

What Will You Write About?

A couple of weeks ago, we suggested some great summer reading books. But you could also write your own book this summer!

All it takes is a quiet place, ideas, paper and pencil or a computer. Why not become an author? Try to write several times a week. Writing is like playing ball or jumping rope: You get better the more you practice.

Step 1: Think

Think about what you are going to write about. You can do this almost anywhere. Some kids keep their ideas in a notebook so that when they have time to write, they can get started more easily.



Try using a web diagram to organize your thoughts.

Step 2: Organize

Organize your ideas. Make a list, a chart, an outline or a web diagram.

Have you learned about webbing in school? It's a way to get your ideas out of your mind and onto paper.



Mini Fact:

Experts say writing during the summer will help you jump back into school more easily in the fall.

The main topic or idea goes in a circle in the middle. The parts of the idea branch out from the main circle. The details branch off next.

Step 3: Write

Write your story, poem or information. Right now the most important thing is to get your ideas down. These first attempts are called "working copy" or "drafts."



Step 4: Read and rewrite

Read your draft to yourself several times. Think about how you could improve it. Are there details you could add that would make it more interesting? Is there anything in the draft that is confusing?

Read your draft aloud. Making changes is hard, but it makes your writing better.

Step 5: Edit

When you are satisfied with your draft, edit it. That means you check to make sure you have the correct spelling and punctuation. It's OK to get help with this. Even the best writers get help from editors.

Step 6: Publish

Think about how you could publish your writing. You could rewrite it in your best handwriting or type it on a computer. You can make a book or write a script for a movie or play. You might add pictures or decorations.

Step 7: Share!

Share your finished writing with your friends and family. They will be so proud to know an author!

If you'd like to spread your story further, talk to the staff of the school newspaper to find out if they'll publish it. A community newspaper or magazine might be interested in it, too.

Your writing also makes a great gift for family members and friends.

Get started

The time to start is now! Make a list of subjects you'd like to write about. We'll get you started with a few ideas.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Pets | Historical figures |
| Vacations | Outer space |
| Sports | Wild animals |

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/1V1Pu9M
- storyjumper.com
- scribblitt.com

At the library:

- "My Weird Writing Tips" by Dan Gutman
- "Frank and Fiona Build a Fictional Story" by Rachel Lynette

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of summer writing are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



AUTHOR, COMPUTER, COPY, DIAGRAM, DRAFT, EDIT, IDEAS, IMPROVE, NOTEBOOK, ORGANIZE, PRACTICE, PUBLISH, READING, SUBJECT, SUMMER, THINK, TOPIC, WEB, WRITING.

G T Z E X R E A D I N G B P G
 X N C L Z J H E V O R P M I H
 R I I E C I T C A R P X D K D
 D E P T J U N Y P O C E T O I
 T R T U I B T A E K A A I O A
 Z H A U B R U O G S L U D B G
 U X I F P L W S P R N T E E R
 W E B N T M I I N I O H A T A
 I E F O K O O S K Z C O F O M
 R E M M U S H C H Y G R Z N A

Cook's Corner

Chicken Strips With Orange Marmalade Ketchup

You'll need:

- Cooking spray
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch-thick strips
- salt and ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup ketchup

- 1/2 cup orange marmalade
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

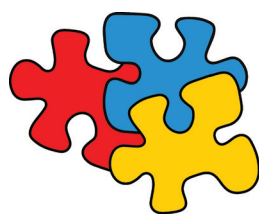
What to do:

1. Coat a stovetop grill pan or griddle with cooking spray and preheat over medium-high heat. Season chicken strips with salt and pepper.
2. Add strips to hot pan and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, turning frequently, until golden brown and cooked through.
3. In a small saucepan, combine other ingredients. Mix well and bring to a simmer, then decrease heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve strips with dunking sauce on the side.

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com).

Puzzling

Unscramble the words below that remind us of writing.



- asdie _____
- ecpomutr _____
- lpsel _____
- okbos _____

Answers: ideas, computer, spell, books.

Mini Jokes



Tim: What does a cat have that no other animal has?

Tali: Kittens!

Patty: What is green and likes to peck at trees?

Pierre: Woody Woodpickle!

Eco Note



A freakishly warm Arctic winter resulted in polar sea ice reaching its lowest winter level ever observed. Arctic sea ice peaked at 5.607 million square miles on March 24, breaking last year's record low of 5.612 million square miles set on Feb. 25, 2015. Overall, the Arctic has heated twice as fast as the rest of the globe.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Work with a friend on a book idea. Share your ideas, then read each other's books.

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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