

# Lesson 4: Dialogue Journals

**Purpose of Lesson 4:** You will learn about dialogue journals.

**Skills:** Creative writing, reading comprehension, self-reflection, writing and vocabulary.

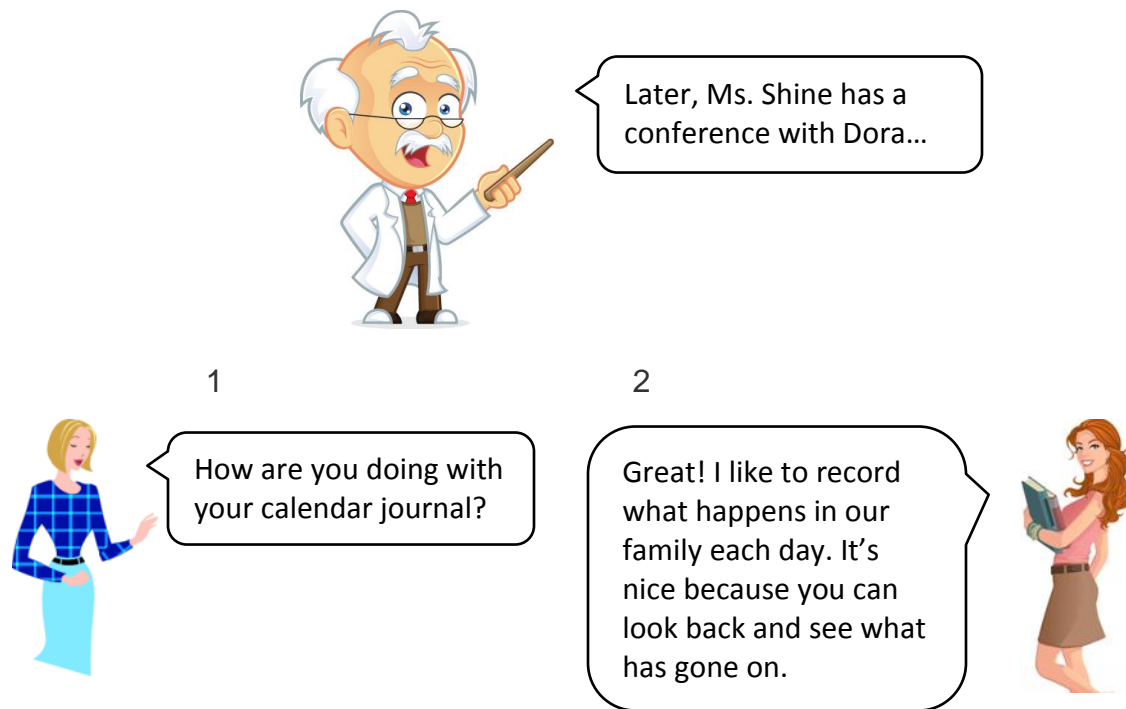
## Words to Learn:

**details** - small items or parts: *Interesting details are important to a good story.*

**dialogue or dialog** - a conversation between two or more people: *Beau, Scott and Don have a constant dialogue about football.*

**dialogue journal** - two or more people talking, to each other, by writing in a journal: *Ms. Shine uses a monthly dialogue journal with our class.*

**punch** - a word or words used to liven up or add color to conversation or writing: *Ms. Shine wants Lee to add more punch to his story to make it more interesting.*



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It becomes a wonderful record of family memories. How do you put all that information in such a small space?

4

I use abbreviations like Babu did.



5



I am very proud of you. Now, I want to invite the class to keep a dialogue journal with me. I am sure you will like it.

6

What do you mean?



7



Once a month, I will give the class a writing assignment to keep in a notebook. I will read the responses and write comments for each one. It is a special conversation or dialogue between me and each student.

8

It sounds interesting. Why is it called a dialogue journal?



9



Good question! It is called that because each student writes back.

10

A one-on-one communication! It seems a good way to exchange thoughts about our work. It is another way for us to learn and to improve our writing skills. I am going to like this.



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Let's practice. Write about your last birthday. Just write, and don't forget to include your senses.

12

Let's see. My last birthday...



**My last birthday:** My last birthday was very special for many reasons. First of all, my family planned a surprise party. I have to admit that I was not 100% surprised because the house smelled of delicious food when I got home. I came home a little early, so I kind of accidentally discovered the party plans. (That's my way of saying I snooped.) Ha! Of course I went into the kitchen to check it out, and saw a beautiful cake on the table and balloons trying to hide in the corner. I was feeling very sneaky as I carefully touched the cake and stole some frosting...it was so good! Before I could explore the kitchen I heard my mother coming into the house, so I ran out the back door. I waited awhile, and came in the front door and went straight to my room. I know my mother suspected that I had figured it out, but I acted very surprised when I came downstairs for dinner and saw my family standing there and singing "Happy Birthday." I really was surprised to see my cousins Nicholas, Ana, Gabriel, Olivia, and Marin there. I was very happy.

**Teacher Response:** Funny story and you did a fine job. As you can see, when you free write your ideas just flow. Lucky you had a door in the kitchen for your great escape. Did you ever tell anyone in your family what happened? Or, are you going to keep it a special secret? You also did a great job bringing your senses into the story.

**Your Turn:** Write anything you want about your last birthday.

# Lesson 4: Dialogue Journals

Continued after Assignment 1

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See how it works? You will like this journal for many reasons.

14

What I like the most is the written dialogue between us. It seems more personal than a class discussion.



15



I agree. The way this works is that I assign different things to write about. It's a good opportunity for the writer to reflect upon a variety of topics. Later, when we write essays, the journal is a good place to get ideas.

16

How much do I have to write for each entry?



17



Rule of thumb is that these student-teacher dialogues are not lengthy. Short and to the point is the best communication between us. Like other journals, your comments are abbreviated. You do not have to think of it as a perfectly written note to me.

18

Everyone will like that, too. I am beginning to see how journal writing helps prepare us to write essays. For me, liking to write and not being afraid to write is half the battle.



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I have a good idea. Can the class start a calendar journal, too? Since this is a writing class, don't you think it would be good for us to know about different kinds of journals?

20

That is exactly what I am planning. This year it is my goal to have the class be introduced to:

- (a) Calendar journal
- (b) Personal journal, and
- (c) dialogue journal.


I am hopeful the rest of the class enjoys them as much as you do. To think it all started with your family reunion!



Let's review. Please take the next quiz to see how much you have learned about journals so far!


# Lesson 4: Dialogue Journals

Continued after Quiz 1




21

How do you like keeping a journal with Ms. Shine?




22

It's awesome. I have learned a lot. I love to read what she writes. I write back after I review her comments and my work.



23

Me, too. Do you mind if I read your journal? I would love to see your writing.



24

Go ahead. This is what I'm handing in tomorrow.

Continued after Quiz 2



**Dear Student:**

Now that you have seen how the dialogue journal works, perhaps you would like to start one. There are many paths to becoming a good writer. Journal writing is one of them. I encourage you to take this path! I do believe you will find it enjoyable and helpful.