

Content Specific Ideas

Science – excellent for regular observations over time in the field (e.g. with gardens).

Math – word problems; sketch & calculate sizes of objects and rooms; sketch & describe shapes.

Art – superb for sketching objects as part of observations to understand & reference.

Physical Education – use to describe & sketch regular exercises; feelings; and goals.

Language – storyboard the sequence of a story; write down words of interest; imitation writing of song lyrics; words of interest; synonyms; stories.

Technology – Go to www.mapquest.com — create and print a map from the school to home to include as part of an observation assignment. Paste the map and directions into the Idea Book for taking notes when traveling the route.

Homework – students use their Idea Books to develop classroom lessons further (e.g. with observation have students do similar exercises in their homes or on the way home). To develop ownership and buy-in, have students select their own topics for homework.

Field Trips – students use the Idea Books to record observations and reflections on field trips that provide a research tool in the process. These notes and sketches can then be used in class.

Sharing

Each student regularly shares their Idea Book with peers including in pairs (pair-share); small groups (3 or 4 students); and whole group presentations. Effective sharing includes a protocol of compliments, observations, and questions. Each student regularly shares their Idea Book with the teacher. When meeting with the teacher, the student shares their one or two favorite entries. The student is asked if they would like to photocopy their favorite entry to post in the classroom in a designated wall location as a model for ideas, concepts, structure, and self esteem.

Thinking Out of the Box

Idea Book Ideas – to build ownership it is important to generate ideas from the students and let them have a say in the selection of ideas to explore in their Idea Book. When initially using the Idea Book elicit suggestions from the students for posting in the room to select from.

Calendar Entry – each day on a calendar a different student (or two) talk about an event for the day (current or historical) &/or their day at school.

Group Books – each group of approximately three to five students would have a group book. This book could be kept in class to be used by the groups as they are in the classroom. The book would have a topic which would require collaborative entries. The purpose is to work together to share ideas and develop a collaborative resource. The same framework used with Idea Books would be used with Group Books.

Living Talking Book Journal – students create drawings of a partner, then each develops a call and response or statement with speech bubbles (like comics). Examples include:

- What is your opinion about ____? My opinion is ____.
- What do think about ____? I think ____.
- What do you know about ____? I know ____.

More Ideas on Idea Books

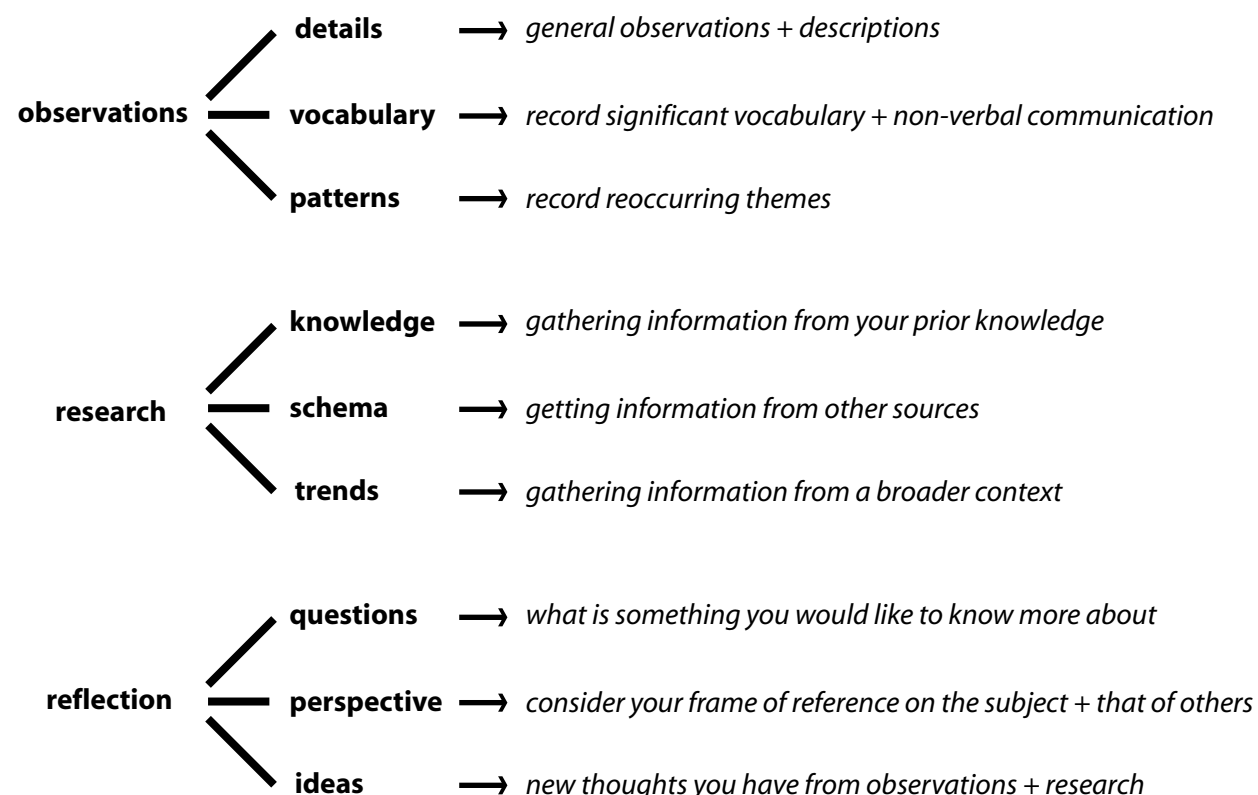
There are many excellent books and publications that have many ideas to incorporate within Idea Books. Please see the accompanying list of books which may be accessed at www.eggplant.org.



