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## **Holiday Journal Writing**

### **1. What Is a Holiday Journal?**

A **holiday journal** is a special kind of writing where you:

- Record what happened during your holiday
- Describe places you went and people you were with
- Explain how you felt and what you learned
- Capture memories so you can remember them later

You usually write in the **first person** (using **I, me, my, we, our**), mostly in the **past tense** (what *has already happened*).

A holiday journal can be:

- A daily entry (one page per day)
- A special entry about one main event (e.g. “The Day We Went to the Beach”)
- A reflection at the end of the holiday (e.g. “What I Learned on My Trip”)

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### **2. Types of Holiday Journal Entries**

You can write different *styles* of entries:

1. **Recount entry** – retells what happened in order
  - Focus: *First we... Then... After that... Finally...*
2. **Descriptive snapshot** – zooms in on one moment or place
  - Focus: describing **what you see/hear/smell/taste/feel**
3. **Feelings and reflection entry** – focuses on your thoughts and feelings
  - Focus: *How did this holiday change me? What did I learn?*
4. **List-style entry** – short lists with some detail
  - E.g. “Top 5 Best Moments of My Holiday” + a few sentences for each

Your journal can include **all** of these over the whole holiday.

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### 3. The Structure of a Strong Journal Entry

Think of your journal entry like a mini story:

#### 3.1 Beginning – Setting the Scene

Answer:

- **When?** (day/date/time of day, weather)
- **Where?** (place)
- **Who?** (people with you)

Example beginning:

#### **Monday, 8 January**

Today my family and I went to the mountains for a picnic. The air was cool and fresh, and a thin mist wrapped itself around the tall gum trees.

#### 3.2 Middle – What Happened? (The Events)

- Tell events in **time order** (chronological order).
- Include **3–5 key things** that happened.
- Add **details**: what you saw, heard, said, thought, felt.

Use **time connectives**:

first, next, then, after that, later, suddenly, meanwhile, in the afternoon, in the evening, finally

#### 3.3 Ending – Reflection (Your Thoughts and Feelings)

Answer:

- How did this day make you feel?
- What was the best or worst part?
- Did you learn or realise anything?

Example ending:

This day made me feel peaceful and grateful. It reminded me that I don't need games or screens to have fun — just my family, fresh air, and time together.

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#### 4. Planning Your Entry (Step-by-Step)

##### 4.1 Quick Plan Using 5Ws + 1H

Fill this in before you write:

- **When?** (day/date/time):

- 
- **Where?** (place):

- 
- **Who?** (people):

- 
- **What happened?** (3–5 main events):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- **How did you feel? Why?**

- 
- **Why was this day special/important?**
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##### 4.2 Senses Planning

Add sensory details:

- **I saw...**
- **I heard...**
- **I smelled...**
- **I tasted...**
- **I felt (physical)...**
- **I felt (emotion)...**

Example for a beach day:

- I saw: seagulls swooping, bright blue waves, kids building sandcastles

- I heard: waves crashing, children laughing, distant music
- I smelled: salty air, sunscreen, fish and chips
- I tasted: crunchy hot chips, fizzy lemonade
- I felt (physical): sand between my toes, cold water on my legs
- I felt (emotion): excited, relaxed, happy

## 5. Important Writing Features to Use

### 5.1 Grammar Choices

- **First person:** I, me, my, we, our
- **Past tense:** went, saw, felt, heard, ran, laughed
- **Clear paragraphs:** new idea = new paragraph
- **Conjunctions** to join ideas: and, but, so, because, while, when, although

### 5.2 Descriptive Techniques

Technique	Simple Meaning	Example (Holiday Style)
Adjectives	Describing words	“sparkling water”, “crowded market”
Adverbs	Describe how something is done	“We walked <b>slowly</b> ”, “She laughed <b>loudly</b> ”
Simile	Comparing using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	“as hot as an oven”, “like tiny diamonds”
Metaphor	Saying something <i>is</i> something else	“The beach was a giant playground”
Personification	Giving nature/objects human actions or feelings	“The wind whispered in my ears”
Onomatopoeia	Sound words	“splash”, “crunch”, “buzz”, “whoosh”
Imagery	Words that help the reader <i>see/hear/feel</i> the scene	“The golden sand stretched for miles”

Try to use **at least 3 techniques** in each entry.

