



Journal Prompts and Exercises for Writers



Stuck in a rut with writer's block? Looking for help to start a daily journaling habit? You're in the right place.

Keeping a daily journal is a powerful habit for anyone looking to hone their writing skills and kindle a creative spark.

The act of journaling is a dialogue with oneself that can help change doubt into self-affirmation and clarity. Every page turned in a journal is a step taken in the journey of self-discovery, where the pen (or keyboard) is both compass and map, leading us deeper into our own hearts and unlocking untapped places in our imaginations.

Grab a notebook and get started becoming a better writer through journaling!

There are also PDF templates provided with each exercise.





Get Ready: Set Up Your Writing Ritual



Discipline shouldn't be a bad word for creative types. It lets the little things take care of themselves and frees up your mind to tackle the bigger issues.

The easiest way to add some discipline to your writing habit is to create a ritual. All you need is a way to write and a timer.

Set your timer to 20 minutes and keep writing until it rings!

You can write with a pen and paper or a simple writing app on your phone or computer. No need to get bogged down in finding the “perfect” way to write.

Pick a comfortable place to write and a time of day when you can habitually write.





Day 1: Gratitude Journal



This is a classic, and a good place to start. If you don't already have a gratitude journal, you can use one of the provided PDF templates (next pages).

We all have something we can be thankful for. It can be simple or profound.

This could be something as straightforward as the warmth of a sunny day or as profound as the unwavering support of a loved one. Recognizing these moments of thankfulness can significantly enrich our lives.

Why are you thankful for this? How has it changed your life?

Why do these blessings evoke such gratitude within us? They often bring about a transformative effect, altering our perspectives or enhancing our well-being in a meaningful way. For instance, being thankful for good health might encourage us to live a more active lifestyle, while appreciation for a supportive community can foster a sense of belonging and comfort. Such gratitude can lead to increased happiness and a more positive outlook on life.

Is there a way to extend this gratitude, to share the benefits of our good fortune with others?

Absolutely. We can pay it forward by offering kindness and support to those around us, much like the kindness we have received. Simple acts, such as volunteering time to help someone in need or simply offering a listening ear to a friend, can create a ripple effect of positivity and goodwill. In doing so, we not only reinforce our own sense of gratitude but also spread those feelings to others, contributing to a more compassionate and connected community.





Day 1: Gratitude Journal cont.

Try to complete this task the first time in 20 minutes or less. Then step back, consider what you wrote, allowing yourself as much time as needed to let the words and emotions flow.

This is a great habit-forming exercise, especially if you complete it at the same time every day.

Have at it!





Daily Gratitude Journal Entry

Date

3 Positive Things That Happened Today



3 Things I'm Grateful for Today



Something I Did to Make a Difference, No Matter How Small



Tomorrow, I look forward to





Evening Gratitude Journal Entry

Date

3 Things I'm Grateful for Today



What I Have Learned from Today's Experiences
and How It Makes Me Feel

3 Goals for Tomorrow





Day 2: Overcoming Challenges

For this exercise, you can free write on a sheet of paper, in a blank journal, or use the provided one-page template (on the next page).

What did you find challenging today?

It could be as simple as aches and pains getting out of bed or as difficult as dealing with a bully or losing motivation to get through the day.

How did you meet the challenges the day brought?

Are you going to use the same techniques tomorrow or would you prefer to do something differently? As you navigated through these difficulties, what strategies did you employ to overcome them? Did you rely on deep breathing exercises, positive affirmations, or perhaps seeking support from friends or family?

Maybe you took a moment to reflect and reframe your thoughts, or you found solace in a brief walk or a favorite hobby.

Looking ahead, will you continue to utilize these approaches tomorrow, or are you considering adopting new methods to better handle such situations?

Perhaps you plan to integrate more mindfulness practices, or maybe you want to establish a more structured routine to enhance your resilience. Exploring different techniques can help you build a more adaptable and effective way of coping with daily challenges.

Set your timer for 20 minutes and write! It's often easiest to simply let the words flow and then go back to think on what you wrote.





Overcoming Challenges

Writing Exercise

Date

What did I find challenging today?



How did I meet the challenges the day brought?



Will I do things differently tomorrow? If no, why? If yes, what?





Day 3: Your Space



For this exercise, you can use a blank sheet of paper, or the one-page PDF template provided (next page).

Our physical space can often define, inspire, or motivate us.

