

Journal

Historic New England has in its collection many old journals. These journals help historians understand historic events and the everyday lives of people in the past. Recording your own life in a journal will help future historians understand what life was like in the 21st century. It is also a great record for your family that can be shared with future generations.

There are many different approaches to keeping a journal. Some people set a goal to write something, anything, in their journal every single day. Other people pick a topic to focus their writing. School, a favorite sport, music or dancing, and nature are all possible topics for students.

While any notebook can serve as a journal, sometimes it is helpful to have a special book for this purpose. On the following page you will find directions for making a simple journal either in the classroom or at home.

To include a journal activity in a family album, use the following worksheet to document “a day in the life.” Have your students pick a specific day and write about all the things they do on that day.



Make a Journal

Materials

fabric
glue
stapler
ribbon
heavy cardstock
construction or decorative paper
Copy or printer paper for the pages of the journal
markers

Directions:

1. Cut the cardstock to 9"x12" or 8.5"x11".
2. Pick the fabric that you will use to cover your journal. Cut it so that it is at least 1" larger than the cardstock on all sides.
3. Cover the cardstock with the fabric and fold the extra inch of fabric down over the edges of the cardstock. Glue the edges of the fabric down.
4. Cut out a piece of construction or decorative paper about 1/4" smaller than the cardstock on all sides.
5. Glue the construction or decorative paper to the inside of the cardstock so that it covers the extra fabric that was folded down. (To reduce bulk, carefully trim the extra fabric beforehand.)
6. Count out the number of pages you would like in the journal. Do not use more pages than will comfortably fold in half. Center the pages inside the cover and fold the entire book in half. Open it up and staple or sew the pages into the book along the spine where your fold marks are.
7. Pick out a piece of ribbon and tie a bow or decorative knot around the spine of the book. This will cover the staples or stitching used to hold the pages in place.
8. Write your name on the inside cover.



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