

Learning Logs

Like notes, learning logs record knowledge about a given subject. Students make regular entries, reflecting on their learning. Some focus questions for learning logs include:

- What did I do in class today?
- What did I learn?
- What did I find interesting?
- What questions do I have about what I learned?
- What was the point of today's lesson?
- What connections did I make to previous ideas or lessons?

Example Learning Log Topics

1. Writing About Mathematics

- Students write a detailed explanation to another student of how to solve a math problem.
- Students create similar problems to those they are studying in class, including the steps to the solution and the solution itself.
- Your friend believes that if you double the length of the sides of a rectangle, then the area of the rectangle will also double. Draw a diagram and carefully explain why he may be wrong.
- How would you explain to an eight-year-old which fraction $\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ is larger?
- Draw a picture of 5×4 and write in words exactly why your picture describes this multiplication.

2. Writing About History

- Students place themselves in an historical period or event and write about it from the point of view of a person involved in the event. Students should focus on the what, when, where, why, how and what if of the situation.
- Students write a conversation between themselves and a historical person, focusing on details of an event.
- Students examine events and speculate about the long-term effects resulting from the events.
- Students write a letter to the editor about a current event issue.
- Students select a political cartoon from the newspaper and identify the problem. Analyze the cartoon's message.

3. Writing About Science

- Students describe a lab activity that they did in class. They should include what question the lab was designed to answer or conclusion they reached upon completion of the activity, and a description of the data they collected that supports their conclusion.



- Students summarize the main points of a lecture, making connections to their textbook reading.
- Students conduct and report in writing an interview of a scientist or an individual in a science-related career.
- Students build a device, write down the steps in the construction process, and give the materials and directions to another student group to complete and build the same task.
- Students research, plan, and discuss a controversial science-related issue. They write a position statement based on their research and the discussion.

4. Writing About English

- Students write a short summary of a story, demonstrating understanding of plot structure.
- Students compare and contrast a pair of characters from a single piece of literature or two different pieces.
- Students create a double-entry journal with important passages from a story or novel on the left side and personal responses on the right side. These work well for making thematic connections and for studying character development.
- Students write an autobiographical incident as an introductory piece early in the year.
- Students write a fictional story demonstrating understanding of plot and character elements.

For additional writing activities, see *Middle Level Writing with Integrated Reading and Oral Language* and *The Write Path* books in each subject area.