Use your journaling time today to describe your space. Start with the physical.

This room is big.

You can expand upon this. For example: This room is spacious with high ceilings that create an airy atmosphere and walls that seem to stretch out, accommodating light and shadow in a dance that changes with the time of day. The windows are expansive, allowing natural light to flood in, casting a warm glow across the wooden floors and highlighting the subtle textures of the furniture. Or, this room is small but cozy, with a window which allows light to flow into the space and dance on the walls, touching upon the shelves covered with books.

Transitioning from the physical to the personal experience, you might write: This room exudes a sense of spaciousness and warmth. The openness encourages movement and thought, making it an ideal place for reflection, creativity, and relaxation. The welcoming nature of the space invites you to linger, to sit back and let the environment envelop you in its calming embrace.

Would you change anything about your space?





Day 3: Your Space cont.



Would you add plants to bring in a touch of nature, adding life and vibrancy to the already inviting atmosphere? Some artwork or personal photographs might adorn the walls, infusing the space with character and personal history. Or perhaps a comfy chair in the corner to curl up with a book or write. These minor adjustments could enhance the room's already comforting and inviting nature, aligning it even more closely with the personal essence of its occupant.

Set your timer for 20 minutes and get writing!





Your Space Writing Exercise

Date

Describe your physical writing space.



How does the space make me feel?



Would I want to change anything about the space? If yes, what?





Day 4: Doing Something New

For this exercise, you can use a blank sheet of paper, a blank journal, or use the one-page PDF template (next page).

Find something entirely new to do.

Eat lunch at a new restaurant, take an alternative route to work or read a different source of news than you normally do. Such small changes can add variety to your life and broaden your horizons.

Reflect on how these experiences unfolded.

Did the meal introduce you to a new favorite dish or cuisine? Was the alternate path to work more scenic or less congested? Did the different news source offer fresh perspectives or insights you hadn't considered before?

To continue incorporating new experiences into your life, try setting a personal goal to introduce at least one new activity or change each week. This might include joining a club, learning a new skill, or attending an event you wouldn't normally consider. By seeking out novel experiences, you can foster personal growth and keep everyday life exciting and fulfilling.

How did it go? How can you keep introducing new things into your life?

Set your timer for 20 minutes and start writing!





Doing Something New Writing Exercise

Date

What new thing did you try or do today?



How was the experience? What did you gain from it?



What new experience would you like to try tomorrow?





Day 5: Advice to Yourself

For this exercise, you can use a blank sheet of paper, a blank journal, or the one-page PDF template (next page).

Suppose you had the chance to give one piece of advice to yourself five years ago, or even one year ago. What advice would you give yourself?

Would you emphasize the importance of embracing change and staying resilient in the face of challenges. Life is unpredictable, and being adaptable can make a significant difference in how we navigate through various situations. Would you remind yourself to prioritize mental health and well-being, as it's crucial for long-term happiness and success. Would you suggest staying open to new opportunities, as they often lead to personal growth and unexpected paths that enrich our lives.

Do you think people can really learn from advice or do we always have to learn the hard way?

Advice can be invaluable, offering insights and perspectives that we might not have considered otherwise. Learning from others' experiences can save us time and prevent unnecessary mistakes. On the other hand, there is a belief that some lessons are best learned through personal experience, as they tend to leave a deeper impression. Ultimately, while advice can guide us, the combination of listening to others and experiencing life firsthand often shapes our understanding and growth.

Do you feel this advice would have made a difference in how you approached life, or will it make a difference moving forward?

Set your timer for 20 minutes and start writing!





Advice to Yourself Writing Exercise

Date

Suppose you had the chance to give one piece of advice to yourself 5 years ago, or even 1 year ago. What advice would you give yourself?



Do you feel this advice would have made a difference in how you approached life, or will it make a difference moving forward?





Day 6: Recognize Accomplishments

For this exercise, you can use a blank sheet of paper, a blank journal, or the one-page PDF template (next page).

Within each of us lies a treasure trove of achievements; may we celebrate the successes that brighten our life journey.

We all have something we can be proud of. These can range from seemingly simple acts, like the time you lent a helping hand to a friend in need, to more significant achievements, such as a major milestone in your career or professional life. Take a moment to genuinely appreciate these accomplishments and let yourself feel a sense of satisfaction and pride in what you've achieved.

Take a minute to feel good about yourself.

What causes and conditions led to your success?

