

## **c. Journal (Diary) Writing**

A journal entry usually records the day's events or experiences of a person in a short notebook. It is indicative of the happenings during the day or a particular time span in one's lifetime. Academic journals give an overview of the views or opinions formulated by a particular individual or group of people engaged in the critical interpretation of a writer and his works. In so doing, the journal writer keeps in mind the important viewpoints of the author in question and to this effect he quotes relevant passages from his book. The references from other writers, especially critics add to the journal writer's individual opinions or enlightening views. In other words, a journal is meant for fresh thinking and contribution from the writer trying to give a coverage to his own individualistic views.

A diary is a private place where you can keep your thoughts, feelings and opinions on everything from work to school and everywhere in between. There are all different types of diaries, like food diaries, health diaries or academic diaries. But your diary doesn't have to be specific if you don't want it to be, it can also just be a place where you write about whatever you want. If you're just getting started, maybe you haven't decided what you want to write about, and that's fine. That is what we are here for – to help you with all those moments of writer's block you may be having. Our tips can help guide you and inspire you. Let's begin!



## **b. Ways of Listening**

### **1. Receiving**

This is the first and most basic stage of listening process. It is actually an act of absorbing the information passed on, whether verbally or non-verbally. Not all communication is done through speech and not all listening is done through hearing. No matter how you're communicating with another person, the key at this stage is to pay attention. Focus all of your energy on them, by following these three simple tips:

- **Avoid distractions.** Don't have your cell phone out, or your iPod in, or the television on. Don't try to divide your attention between the speaker and something else. You might think you are good at multi-tasking and perhaps you are, but demonstrating a commitment to the act of listening will make you a more respected person among your peers.
- **Don't interrupt the speaker.** You might want to make an assumption about what the speaker is saying or what they're about to say – don't. It's rude and you may find your assumption was wrong, which is beneficial to no one. You can, however, practice non-verbal feedback cue, such as nodding, to demonstrate your attention.
- **Don't rehearse your response.** At this stage, your job is only to listen. If you start to plan a speech while the other person is speaking, you're going to miss certain points and not be able to respond to their larger message when it's your turn to talk.



## 2. Understanding:

This is the point in the listening process where you are able to plan your response. Understanding takes place after you have received the information from the speaker and begin to process its meaning. You can do this by asking questions, or rephrasing parts of the speaker's message. This allows you to demonstrate your active engagement with their words *and* help you better understand their key points.

## 3. Remembering:

What good would it do in a conversation if you forgot everything the speaker had just said? This stage of the listening process might seem very similar to the first two, but it goes beyond merely absorbing and processing information. Remembering is about retaining that information and the most effective way to do so in an important conversation is to move the key elements of a message from your short-term memory and into your long-term memory.

There are numerous methods for doing this:

- **Identify the fundamental points.** By converting a collection of small details into a central theme, you are able to create something potentially complicated into an easy-to-grasp general concept. The details will remain in your short-term memory, but isolating the main ideas will help you understand them better and remember them longer.
- **Make the message familiar.** Relate that main idea to something you already know. This should be easy to do – there aren't many new ideas out there and chances are that the discussion you are having will trigger old memories and past experiences. Use those to help you retain incoming information.

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#### 4. Evaluating:

It is at this stage you can begin to prepare for your response, but remember, you are still a listener, not a speaker. After the message has been absorbed, processed and remembered, you can begin to sort the information into pieces.

- What is fact and what is opinion?
- Was the speaker demonstrating any particular prejudice with their message?
- What portions of the message, if any, were exaggerated?
- What parts of their message were interpreted and which parts were unbiased?
- What was the speaker's intent with their message?

After interpreting the speaker's message, through a combination of understanding, retention, and evaluation, you are ready to form a response.

#### 5. Responding:

If you have completed the receiving, understanding, remembering and evaluating portions of the listening process, responding should be easier than ever. You will be prepared to address the speaker's most important points, with an awareness of the circumstances and context surrounding their words.

It is important to understand the transition between listening and speaking. It is better to be aware of the ways of responding which is still a part of the active listening process.

- **Don't complete the speaker's sentences.** This is a rude way to poke your nose unnecessarily. It impedes on the receiving process and will make the original speaker want to listen to you less.
- **Address the speaker's points.** It will make it easier for the speaker to transition into a listener when they know exactly what part of their message you are addressing.