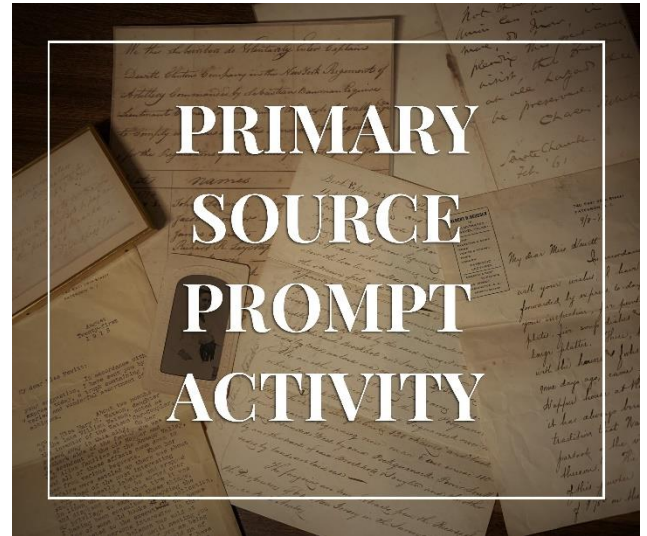


Primary Source Writing Prompt & Journal

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What is a primary source? Primary documents are original records of historical events - things like letters, diaries, photographs, and newspaper articles. Historians use primary documents because they are critical in learning about the past. Who can imagine studying history without resources like George Washington's letters, Anne Frank's diary, and notes from the front lines of war? Those stories make history come alive!

This activity gives you an opportunity to create important documents that will help tell your story many years from now. These journal prompts can be used to assist you with writing down your observations, thoughts, and feelings while documenting what is happening in the world through your eyes. Handwriting is preferred to typing or using technology to record your thoughts and observations. Handwritten documents can still be read 200 years or more from now, while technology needs to constantly be updated or it becomes obsolete and can't be read.



You can use these journal prompts for inspiration on what to write about each day, or a few times a week. If you already have something you want to write about, go for it! Imagine that your future children or grandchildren will read it. When you are a grown up, you will be excited to read and share your primary document- and historians may use it for their own research and writing!

Don't have a journal? No problem! Directions are included at the end of this document to help you make your own journal using items you probably already have in your house!

Writing Prompts

Remember, these are suggestions in case you need help getting started. Feel free to write about any topic on your mind!

1. Write an entry explaining why you are starting this journal. What is going on in the world right now that makes this such a noteworthy time?
2. Describe a special event or activity that you enjoy doing? Why do you like to do it?
3. What is something you love about your life?
4. What was the best and worst part of your day?
5. Do you have a school (public, private, or homeschool) routine or schedule? What is it?



6. What is something that you are grateful for today?
7. Have you done something nice for a neighbor or friend? Has a neighbor or friend done something nice for you?
8. Is there a craft or activity that you have tried for the first time? Would you try it again?
9. Draw a picture or take a picture of yourself and describe what you are doing.
10. How do you stay in touch with family and friends? Do you write letters? Call or text them?
11. Today I felt [insert feeling] when [talk about an event or issue that happened today that made you feel that way].
12. How were you helpful today?
13. How is today different than a normal Monday?
14. Do you have a best friend? Who is it? Write about what you like about them.
15. What is your favorite thing to eat and why? Do you like to try new foods?
16. I want to always remember _____ about today.
17. Today I laughed or smiled when _____.
18. Do you enjoy school? Why or why not?
19. Are there any holidays coming up that you are excited about? Which one and what makes it fun?
20. Everyone has to pitch in and be helpful each day. Do you have a chore you are responsible for?
21. How does your family get their groceries? Do you go to the store or have them delivered?
22. Describe your room. Have you ever rearranged the furniture or put up new artwork?
23. How do you stay active in your house and yard? Do you like to spend time outside, playing sports, hiking, or observing nature? Or would you rather stay inside and do other activities?
24. Do you have a favorite book you like to read or movie you like to watch? What is it and why do you like it so much?
25. Describe what kind of clothing you like to wear. Do you like to wear the same thing all the time or change up your style?

