Keep a book journal

BOOK WORMS
A 2024 study found that students in England and Ireland read an average of 16.74 books per year.

Do you ever forget what you've read? Have you ever wondered how many books you've read in a year? Perhaps you struggle to remember details from books you've read and why you loved them so much. Keeping a book journal is a really useful way of reminding yourself what you've read – and can be fun and creative too.

Writing in a journal can help you improve key skills like creative writing, critical thinking and reading comprehension (the ability to understand what you read). It's also a record that you can look back on, tracking how your reading habits and tastes change. You can use it to jog your memory, too. Perhaps you've got the sequel to a book you read a while ago; a journal can help you recall characters and storylines. Here are four tips to help you create a brilliant, useful book journal.

A book journal is a reading record.

What is your format?

Decide how you'd like to keep your book journal. You can record it on paper or use a digital format. If you keep it on a computer document it can be easier to correct mistakes than if you're using a pen and paper. However, writing in a notebook can boost creativity because you can add things like drawings and doodles. You could also ask an adult for permission to create a written or video blog, which makes sharing your journal easier.

Decide on details

If you add particular details on every entry, it helps to make your journal consistent. This means it's easier to compare books you've read and keep track of your reading progress. Including the title of the book you've read and the author's name is a must. Other useful details to include are the date you started the book and the date you finished it. You could also include the book's genre. For example, is it non-fiction, crime or fantasy?

Write your review

You could summarise (give a brief version of) the book by saying what it's about – a bit like the words they print on the back or inside cover of a book. Write what you thought of it. If you have trouble getting started then ask yourself some questions. Did you enjoy the book and why (or why not)? What was the best thing about it and the worst thing about it? Perhaps you loved the characters but thought the descriptions were too long.

Add your own creativity

What can you add to make your journal more individual? You could write out your favourite quote from the book, or list the emotions you felt reading it – were you happy, sad or surprised? Perhaps it taught you something that you'd like to remember, or there are some facts from it that you don't want to forget. You could also use it to create something new. Write a poem about a character, rewrite the ending or draw a picture of a scene from it.

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