

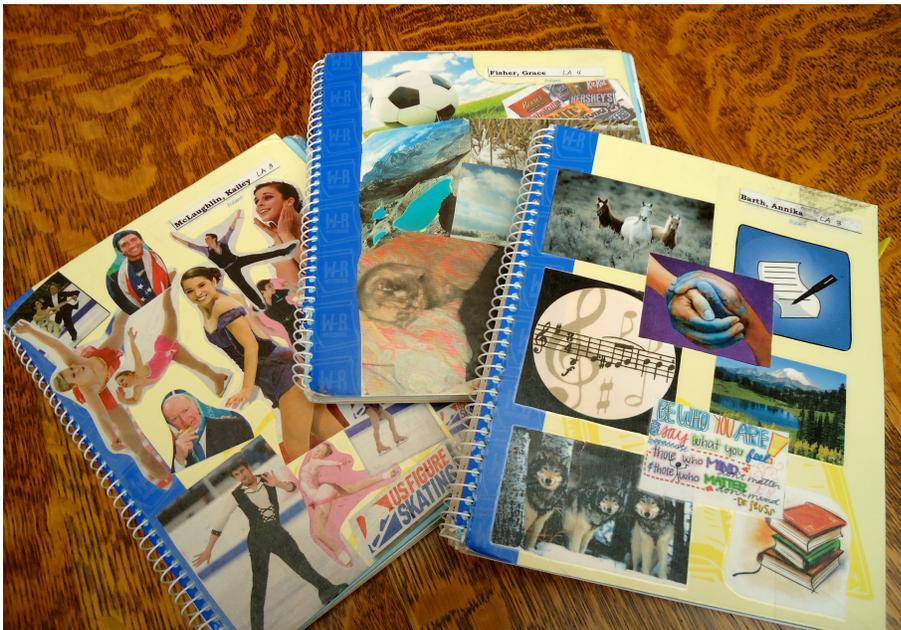
***A Writer's-Reader's Notebook: A Place for Students
To Develop and Grow as Readers & Writers***
Wisconsin State Reading Association Conference
6 February 2020 Linda Rief

“Keeping a notebook is the single best way I know to survive as a writer. It encourages you to pay attention to your world, inside and out. It serves as a container to keep together all the seeds you gather until you’re ready to plant them. It gives you a quiet place to catch your breath and begin to write.”

Breathing In, Breathing Out: Keeping a Writer’s Notebook (1996, Fletcher, p.1)

Expectations

***To read voraciously for pleasure,
Because there are so many great books.
To write or draw everything you think or feel or believe,
Because your thinking matters.***



“Carry this with you on your journey,” he said softly, “for there is much worth noticing that often escapes the eye. Through it you can see everything from the tender moss in a sidewalk crack to the glow of the farthest star—and, most important of all, you can see things as they really are, not just as they seem to be. It’s my gift to you.”

(Juster, 1961, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, p. 132)

August 6th, 1986- I read Don Murray’s words.

“The most valuable writing tool I have is my daybook... All the writing in the daybook is a form of talking to myself, a way of thinking on paper....The daybook stimulates my thinking, helps me make use of those small fragments of time that on many days is all the time I have to write. There is no sign of struggle. I’m not fighting writing. I’m playing with writing. ...The daybook also keeps my writing muscles in condition; it lets me know what I’m concerned with making into writing; it increases my productivity....(it’s a place) where you can do all the bad writing and bad thinking that are essential for those moments of insight that produce good writing.”

Wednesday, January 17 9:51 PM

“Mrs. Rief, I counted my journals tonight. I have written 21 since eighth grade.

Thank you!” Sincerely, Lil”

“If we are so foolish as to dare to teach writing without ever writing ourselves, we are treading with arrogance on shaky ground.” Mem Fox

When I ask my students at the end of each year, what has helped them the most as writers and readers, they always say, “You wrote with us, and you read with us.” Linda Rief

“Writing organizes and clarifies our thoughts. Writing is how we think our way into a subject and make it our own. Writing enables us to find out what we know—and what we don’t know—about whatever we’re trying to learn.”

Writing to Learn by William Zinsser (1989, Harper & Row)

Writer's- Reader's Notebook

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Response Section:

- to collect writing ideas and initial drafts of writing
- to collect/respond to/react to/reflect on reading (books, magazines, instructions, other classes, etc), writing, observations, and discoveries about yourself, others, and the world with pages of writing, collected pictures, charts, cartoons, lists, drawing/week
- to read for a half hour each night, _____ times per week
- to record _____ entries per week. An entry looks like this:

Date

Title of book (or magazine & “article”)

Time spent reading

- to read with a writer’s eye- what are you noticing/learning about writing from the writers you read?
- to collect at least **one poem/month**, glued into your WRN with an explanation of why you chose this poem and how it reflects you and your thinking at the moment

Notes Section:

- to record all notes given in class
- to maintain a *Table of Contents* for these lessons/instructions, so you can easily find and use the information

Vocabulary Section:

- to “find” at least _____ words per week which are new or unknown (from reading, listening, talking, in or out of school)
- these are words you’d like to begin to use in your speaking and writing

“The point of a notebook (journal) is to jumpstart your mind.”

