

Journal Prompts for Teens

For parents, teachers and counselors to share with teens.

60 prompts to use offline, on paper. Pick one, read it aloud or hand it out, and give ten quiet minutes to write. Writing is optional, and nobody has to share what they wrote.

Journal prompts for middle schoolers (ages 11 to 13)

1. What's something you're better at now than you were last year?
2. Describe a perfect Saturday from morning to night.
3. If you could design one class at school, what would it teach?
4. Who is someone you can always be yourself around? What makes them easy to be with?
5. What's a rule you think should change? What would you replace it with?
6. Write about a time you were brave, even a little.
7. What's the best thing that happened this week?
8. What do you want to learn how to do this year?
9. Describe your favorite place using all five senses.
10. If your pet or favorite object could talk, what would it say about you?
11. What's something that worried you before but doesn't anymore?
12. Write a thank-you note to someone who helped you, even if you never send it.
13. What three words would your friends use to describe you? Do you agree?
14. What is something you'd like adults to understand about being your age?
15. Invent a holiday. What is it called and how do people celebrate?

Journal prompts for high school students (ages 14 to 18)

16. Write about a moment you handled better than your younger self would have.
17. What does a "good enough" school day look like? Not perfect, good enough.
18. What's the difference between the online you and the offline you?
19. Write about a friendship that changed this year: grew, faded or shifted.
20. What's a belief you grew up with that you're thinking about differently now?
21. Describe your future self on an ordinary Tuesday, not a highlight reel.
22. What do people thank you for? Make the list, even if it feels strange.
23. Write about a test, tryout or audition that felt huge then and feels smaller now.
24. What's one decision coming up? Write the pros and cons, then what your gut says.
25. Who do you respect but disagree with? Why?
26. What does success mean to you, separate from what others expect?
27. Write about a conversation you'd like to redo, and the version you'd say now.
28. What's something you're proud of that nobody else knows about?

- 29. What do you need more of this month: sleep, space, laughter, help?
- 30. Write a pep talk you'd actually believe on a rough day.

Journal prompts for students in class or advisory (any age)

- 31. What's one thing you learned this week that surprised you?
- 32. Which subject feels hardest right now, and what's one small thing that would help?
- 33. Describe a time you helped a classmate or a classmate helped you.
- 34. What does a classroom where everyone does their best work look like?
- 35. What's a goal for this grading period, and what's the first step?
- 36. Write about a mistake that taught you something.
- 37. If you could ask any historical figure one question, who and what?
- 38. What's something you'd like to get better at outside of school?
- 39. Describe your ideal study spot.
- 40. What would you tell a new student on their first day?

Prompts for feelings and hard days

- 41. What feeling showed up most this week? Give it a name and a color.
- 42. What helps you calm down when everything feels like a lot?
- 43. What's something that's been on your mind that you haven't said out loud?
- 44. Make a list of five things that cheer you up and cost nothing.
- 45. Who could you talk to if something felt too big to handle alone?
- 46. Write a letter to a feeling you've been avoiding.
- 47. What would you tell a friend who was having the week you're having?
- 48. What's one thing you can let go of before tomorrow?
- 49. What's something hard you got through before? What helped?
- 50. What do you need from the people around you right now?

Prompts parents and teens can do together

Both of you answer, then share only what you each choose to.

- 51. What's a family memory you want to keep forever?
- 52. What's one thing we could do together more often?
- 53. What's something you've never asked me about but wonder about?
- 54. Describe a perfect day off together.
- 55. What's one thing you appreciate about each other?
- 56. What's a tradition we should start?
- 57. What were you worried about at my age (parent) or right now (teen)?
- 58. What's a goal we could each work on this month and check in about?

59. Write about a time we laughed until it hurt.
60. Finish the sentence: "I feel most understood when..."

A 10-minute routine

2 minutes: phones away, paper out, read the prompt aloud. **6 minutes:** quiet writing. **2 minutes:** anyone who wants to share a sentence can. Nobody has to.

When journaling isn't enough

Journaling can help with sorting through thoughts, but it is not therapy or a substitute for professional care. If a teen seems to be struggling, connect them with a school counselor, their doctor or a mental health professional. **In crisis? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, US)** or visit findahelpline.com. In immediate danger, call 911.