Was it the result of hard work, determination, and perseverance? Perhaps it was the support and encouragement from loved ones or the guidance and mentorship of someone you look up to. Understanding these elements can be incredibly empowering, as it allows you to recognize the paths and decisions that led to your triumphs.

If you were to advise others on how to replicate your success, what wisdom would you impart?

Maybe you would emphasize the importance of setting clear goals and maintaining a positive mindset. You might suggest cultivating resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges, as these qualities often pave the way for overcoming obstacles. You could highlight the value of building strong relationships and networks, as these connections can provide invaluable support and open doors to new opportunities.





Day 6: Recognize Accomplishments cont.



By reflecting on your journey and the factors that contributed to your achievements, you not only reinforce your own sense of accomplishment, but also equip yourself with insights that can inspire and guide others on their paths to success.

Set your timer for 20 minutes and start writing!





Recognize Accomplishments

Writing Exercise

Date

Reflecting on your life, what is something you can be proud of, whether a small act of kindness or a major accomplishment?



What causes and conditions led to your success?



If you were to advise others on how to replicate your success, what wisdom would you impart?





Day 7: Commitments



For this exercise, you can use a blank sheet of paper, blank journal, or download the one-page PDF template.

Commitments and resolution are powerful tools. They provide the necessary strength to maintain a beneficial habit, even on days when you feel low, exhausted, or tempted to skip it.

When we commit to something, we create a promise to ourselves that transcends our immediate feelings or circumstances. This is especially true when it comes to cultivating good habits, such as writing. There will be days when you might feel down, fatigued, or simply unmotivated, and the temptation to skip your writing session can be overwhelming. However, it is during these moments that the strength derived from your commitments and resolutions truly shines through, allowing you to push past the urge to abandon your practice.

How can you turn writing into a commitment? What motivates you to write everyday, to grow as a writer step by step?

To transform writing into a commitment, it is important to establish clear goals and a structured routine. Start by defining what writing means to you—whether it's journaling, working on a novel, composing poetry, or blogging.

For some, the motivation to write is the desire to share stories or ideas with the world. For others, it might be the pursuit of honing their craft, where every word written contributes to their growth and skill development. Setting achievable goals, such as writing a certain number of words each day or completing a chapter by the week's end, can provide tangible milestones to strive for, offering a sense of accomplishment and progress.





Day 7: Commitments cont.



What can you tell yourself when you feel stuck and don't want to write?

When faced with a lack of desire to write, it's helpful to remind yourself of your reasons for writing in the first place. Reflect on the satisfaction you derive from creating, the joy of storytelling, or the impact your words can have on others. Consider telling yourself that it's okay to write poorly on some days, as the act of writing itself is more important than creating something perfect. Embrace the process and remember that every writer experiences challenges; persistence is key, and overcoming these hurdles only strengthens your resolve and ability.

Embrace the idea that writing is a process, one that involves exploration, experimentation, and sometimes even failure.

Each time you write, you are honing your skills, discovering your voice, and learning more about your craft. This perspective can help alleviate some of the pressure you may feel when facing a blank page. Remember that the act of writing is a journey, and every commitment you make brings you one step closer to becoming the writer you aspire to be.

Set your timer for 20 minutes and start writing!

Writing is an art form that serves as a power means of self-expression and storytelling, allowing you to create worlds and characters that resonate with readers. It is a way to entertain, inform, and inspire, touching the hearts and minds of those who engage with your words.





Commitments

Writing Exercise

How can you turn writing into a commitment? What motivates you to write everyday, to grow as a writer step by step?



What can you tell yourself when you feel stuck and don't want to write?





Next Steps



Congratulations! You've completed 7 days of journal prompts and writing exercises. We hope you've found these informative and helpful in kick starting good writing habits. It's important not to lose motivation. If that means starting over with Day 1 of this course for the next week, do it.

If you still feel you need additional support or motivation, consider:

- Finding a writing accountability buddy. This is usually another writer, editor, or even a trusted reader who helps motivate you to stay on track and someone with whom you can bounce off ideas. If it's another write whom you trust, be sure you reciprocate.
- Join a critique group. If you're a social person who is comfortable in a group setting, there are many writing critique groups available. You can search your local area or online. If you're part of a writing group on Facebook, ask if they have recommendations. Or, form your own.
- Consider a motivational writing coach. A coach can help you stay on track, motivated, and accountable while also celebrating milestones.