John Gregory Dunn from *Shoptalk* by Don Murray

“My notebook is who I am/everything I want to remember as a writer, reader, thinker, listener, observer of the world around me.”

Linda Rief

Writer’s-Reader’s Notebook

Writing: We learn to write by writing. Your notebook is a place to play with ideas and words. It is a place to write your initial ideas. It is a place to think.

Books: You choose your own books or magazine articles. Try to have a book you are reading at all times. If you don’t like it, abandon it, and find another. Read deeply. What do you notice, learn, think as you read.

Reading: We learn to read, and to write, by reading. I expect you to read for a half hour each night, _____ nights per week. Friday is silent reading day in class, a time for you to sink into a book of your choice.

What you write/draw in this WRNotebook should be what you notice and want to remember about your thinking and living. Written/illustrated pages are your thoughts, reactions, interpretations, questions,... to what you are reading, writing, noticing, thinking in the world around you. Your comments may be in response to the author’s process as a writer, and your process as a reader, writer, and learner. If you are stuck, you might:

- **Quote or Point Out-** Facts or lines that surprise you, fascinate you, anger you-- that you hear or read. Quote a part of the book, your own writing, or something you hear. What makes this memorable? Why do you want to save it?
- **Jot Down Experiences or Memories-** What’s going on in your life? In the world around you? In the books you read? What ideas does this reading give you for writing?
- **React-** What reactions do you have to the world around you? To things you read or learn or discover? Do you love/hate/can’t stop reading this book? What makes you feel this way?
- **Question-** What confuses you? What don’t you understand? Why did the author do something a particular way? What would you have done differently? What questions do you have about your own writing? about things you notice around you?
- **Evaluate-** How’s your life going? How is your writing going? How’s your world, the world-at-large doing? How does this book compare to others you have read? What makes it good or not so good?
- **Understanding-** What are the ideas or understandings you are taking from the book (the “so what” of why it was written)? From your life? From the world around you?
- **Collect-** Poems, song lyrics, pictures, photos, surveys, news articles, sayings, that have to do with who you are/anything you want to remember as a writer, reader, thinker, listener, participant, observer of the world around you.

Response to your WRNotebooks: During the year you will share your WRNotebooks with me and with peers of your choice. The response to you is meant to “affirm what you know, challenge your thinking, and extend your learning.” (Atwell)

“Read like a wolf eats.” Gary Paulsen

If it helps, consider using any of the following phrases when you write or sketch about yourself, about others, about reading, about the world in your WRNotebook:

I wonder...
I'm surprised by...
I noticed...
I like how...
... reminded me...
I don't see...
Maybe...
The author...
I wish...
I understand...
I can't understand...
I love the way...
Why did...
I feel ...
I imagine ...
I think...
I realized...
I believe...
If I were...
I'm confused by...

Take note of:
Those things that make you think or feel.
Questions that come to mind.
What motivates people/characters?
Eavesdrop- borrow lines, unique ways of saying things you overhear.
What surprises you in life? In books?
Copy down compelling leads! Endings!
Surprising/unique phrasing! Passages that seem to say *“This is the significance of this writing.”*

Read deeply. Write honestly. Admit confusion. Discover and expand on an author's ideas or craft. Attempt to discover your own ideas about writing, about reading, about books, about yourself, about the world.

To:

From: Mrs. Rief

Our students need:

- *Reading that engages, interests, challenges*
- Real writing for real reasons for real audiences

Our students deserve teachers who:

- read and have the courage to write
- are reflective practitioners
- have high expectations
- teach with their head & their heart
- recognize, encourage, & build on the diverse strengths & promises
of their students

Students can do their best work when given:

- TIME
- CHOICE
- RESPONSE (toward revision, while drafting)
 - this is what you did well
 - questions you might consider
 - suggestions- framed as “What if...?”
- MODELS and MODELING of fine reading & writing (both fiction and nonfiction)
- STRATEGIES for entering into, strengthening and extending that writing and reading
- A Writer-Reader Notebook- a place to consistently initiate and collect their thinking
- Encouragement to use visual tools to show their thinking as writers and their understandings as readers

(Some students need: deadlines, limited choices, direct response.)

Linda Rief’s books—

The Quickwrite Handbook: 100 Mentor Texts to Jumpstart Your Students’ Thinking and Writing (Heinemann, 2018)

ReadWriteTeach: Choice and Challenge in the Reading-Writing Workshop (Heinemann, 2014)

Visual Tools for Differentiating Reading and Writing Instruction- Roger Essley with Linda Rief and Amy Rocci (Scholastic, 2008)

Inside the Writer’s- Reader’s Notebook: A Workshop Essential (Heinemann, 2007)

Adolescent Literacy: From Promise to Practice- Eds. Kyleene Beers, Robert Probst, & Linda Rief (Heinemann, 2007)

Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents- (Heinemann, 1992)

Available from Heinemann Publishers on-line at <http://heinemann.com>