Make Your Own Journal

Don't have a journal handy? It's easier than you think to make a book using supplies you probably have in your house! Please continue reading below along with accompanying images for step by step instructions on how to make your own!

You will need:

1. enough cardboard to for two 9"x 6" rectangles
2. Pretty paper to wrap the cardboard in (wrapping paper, construction paper, or plain paper that you can decorate)
3. Wide roll of tape, like duct tape or packing tape
4. Several sheets of printer or lined paper
5. String or yarn
6. Scissors, glue stick, pencil, marker, ruler



Step 1:

Cut two 9" x 6" cardboard rectangles



Step 2:

Glue the cardboard onto the middle of the pretty paper.



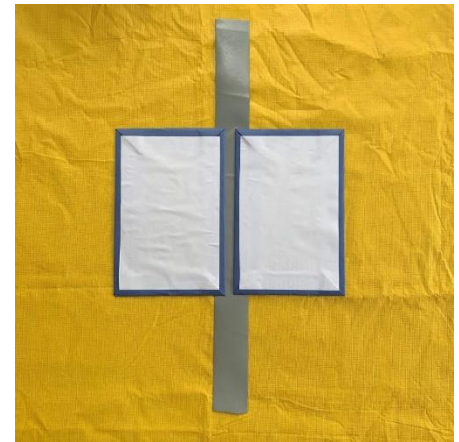
Step 3:

Wrap the rest of the pretty paper around the cardboard. One piece of construction paper does not wrap the entire piece of cardboard, so I glued a second sheet to the inside. Repeat for both pieces of cardboard.



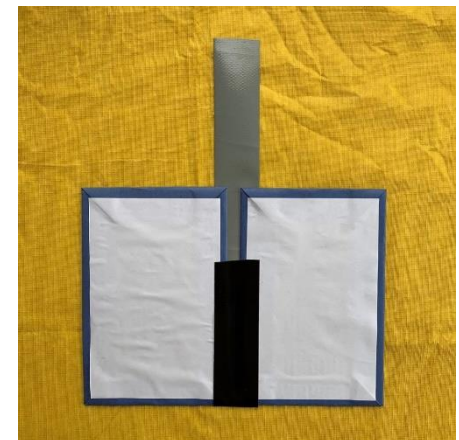
Step 4:

Place a long piece of tape - sticky side up! - on the table. Place the two wrapped pieces of cardboard in the middle of the tape. It's important that the two pieces of cardboard don't touch in the middle, or else the book won't close.



Step 5:

Fold the top and the bottom of the tape around the inside of the cover.



Book cover! Now we will add the pages.



Step 6:

Fold the printer or lined paper in half, and line the crease up on the book cover's binding.



Step 7:

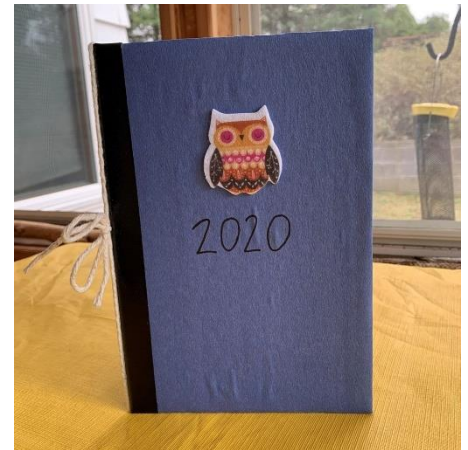
Cut a long piece of the string or yarn and wrap it around the middle of the book.



Step 8: Tie the string and slide the knot or bow to a place you think looks pretty. Tie it tightly because that will keep the pages attached to the cover better. You don't want them falling out!



Step 9: Decorate the cover and you are ready to start writing!



Get writing! Future historians will thank you for it!

