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Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Your Writer's Daybook

Writers keep special journals and notebooks with them at all times to jot down ideas and notes that might come in handy when they are writing.

Many writers call this special book a "daybook" because they make it a habit to write in it everyday so they will have lots of ideas when they sit down to write.

It is a good idea to write down everything you see in detail because you never know when something will spark a writing idea. A sign tacked up on a telephone pole near your home telling of a lost pet might prompt you to write a story about a child who has to go away on a vacation while a pet ferret is missing. Or, seeing a bumper sticker advertising Jackson Hole, Wyoming might remind you of an exciting vacation you would like to write about.

To start keeping your daybook, find a notebook—any size will do. You can make your own by stapling together sheets of lined paper with construction paper for a cover, or by putting them paper in a three-ring binder.

Write an entry for your daybook for a cold, January day with two feet of fresh snow on the ground.

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Write notes about the day you went to the zoo with your family.

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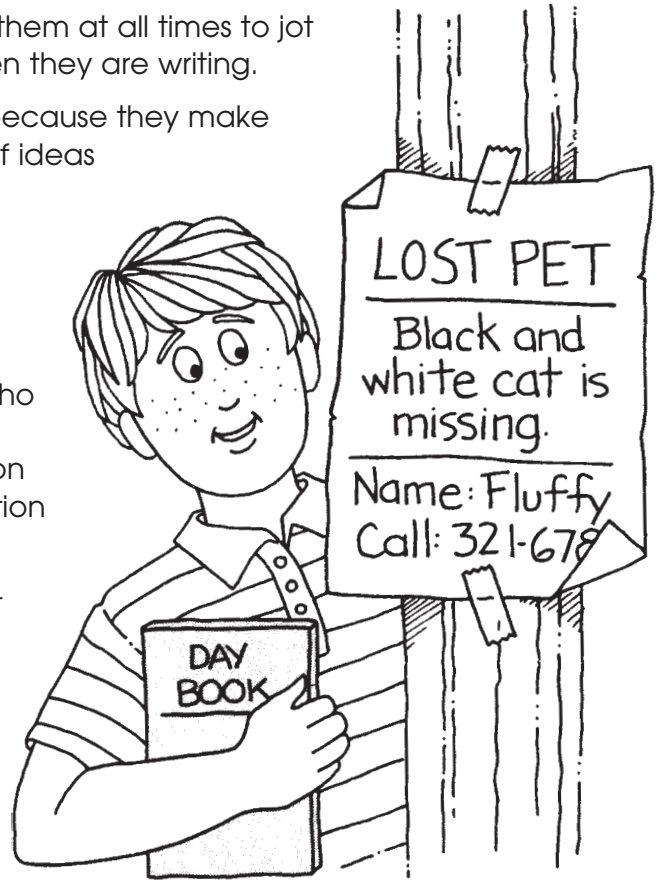
Write what you might see during a walk around your house if you look very closely.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Inventing Characters

Some writers say that characters are even more important to a story than a plot. They believe that if readers care about the characters, they will be eager to find out what happens to them. The better you know your characters, the easier it is to know what they will do next. Here is a form to help you invent characters and get to know about them.

If you can't think of an interesting name, this way always works. It is also fun! Get the white pages of your local telephone book. Go down the list of last names and find one you think is interesting. If you know a little about your character, you can try to match the last name with what you know. For instance, if your character is an Irish immigrant you will not want to use a name like McCafferty, which is Scottish, or Monet, which is French.



When you have chosen a last name, open the phone book to a different page and choose a first name that sounds good with it. Do not use the name of a real person. If the name you create turns out to be someone's name, it should have been an accident. Most fiction writers include a disclaimer at the beginning of each book that reads, "Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental." People do not always enjoy seeing their names in print, especially if the characters bearing their names are not good and honest people.

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Character Invention Form

Character's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Eye color: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair color: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ and/or school grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite color \_\_\_\_\_ Favorite hobby: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Fears: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite foods: \_\_\_\_\_

Best friend(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings (brothers and/or sisters): \_\_\_\_\_

Other information: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Hat Tricks

There are times in all writers' lives when original thoughts just don't come easily. If you're having trouble coming up with a new and different character it sometimes helps to throw yourself into the part! Here's how it works.

If you are at school, ask your teacher if he or she has a hat collection. Gather up some hats from the hall closet, the attic, the basement, or your bedroom. (Be sure to ask permission if the hats belong to someone else.) Or imagine yourself in one of the hats pictured at the bottom of the page. Answer the questions.

One person's collection of hats might include an army helmet, a baby's knit cap, a sailor cap, a golf cap, a sunbonnet, and a felt hat with a brim. Put one of the hats on your head and look in the mirror. Ask yourself some questions.



What kind of person am I? \_\_\_\_\_

What is my name? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_

Where am I going in this hat? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do I live? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I like? \_\_\_\_\_

Put on a different hat and try to create a different character from the first. Then invent a situation in which the two characters would come together. Give each character a name.

Write a dialogue between the two characters.

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