

Journal Prompts for LA9H – How to Journal Effectively

Whenever you are assigned a journal, write for at least 10 minutes. Aim for about a page (or more) of double-spaced typing. Don't worry about mechanics and spelling at this point; just try to record your ideas and responses as they occur to you. Journal entries should do more than just give a simple answer to the question; they should explore the topic and even take a few minor detours.

The best journal entries do all of the following:

- **Answer the question** with the ideas that come to you.
- **Explore your reasoning**--When you explain your initial response, be sure to explore and explain why you have taken the position that you have. Try to address any obvious counter arguments.
- **Give examples and make connections**-- As you put forth your position, make connections to the concrete. Give examples whenever possible to illustrate what you mean. If the prompt or some comment you've made reminds you of anything you've seen (in your personal experience or in the media) or read (in or out of class), explain those connections in the journal.

If the journal is a **homework journal**, read it over carefully and make sure that your ideas are clearly expressed and **edited**. (It's at this point that you do edit!)

If the journal is **done in class**, I will give you a few minutes to briefly read over and clarify your ideas. I do not take off points for editing mistakes in an in-class journal, but I must be able to read it and follow your ideas.

The purpose of a journal is to gather your preliminary thoughts on a topic that you may choose to develop later in an essay. Journal writing also allows me to hear your thoughts on an issue we are discussing in class.