

# A Digital learning journal

## Introduction

This activity uses a digital notetaking application to encourage students to reflect on their classroom learning.

Reflection is an important part of learning and remembering new language and the use of a learning journal can help to support this process. Digital learning journals are additionally effective because they support multimedia and students can add images, audio, video and attachments to them, as well as text.



In his webinar Milton Bradbury suggests using learning journals for online learners but they are also useful and can be used with learners in the physical classroom.

## Tech Tip

There are two possible notetaking apps that you can use for this activity. These are:

Microsoft OneNote – This application can be downloaded from

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/onenote/digital-note-taking-app>

Evernote - This application can be downloaded from: <https://evernote.com/>

Both of these applications are free, but they do require registration. Students will need to install them on their devices. Both work equally well on mobile and desktop computers.

They both enable users to create digital notebooks that can include multimedia as well as text. Evernote is the simpler one to use and it enables students to have multiple notebooks for different topics and add multiple notes in each notebook.

**Webinar time reference:** 27:17 -31:19

**Level:** Secondary A2+

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes at the end of each lesson.

**Aim:** To encourage students to think about, reflect on and remember what they learn from each lesson.

### Preparation:

- Make sure that students have downloaded one of the suggested the applications.
- Choose some reflection questions from the suggestions in the materials section below.

### Procedure:

- Wait until about 10 – 15 minutes before the end of the lesson.
- Tell the students you want them to silently think back over the lesson. Note: You could ask them to close their eyes and do this.
- Ask the students to try to remember what activities they did during the lesson.
- Now give the students your reflection questions.
- Ask them to work in pairs or small groups and ask and answer the questions together.
- When they have finished, ask them to use their digital notebooks to make notes about their answers to each of the questions. (They could do this at home after the lesson)
- Ask the students to share a link to their notes with you.
- Check their notes, comment appropriately and add encouragement.

### Materials:

#### Reflection questions

- Did this activity help you learn more than others we've done? Why?
- How can you apply what you learned today to your own life?
- What can I do tomorrow to help you more?
- How does something you learned in today's lesson connect with something you already knew?

- How would you explain what you learned today to someone in the grade below you?
- If you were creating a quiz about today's lesson, what are 2 questions you'd include?
- My favourite part of today's lesson was...
- Reflect on your thinking, learning, and work today. What were you most proud of?
- The top 3 ideas I remember from today's lesson...
- Two facts I learned about the topic...
- What are some things you did really well today?
- What are your next steps after today's lesson?
- What areas did you find most difficult to understand / complete?
- What class activities or assignments help you learn the most?
- What do you believe the teacher do differently to help you learn?
- What is one question that you still have about the lesson?
- What is something you weren't sure about at the start of the lesson but understand now?
- What is the most important thing you learned today and why?
- What part of the lesson surprised you?
- What's one thing the teacher did in this lesson that you really liked?
- Where did you struggle today, and how did you deal with it?
- Which part of today's lesson was most interesting?
- Why do you believe we're studying this lesson?

## Additional resources

### LearnEnglish Teens learner diary

- This diary offers students and teachers a step-by-step introduction to the LearnEnglish Teens website and a more motivating and communicative alternative to course book-based homework. It can be used with students with an A2+ level of English.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learnenglish-teens-learner-diary>

### Learner diaries

- When teaching large classes of students year after year it can become very difficult to see each student as an individual with individual needs and abilities. Learner diaries are one method I have used to try to overcome this and to develop a 'one-to-one' relationship even with large classes of students.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learner-diaries>

### **Class journals**

- Students often write in their English classes, following a specific genre in order to do so: the informal email; a job application letter, etc. Of course, it is important that they learn this kind of writing (which is usually essential for exam success), but it doesn't always encourage them to write for the sake of writing, and to get used to writing in a more relaxed and creative way.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learner-diaries>

### **Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practices**

- Learner autonomy has been the subject of many studies but there have been fewer studies of what learner autonomy means to teachers. This study, conducted in Oman, reports on teacher beliefs and reported practices regarding learner autonomy.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learner-autonomy-english-language-teachers-beliefs-and-practices>

### **Promoting learner autonomy through communication strategy training**

- In this webinar recording Kathleen M. Bailey discusses the topic of learner autonomy in the context of conversations in the target language. Speaking a new language entails taking risks – and that's where communications strategies come into play.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/promoting-learner-autonomy-through-communication-strategy-training>