

Journal or Blog

Description

A journal is a personal record of thoughts, feelings, and/or observations about something. Some people keep journals or diaries to keep a record of their daily lives. Some people keep journals during their travels so that they can remember the details of their trips for as many years as they like or to share with others. Making a journal is also a way that you can show what you have learned about a famous person; a “regular” person from a particular time period; a person traveling through a particular ecosystem recording the weather, animals, plants, and terrain; or a person who lives in a country or culture that you want to describe—journals provide endless possibilities to show learning.

Although some journals are written on paper, another option is to post your journal entries on a blog. A blog is a website that allows you to publish information and encourage discussion through comments. Many blog services allow users to upload images and videos so that blog spaces can be used as webpages. The organizing feature on blogs is a post. The posts are shown from most recent to earliest along with the author’s name and date of the posting.

An example of a blog or journal that could show what you have learned about Lewis and Clark’s expedition to the Pacific Ocean might begin with the start of their journey in Virginia—perhaps on the day they get their instructions from Thomas Jefferson. As Lewis and Clark proceed with preparing for the trip and then making their historic and sometimes dangerous journey, they could post (via you and your teammates) their scientific, geographic, and personal discoveries.

Planning

1. Think about the best way to use a journal or blog to share information about your project/research; will it focus on one historical figure? Will it be a famous person or a “regular” person? Will your journal start at one point and then have pauses, be picked up later, then have pauses, then be picked up again, or will it run consecutively from the day it starts? You may want to storyboard your journal—how long will it be? What main points will you cover?
2. How will you give as complete a picture as possible about everything going on at the time of the journal? Will the journal entries be written strictly from one person’s point of view, or might they have read a newspaper or seen something about things happening far away in the world during the time of the journal?
3. Will there be drawings, cartoons, or humor in your journal? If you have a blog, will there be links to videos or websites? Photos?

Assessing

Use the following rubric or one that you and your teacher agree on to collect feedback about your journal project. Then discuss your project with your teacher.

Criteria for rating journal	Student	Peer	Teacher
Choice of topic			
Depth of research			
Quality of information			
Evidence of creativity			
Level of writing			
Contains factual information			

The most interesting thing I learned about this topic was

A problem I had to overcome in completing this task was

The resources I used in gathering information to do this work were

Technology Connection

If you record your journal as a blog, you can get feedback from your readers. Talk with your teacher about how blogs work, how they are monitored, what is expected of you, and the guidelines to follow as you work on the blog.

Create a blog: <http://www.blogger.com>

Middle school blogs: <http://www.middleweb.com/mw/aaDiaries.html>