

Why all children should keep a journal

by [Caroline Duda](#) Jun 24, 2015 at 5:14 p.m. ET



Parents and children alike are familiar with the common advice for maximizing a student's academic performance: Complete homework in a quiet environment, eat well, go to sleep early the evening before a test, utilize highlighters or Post-it notes... but what of journaling? This technique is less often discussed than those previously mentioned, but keeping a journal can have a positive impact on your child's educational development, no matter her goals, grades or weakest subjects. Unconvinced? Here are four reasons your child should journal.

1. Journaling provides consistent writing practice

Whether your student chooses to keep an electronic or hard-back journal, its most obvious benefit can be described in two words: simple practice. Like many academic skills, the ability to write well is the result of hours of practice. Your child need not address a specific prompt, nor adopt a formal tone in her journal. Any attempt to put pen to paper is ultimately valuable. If your student is hesitant to write, encourage her by suggesting potential topics (your trip to the aquarium or the zoo, perhaps), or by setting aside a specific time period to journal each day.

2. Journaling fosters creativity and self-expression

As briefly discussed above, journaling has few, if any, rules. This means that your child can use her journal to write a description of her favorite real or stuffed animal, to collaboratively pen a poem or a short story with you, to release her feelings about a frustrating day, and so on. Her journal is a space

to work without criticism and correction, and for this reason, it can enable her to experiment with self-expression and to hone her creative voice. Journaling can even help her approach the world outside of her notebook's pages with greater confidence.

3. Journaling connects academic content to real life

The process of learning is contextual and gradual. We master knowledge and skills by building on our current understanding of our surroundings, but this often happens unconsciously. Journaling can bring this process to the forefront of your child's mind. For instance, if your student is learning about fractions, you might help her record a family recipe in her journal. While you can direct her toward connections, allow her the freedom to make her own, too. Her brain will be all the better for it.

4. Journaling encourages self-reflection

Successful artists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and students all have one thing in common: They continually reflect on their past actions. Reviewing their performance permits these individuals to analyze their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to adjust their behavior in future scenarios. If your child is new to reflecting on her academic record, journaling is an easy way to introduce her to this habit. By contemplating questions like, "What am I proudest of this year?" or "Where can I improve?" your student can reap the full academic benefits of keeping a journal.

For more tips and strategies to help your student succeed in school, visit [varsitytutors.com](https://www.varsitytutors.com).