



Dear Diary Day

September 22 is Dear Diary Day, a day created by Thomas and Ruth Roy to celebrate the ways diaries help us document our lives. At Mentoring Minds, we think it's also the ideal time to develop the **Reflect** critical thinking trait. With this activity, students will begin a powerful end-of-day journaling routine as they are inspired to **Reflect** on their learning journeys!

Getting Started



Critical Thinking Trait Focus—Reflect: *I review my thoughts and experiences to guide my actions.*

Note: Other traits that might closely connect to this activity: **Link** and **Examine**.

Learning Standards Focus—reflective writing, causal relationships, word choice, voice, point of view .

Vocabulary—reflect, achievement, goal, journey, accomplishment, journal or diary

Instruction

Activity Preparations:

1. Invite students to paste a copy of the Think It Out! page inside the front cover of a writing journal to begin the activity routine.
2. Review the **Reflect** critical thinking trait with students and explain they will be using this trait to begin a learning journey diary.
3. Choose a short title or excerpt to read aloud from the suggested literature list or select a title of your own choice that includes the theme of reflection, journaling, or reflective writing.
4. Prompt students with a thought-provoking question in response to the literature. Examples include:
 - What do you think (characters) might say to themselves about their achievements?
 - In what ways do you think (character) prepared to reach his/her goals?
 - What steps would you have taken (refer to literature)?

Note: This activity should be executed daily over the remainder of the school year. Set aside 8-12 minutes at the close of each day for journal entries.

Activity Directions:

1. To introduce reflective journaling, invite students to **Reflect** on the school day using the **Think It Out!** page. Select one or two topics for the entry and write about the school day together using a shared or interactive writing routine. For younger students, repeat the introductory writing routine at the close of each school day until students are ready for independent journaling.
2. Allow students time to think and write a journal entry individually at the close of each school day. Remind students to focus their ideas on one or two developed topics from the **Think It Out!** page.
3. Encourage students to vary their journal topics during the week from the list of ideas.
4. Allow students extra time every couple of weeks to reread their journal entries or choose an entry to share with a partner.



Reflect

After students have **Reflected** and written in their learning journey diaries, facilitate a discussion about their thinking and learning. Guide students as they focus on how the **Reflect** critical thinking trait helped them process through the task. Emphasize the importance of using Reflection to guide their future actions.

Literature Suggestions

Books About Reflecting on Achievements: *Are You There God? It's me, Margaret* by Judy Blume, *The Bad Seed* by Jory John, *Me...Jane* by Patrick McDonnell, *On A Beam of Light* by Jennifer Berne

Books About Goal Setting: *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams, *Ruby's Wish* by Shirin Yim Bridges, *The Bee Tree* by Patricia Polacco, *Salt in His Shoes* by Deloris Jordan

Books About Journal Writing: *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney, *The Diary of a Killer Cat* by Anne Fine, *Diary of a Worm* by Doreen Cronin, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

Additional Media Suggestions

YouTube Video: [Diary Features](#)

Penzu.com: [How To Start A Diary](#)

Note: Preview literature and media for appropriate content to match your district guidelines.



We love to see how students interact with our resources!

Take photos of your students' work, share them on social media, and use the hashtags: **#MentoringMinds #CriticalThinking**. Find us on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn **@mentoringminds**

Be sure to remember your social media tags!



Think It Out!

_____’s Learning Journey Day

The purpose of this journal is to reflect on your learning journey at the end of each school day. It’s a space to write about your growth and thoughts as a learner. You will have ____ minutes each day to write.

Journaling Tips:

- Pay attention to your learning journey during the school day to search for good journal topics. This might include activities, ideas, thoughts, feelings, or interactions.
- Think about all the events of the day before you begin.
- Select one or two topics from the What Should I Write? list below.
- Pretend you are writing to a friend you trust.
- Try to keep your writing ideas focused on the school day.
- Include the date at the top of each journal entry.
- Try to choose different writing topics during the week.
- Remember to write in first person (I, we, us) using past tense verbs.

What Should I Write?

a new skill	a surprising fact	a challenge	goal setting
a failure	a process	an interesting topic	a creation
a tough decision	staying on task	an awesome lesson	an idea
a connection	an experience	a test	improvement
communication	research	personal growth	confusion
an answer	achievement	a favorite moment	an experiment
collaboration	a question	behavior	a feeling
working independently	learning with friends	asking for help	topics you enjoy