Keep a diary

Holly King-Mand

Holly King-Mand is the nation's favourite English teacher, having had thousands of young people join her online lessons during lockdown. She loves Shakespeare and sharing her love of learning. Here she shares her top advice on how to write a diary.

A diary is a great way to express yourself.

DEAR DIARY
The word "diary" comes from the Latin *diarium*, which means "daily allowance".

1 Why bother?

Keeping a diary is a great way of recording your life for posterity (for future generations of people) that will tell your own personal story. It is also a brilliant way of expressing your thoughts and feelings and helping you to explore the good (and difficult) things in your life.

2 Who are diarists?

People who write diaries are called diarists, and you can be one too. You may have read, or at least heard of, famous diaries such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* or even the diaries kept by the Antarctic explorer Captain Scott. If you prefer fiction, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is very popular.

3 Picking the perfect journal

Finding a lovely notebook to keep as a diary makes a big difference. Lined paper will help keep your diary entries organised and something that is hard-backed is more likely to last through the whole of 2022. You might also like to decorate your diary with craft decorations or stickers to personalise it.

4 Getting into a routine

If you want to be a successful diarist, you'll need to write frequently to track the ups and downs of your life. You don't have to write an entry every day, but at least once a week (if not more) is a good start. Set time aside to focus on remembering events and writing up your entry. It might be after you've had dinner or in bed before you sleep. If it's part of your routine then you're more likely to do it.

5 Layout guidelines

Your diary is just that – yours! You can put pen to paper in any way that suits you and best expresses your life. Most people put the date as a title (which is useful when looking back at old diaries). You can also write like Captain Scott and make up titles for different entries, or include drawings and artwork.

6 Privacy

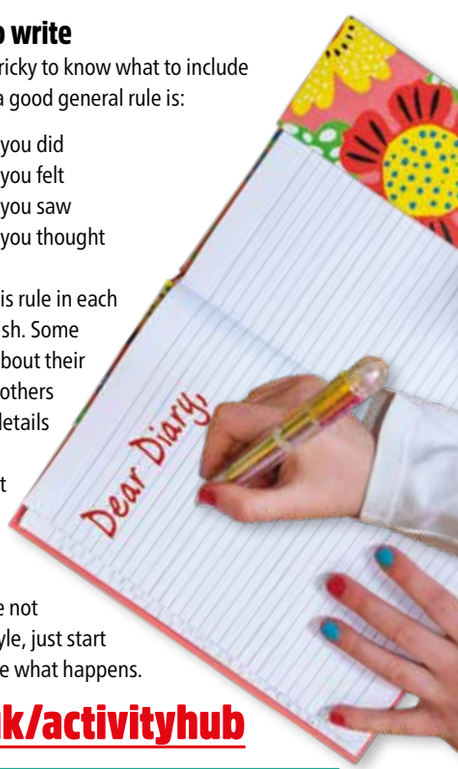
When we write diaries for ourselves, we call them private diaries. Some diaries even come with a lock and key. Your privacy is important to those who care about you but remember that talking about your feelings with an adult you trust is a good way of expressing yourself.

7 What to write

It can be tricky to know what to include in a diary but a good general rule is:

- Something you did
- Something you felt
- Something you saw
- Something you thought

You can use this rule in each entry, if you wish. Some people write about their emotions and others like to record details of where they went and what they did or what is going on in the world. If you're not sure of your style, just start writing and see what happens.



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