

Getting Started with the Writer's Notebook

I. Mindset

- Set the stage!
 - Writers Write—every day!
 - Model “Writerly Life”—Use your notebook, too. Write when your child writes.
 - Everybody Writes... even when they can't write sentences. Invented spelling counts. Let your child read back his/her writing.
 - Work out the writing “muscle”—Build writing stamina via the writer's notebook.
 - Writers write about things that happen in their lives.
 - Memory will fail! Capture all of your ideas, no matter how small, in your notebook—for LATER when you don't know that to write about!

II. But, How Do We Use the Writer's Notebook Effectively?

- Good question! Let's chat...
- Here are some ideas I'd like to try:
 - Write down questions you have. What do you wonder about?
 - Keep a running list of things that are scary, hilarious, surprising, etc. to you. Ask why these things affect you this way.

Presenters:

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- Clip out pictures and articles from some of your favorite newspapers and/or magazines. Why are these things “favorites”?
- Write down a quote that really made you think. How did you relate to it?
- Create a list of books you’ve heard about that you want to read. Check them off when you are done, and write about your reaction to the book.
- Collect ticket stubs, photographs, brochures, etc. from places that you visit and things you do.
- Devote a page to your silly sketches and doodles—no explanations necessary!
- Write about a special tradition in your family and why you enjoy it so much. Include a family recipe that’s one of your favorites!
- Record dialogue: What do you overhear people say? Why is it interesting to you?

III. What Do Real Writers Say?

- Even better question! Let me tell you!
 - Thomas Hardy kept 'literary notebooks', a 'Poetical Matter' notebook and a 'Studies, Specimens, etc' notebook. But the richest to my mind is one with the bare title, 'Facts'.
 - Franz Kafka wrote in quarto-sized notebooks before trading down to octavo near the end of his life.
 - Jean-Jacques Rousseau made notes on playing cards during walks that were later written up as his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*.
 - The list goes on... Virginia Woolfe, Joan Didion, C.S. Lewis, Ray Bradbury!

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- But, the BEST FOR KIDS! = Ashley Spires, author of the picture book, The Most Magnificent Thing: This book focuses on the importance of a growth mindset (a school-wide focus for DVIA). It is about a girl who tries more than ten times to build something and get it right. Double whammy! GET THIS BOOK!
- Here's what she puts into her writer's notebook: "Any germ of an idea or doodle could turn into my next book. I speak to kids about the importance of having books that are your "safe place" — journals where you are free to make mistakes without judgment. Feeling free enough to allow yourself to make mistakes is the only way to let your imagination reach its potential."

IV. Questions? Fears? Excitement?

- What ONE thing will you try tomorrow?
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