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## **6. Useful Sentence Starters**

### **6.1 Beginning**

- Today was an unforgettable day because...
- Early this morning, my family and I...
- As soon as I woke up, I felt...
- The weather was perfect for...
- I had been waiting for this day because...

### **6.2 Middle (Events)**

- First, we decided to...
- After that, we walked to...
- A little while later, we...
- Suddenly, we heard/saw...
- The funniest part was when...
- One thing I will never forget is...

### **6.3 Ending (Reflection)**

- This day made me feel...
- The best part of today was...
- I learned that...
- I am grateful for...
- I hope I can do this again because...

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## 7. Word Banks (Use These to Improve Your Writing)

### 7.1 Feelings Words

**Positive:** happy, excited, thrilled, calm, relaxed, peaceful, proud, amazed, grateful, joyful, delighted

**Mixed/neutral:** surprised, curious, thoughtful, unsure, nervous

**Negative:** disappointed, tired, frustrated, embarrassed, scared, worried

### 7.2 Weather and Sky Words

sunny, blazing, cloudy, overcast, breezy, windy, stormy, humid, freezing, chilly, warm  
blue sky, grey clouds, golden sunset, soft drizzle, heavy rain, thunder, lightning

### 7.3 Place Words

**Beach:** shore, waves, tides, rock pools, shells, seaweed, dunes, seagulls, sandcastle

**Park:** playground, swings, slide, grass, trees, benches, picnic table, flowers

**City:** busy streets, traffic, shops, cafés, crowds, skyscrapers, footpath

**Home:** lounge room, backyard, veranda, kitchen, cosy, quiet, peaceful

### 7.4 Action Verbs

strolled, raced, wandered, climbed, jumped, splashed, chased, explored, discovered, grabbed, packed, shared, laughed, whispered, shouted

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## 8. Model Journal Entries

### 8.1 Model 1 – Detailed Beach Day

#### Thursday, 5 January

Today was one of the most exciting days of my holiday because we went to the beach at Brighton-Le-Sands. The sky was a bright, endless blue and the sun shone so strongly it felt like it was baking the sand beneath my feet. My parents set up a big striped umbrella while my little brother and I ran towards the water.

First, we jumped into the cool waves. The water splashed against my legs with a loud *splash!* and tiny drops of salty water landed on my face. The ocean looked like a huge sheet of glass that someone had sprinkled with glitter. My brother and I tried to race each wave, but one giant wave crashed into us and we both fell over, coming up laughing and snorting water.

After we swam, we built a sandcastle near the shore. The sand felt soft and squishy between my fingers as we patted it into high towers. We decorated it with shells and tiny pieces of seaweed. I pretended our sandcastle was a real palace and that the waves were soldiers trying to knock it down.

At lunchtime, we sat on our towels and ate fish and chips. The chips were so hot they almost burned my fingers, and the seagulls circled above us like cheeky thieves waiting for us to

drop a crumb. One seagull swooped down and grabbed a chip right out of my brother's hand, and he screamed, then laughed.

This day made me feel happy, relaxed, and close to my family. The beach always calms me down, and I love listening to the waves. I hope we can come back again before the holidays end, because days like this remind me how special simple moments can be.

**Notice:**

- **Date** at the top
  - **Beginning:** setting (where, when, who, weather)
  - **Middle:** events in order, **time connectives** (First, After, At lunchtime)
  - **Techniques:** simile (“like cheeky thieves”), metaphor (“sheet of glass”), onomatopoeia (“splash”), personification (waves as soldiers)
  - **Ending:** reflection (feelings + why it mattered)
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## 8.2 Model 2 – Shorter Entry

### Monday, 2 January

Today we stayed at home, but it was still a good holiday day. I slept in and woke up to the smell of pancakes. The house felt warm and cosy, and I could hear my siblings laughing in the kitchen.

After breakfast, we played board games at the dining table. I lost the first game but won the second one, which made me feel proud. Later, we watched a movie together and shared popcorn. The rain tapped softly on the windows while we sat under blankets.

Even though we didn't go anywhere special, I liked today. It reminded me that holidays aren't just about big trips. They are also about spending time with my family and resting.

This shows that even a **quiet day at home** can be a good journal entry.

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### 8.3 Challenge Prompt

Write a journal entry titled:

**“The Day Everything Went Wrong (But Turned Out Okay)”**

Include:

- At least **one problem** that happens
  - How it gets **fixed or improved**
  - A reflection about what you learned
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### 9. Scaffolds for Different Levels

#### 9.1 Level 1 – Sentence Frame Scaffold

Fill in the blanks:

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Today I went to \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.

