



Concentrate on the Processes



What are we doing? What are we thinking?

Concentrate on the Processes

One of the major functions of language is to enable us to represent the world ... [which] involves events and happenings.

Derewianka 2020 p, 45

The crisis with the CoVID-19 pandemic is both encouraging and forcing us into re-thinking many of the things we do with our lives and our learning.



One way to use the time is to record the situation. Samuel Pepys (pronounced 'peeps') kept a diary for nine years in the 1660s, and recorded the Great Fire of London, and the Great Plague; Anne Frank recorded her family's life as they hid from the enemy during WW2; Captain Robert Falcon Scott recorded his explorations in Antarctica, including his realization of there being no hope for his expedition's survival, and Louisa May Alcott's girlhood diaries helped her write *Little Women*.

We now have more ways to record these events, in texts which can still serve as 'diaries'.

What makes diaries so valuable is they are not just a record of events in real people's lives, but they also provide personal insights.

The current situation with CoVID-19 has meant our regular lives are far from ordinary. We can record these processes happening around us - our observations, the things we are doing, thinking and feeling, and the ways our lives are being impacted - in a diary.

The processes

One way of framing each entry is to be guided by concentrating on the processes, that is, the verbs.

Verbs are generally organised into four types:

action – *On Monday, 23 October, we went to school, but a lot didn't, because of CoVID-19.*

relating – *Luckily, my grandparents are OK.*

sensing (thinking & feeling) – *I think Mum and Dad are worried about the virus.*

saying – *The government announced that clubs and gyms have to close.*

By doing a daily entry, and ensuring that each of these processes is included, a picture of both activities and insights is constructed. This can have great value for future reference, as part of the family's history.



Mode

You can decide the way to record your next days and weeks.

Written:

- Use a 2020 diary with the dates already included; try to complete something on each process each day
- Purchase a quality notebook, such as Paper Blanks, and have each member of the family write something for each entry, for each process, or take turns



- Try an [online journal](#) or diary.
- Purchase a ream of A80 paper and distribute to the family. Have everyone make their own entry for each day, in writing, drawing, cartoon, poem; add cutouts from newspapers, collage; make sure the four processes are included. Collect into a family record.

DON'T 'mark' everyone's work. Talk about the events if you like, or assist with spelling or sentence construction before the writing, but otherwise this needs to be an authentic record of events.

Audio-visual:

- Take footage of the street and develop a script for voice-over, of the changes you can see, including the different processes.
- Interview family members and ask them to describe their activities each day, how they feel about what they are doing, and their opinion of the situation.
- Create a stop-motion video of one of the day's activities – use play dough or clay, family toys or objects around the house. Post on You Tube.
- Prepare a daily Power Point of the family's activities. Share with friends and family online.
- Create a [blog](#) to record the events of the day.
- One thing to consider is the way the record can be made accessible for future reference.

As Kath Cartwright says in her blog on this site, '[Keep them engaged, keep it short](#)'.

Our children aren't at school, and there is deep concern as to how they can learn everything they need to. The great thing about literacy is that it is essentially learning about communicating, about making meaning with the people in our world. A diary can do so much more than the basics. And concentrating on the four types of verbs will help build capacity and awareness of their importance in all texts.

Quotes, noting how these diarists use the different types of processes:

To the King's Theatre, where we saw Midsummer Night's Dream, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life.

Samuel Pepys

At such moments, I don't think about all the misery but of the beauty that still remains.

Anne Frank

I may not have proved a great explorer, but we have done the greatest march ever made and come very near to great success.

Robert Falcon Scott

Painful as it may be, a significant emotional event can be the catalyst for choosing a direction that serves us - and those around us - more effectively. Look for the learning.

Louisa May Alcott

References

Derewianka, B. (2020) *Exploring hoe texts work 2nd Edition* Newtown: Primary English Teaching Association Australia

