



# WRITING MORE IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

## HOW TO FILL A PAGE?

Stop having pre-conceived notions about what should be written on the page. Commonly students assume that the notebook=journal, that it has to be a place where you record and analyze your life and feelings. It can be that sometimes or always. AND, it can be a lot of other things.

**Remember** – it's a THINKER'S NOTEBOOK. You should be writing about whatever it is you think about when no one is telling you what to think about. So, the things that actually interest and fascinate you – write about those!

### When I've said this to past students, they've used their notebooks to:

- plan for/reflect on/record Robotics events and team drama
- plan for/record/analyze fantasy football
- draft fiction of all kinds: fan fiction, web comics, short stories, novels, etc.
- plan new inventions
- create lists of both really important life events and really mundane every-day stuff
- map out marching band formations
- record conversations that happened or were overheard
- rant about a teacher/class
- write song lyrics, poetry
- plan sermons
- plan/draft OPs (this is perfectly acceptable and encouraged)

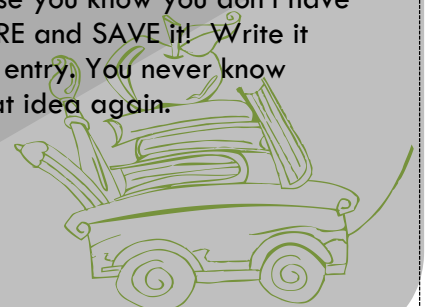
### Why should you WRITE MORE?

At the heart of this class is the goal for you to take yourself seriously as a thinker.

This means noticing the thoughts you have and seeing that they have value, that they are important enough to record and analyze. Though you can't capture every thought you have, honor the power, creativity and brilliance of your mind enough to at least try. Writing down what you think makes ideas available to you in the future. It offers you the opportunity to remember, revisit and revise.

But don't kill the short entry!

Okay, so I've told you why you should write more. Now also hear me say that sometimes you've just got a quick thought. Absolutely jot that down in the notebook. Those half-baked, unfinished, seeds of thought are potential gold-mines for later writing, and I don't want you to miss those flashes of brilliance/humor/profound insight simply because you know you don't have much to say. CAPTURE and SAVE it! Write it down, label it as an entry. You never know when you'll need that idea again.



# OTHER STRATEGIES

1. Divide your page into sections. This seems to work best if these sections are haphazard. Now focus on filling one section at a time. Maintain a theme or switch it up in each new section. Facing smaller spaces lowers the pressure you put on yourself to have a lot to say.

2. Write without stopping for 5 minutes (set a timer). Always keep your pen moving. Whatever comes to you, write it down no matter how strange or unconnected it seems. If you feel yourself running out of steam, write "I don't know what to write" repeatedly until something new comes to you. After 5 minutes, PAUSE and take a breath. Now go back and read what you wrote, trying to see your thoughts as those of a stranger in need of interpretation and analysis. Spend the rest of your time annotating your own writing. Add on where necessary. Ask questions. Explore further.

3. Write to someone. Having an (imagined) audience on the receiving end of your writing can give you purpose and help you find more to say. Write a letter you'd never send – express anger, undying love, jealousy, whatever you'd like to say but have the good sense or decency to keep to yourself. Alternatively, write the letter you'd like to receive from someone else.

4. Use what's going on around you as inspiration. Respond to discussions and readings from this class. Use in-class writing time to make note of what you didn't get to say in conversation or to work out the opinions you have on the topics we cover. Become a snoop and respond to the conversations you overhear in class, at lunch or in the halls.



## Second Assignment

You have until Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup> to show Mr. Loewen your notebook. This check counts as a third of a major grade. Late points will be taken off if you wait until after the due date to have your notebook checked.

1. Keep writing, both during in-class time and outside of class. Make sure you are labeling your entries.
2. Write MORE in each entry. Your goal should be to writing longer/more each time you sit down to write almost every time you write. Aim for **a page or more for all in-class writing sessions and for some out-of-class writing sessions.**
3. Try some of the strategies I've listed here to keep encourage yourself to write more.

## ASSESSMENT

Be prepared to show entries written since the last check. Be prepared (for an A) to show you've gone above and beyond what was asked: by writing more entries than was required and writing more. You should also be able to clearly show you've attempted some of the strategies mentioned here. Having only or just above what is asked is how you get a B. Having less than what is asked is how you get a C.