The weather was \_\_\_\_\_ and the sky was \_\_\_\_\_.

First, we \_\_\_\_\_.

Then we \_\_\_\_\_.

After that, \_\_\_\_\_.

The best part was \_\_\_\_\_ because

\_\_\_\_\_.

This day made me feel \_\_\_\_\_ because

\_\_\_\_\_.

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#### 9.2 Level 2 – Paragraph Prompts

Use these questions to build each paragraph:

##### Paragraph 1 – Setting the Scene

- Where did you go?
- Who was with you?
- What was the weather like?
- What time of day was it?

##### Paragraph 2 & 3 – Events

- What did you do first?

- What was something funny, surprising, or interesting that happened?
- Did anything go wrong? How did you fix it?

#### **Paragraph 4 – Reflection**

- What was the best part of the day?
  - How did you feel?
  - Would you want to do it again? Why/why not?
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### **9.3 Level 3 – Independent Prompts**

Choose one of these and write a full-page entry:

1. A day when you tried something new
  2. A holiday day that didn't go as planned
  3. The most relaxing day of your holiday
  4. A day when you helped someone during the holiday
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### **10. Mini Practice Activities**

You can do these before writing a full entry.

#### **Activity 1 – Improve the Boring Sentences**

Change these “boring” sentences into better ones:

1. We went to the park.
2. It was hot.
3. We ate lunch.

#### **Example improvement:**

We went to the park.

→ This morning we walked to our local park, where the tall trees shaded the dusty path.

Students rewrite each sentence with **adjectives, adverbs, and one technique**.

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#### **Activity 2 – Senses Snapshot**

Choose a place you visited in the holidays (beach, park, shopping centre, grandma's house) and write:

- 1 sentence about what you **saw**
- 1 sentence about what you **heard**

- 1 sentence about what you **smelled**
  - 1 sentence about how you **felt**
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### Activity 3 – Time Connectives

Underline the time connectives in this paragraph:

First, we packed our bags and put them in the car. Then we drove for an hour to reach the zoo. After that, we walked around to see the animals. Finally, we bought ice creams before going home.

Then students write **their own short paragraph** using **at least 3** time connectives.

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## 11. Holiday Journal Checklist (Self/Parent/Teacher)

Before you say “I’m done!”, check:

### Ideas & Structure

- I have written the **date** at the top.
- I have a clear **beginning, middle, and ending**.
- My events are in **time order**.

### Language Features

- I used **first person** (I, me, my, we, our).
- I mostly used **past tense** (went, saw, felt, heard).
- I used **at least 3 descriptive techniques** (simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, strong adjectives, etc.).

### Detail and Reflection

- I described how things **looked, sounded, felt, smelled, or tasted**.
- I explained **how I felt** and **why**.
- I wrote a **reflection at the end** (what I learned / why it mattered).

### Editing

- I checked my **capital letters** and **full stops**.
- I checked my **spelling** of common words.
- I used **paragraphs** for new ideas.

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## 12. Glossary

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning (Student-Friendly)</b>
<b>Journal</b>	A writing book where you record your thoughts, feelings, and what happens in your life.
<b>Entry</b>	One piece of writing in your journal, usually about one day or event.
<b>Recount</b>	A retelling of something that has already happened.
<b>Chronological</b>	In time order (first to last).
<b>Reflection</b>	Thinking carefully about your experiences and what they mean.
<b>First person</b>	Writing as yourself using “I, me, my, we, our”.
<b>Tense</b>	Shows when something happens (past, present, future).
<b>Past tense</b>	Writing about something that already happened (e.g. went, saw, played).
<b>Adjective</b>	A word that describes a noun (e.g. “blue sky”, “noisy crowd”).
<b>Adverb</b>	A word that describes a verb (e.g. “walked slowly”, “laughed loudly”).
<b>Simile</b>	Comparing two things using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> (“as cold as ice”).
<b>Metaphor</b>	Saying something <i>is</i> something else (“The classroom was a zoo”).
<b>Personification</b>	Giving human actions or feelings to objects or nature (“The trees waved”).
<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	Words that sound like the noise they describe (“bang”, “splash”).
<b>Imagery</b>	Descriptive language that helps the reader imagine the scene.
<b>Sensory detail</b>	Details linked to the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch).