

DIARY WRITING TIPS

In this activity you are asked to create a short story by writing a series of diary entries that describe the characters, plot and setting of your story.

An effective piece of diary writing should:

- Be written in an informal tone (e.g. chatty style that appeals to readers)
- Be written the first person
- Use emotive language
- Relate events in chronological order
- Use opinions/points of view
- Correctly use the past tense of regular/irregular verbs
- Use paragraphs to denote changes of time, event and action.



Another feature of diary writing is to include a date or number at the top of the page to denote the order of diary entries and the time between events. You could also consider recording other information at the top of each entry: for example, Bridget Jones records numerical stats at the start of each entry.

You can also imagine that the diary has become the best friend of your leading hero and that your hero trusts their diary with anything, even their biggest secrets. Imagine your hero relating to the diary as a living entity.

In this activity you are also asked to include images in your diary to support the story you create. Images can be photos, sketches, doodles, maps and/or any other imagery. You can also use the images you responded to earlier in this lesson to help get your ideas going. Alternatively, find another image that appeals to you (don't spend too much time looking for the perfect image though; it just needs to be something that sparks your imagination).

PLEASE NOTE: Even though your diary is to be written in an informal (or chatty) tone, you will still need to adhere to standard language conventions (such as spelling and grammar).

GENERAL STORY WRITING TIPS

PLOT – The plot is the main storyline of a story. It includes key events.

STRUCTURE – Fiction narratives often follow a structure where the sequence of events can be broken down into three main parts:

1. Orientation - Who, When, Where. Introduce the characters, setting and events.
2. Complication - In the middle of a fictional narrative readers are introduced to conflicts, interactions and events that lead up to the climax. The climax is where the conflicts and events build up to a point of suspense or importance. At this point a key event will take place that relieves the tension, focuses the action or explains everything that has gone on up to this point. Descriptive words are used to give information about characters and events.
3. Resolution - Deals with the consequences that follow the climax.

THEME – The theme is the main issue or idea. It is the principal message the author wants to convey to the reader.

CHARACTERS – Characters may be human, animal or imaginary. Major characters are central to the action while minor characters support the plot and setting but have little role in main events. The personality traits of characters are important to narratives. Multi-dimensional characters reflect the complex personalities of real life. A well-rounded character will be believable and well-developed: a one-dimensional character will be less believable.

Techniques to describe characters may include:

- Descriptions of physical appearance
- Speech characteristics
- Word choice
- Descriptions of how they act and treat other people
- Dialogue to show what other characters say about them.

SETTING – The setting is where and when events take place. The type of setting will influence the readers' perceptions and expectations of events.

LANGUAGE AND STYLE – Consider the following points about language and style:

- How will you use descriptive language and other stylistic devices to create pictures in your audience's imagination?
- How is dialogue used and for what purpose?
- Will you use imaginative or figurative language? How will this affect your story?
- What form or narration will you use: first person or third person?
- What types of sentence construction will you use and what effect will they have?
- How will you use grammar and punctuation in your narrative?

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