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Idea Books

An Idea Book is a sketchbook + journal used in grades K-12 and college for recording personal experiences including observations, research, and reflections. The diagram below provides a framework for the different types of entries in an Idea Book.



This handout provides many examples of observations, research, and reflections as initial templates for implementing the Idea Book in a classroom. The goal is the students and adults will ultimately use the Idea Book for their specific needs and ideas.

Mechanics

Bound books such as sturdy marbled composition books make an excellent choice for Idea Books. Student-made books are also excellent as they create pride of ownership. They can be constructed with lined or unlined paper using either construction paper or board (e.g. a cereal box) for the covers. In either case, the students should have an opportunity to create original covers that express their individuality (ownership).



Methods of Entries

Methods of entries in the Idea Book include words, illustrations, drawings, and photos. Students should have a variety of tools for their entries including pencils, pens, marking pens, crayons, newspaper and magazine stories and images, glue stick, paint, photos, digital images, and any other materials that support the goals of observation, reflection, and research.

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Examples of Idea Book Entries

This section is divided into the three general categories of entries — *observation, research, and reflection* — with a variety of initial examples to do with your students. It is very important for the teacher and other classroom adults to keep and use an Idea Book concurrently with the students. The adults regularly model using and sharing their own Idea Books.

Observation

An observation entry is words and pictures of things that are part of your life. Observations can come from within the school setting, home, places you go in your neighborhood, etc. Students should be encouraged to use the Idea Books at school and outside of school so they begin to use it as an important part of their life with real life connections. Examples include:

Objects – the students initially sketch objects in their classroom, then expanding to the school and at home. The purpose is to build observation skills, drawing ability, use of visual maps (e.g. Thinking Maps), vocabulary, and to use the books as a research tool.

Newspaper and magazine images – by clipping and including images and words from publications the students are building their awareness of media including current events, what they are seeing &/or reading, and common interests. Excellent for building vocabulary.

Saturation reporting – the students will record in words &/or drawings all the sounds, smells, and sights they have in one location (e.g. classroom, cafeteria, restaurant, etc.).

Sounds – the students will use tape recorders to record sounds from various locations. They would then be revisited with other students. Students can document in their Idea Books what they heard in drawings &/or words.

Person – create a visual map and drawings of different peers and family members. This would include an image of the person, their attributes, and environmental observations.

Tableau – students observe a tableau of one or several students and record observations that reflect their posture, expression, and reaction to each other. Excellent for observing and building vocabulary.

Creating directions – students document a procedure or creation of an object in their Idea Book. This promotes observation while documenting a process. Examples include origami, cooking recipes, art project, how to construct a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Phonic Patterns – students write or clip from newspapers and magazines words with the same phonic patterns.

Research

A research entry is an ongoing compilation of information for investigating one or more topics. The purpose of an Idea Book is to have a readily accessible place and vehicle to record and document ideas for future use and applications.

Quick notes – if the student observes something of interest, having their Idea Book provides an excellent means of keeping the thought and a place to readily access later. It is very important that the teacher also regularly uses their Idea Book in a similar modeled manner.

Internet – record through writing or a printed page websites of interest to include with classroom research projects.

Interview – interview people around the school and in the community.



Research continued

Data Collection – the collection of data is an excellent math application. For example, the school has decided to change the food in the cafeteria – who would we survey, what data would we collect, and who would we present our findings to? Students would then create hand drawn graphs or use a graphing program or spreadsheet on the computer to create graphs.

Field Trips – record observations and information on field trips. This includes pasting in pictures from a brochure or handout as well as drawings and words. Students should bring cameras to take photos specifically for their Idea Books.

Reflection

A reflective entry is a record of memorable experiences and the writer's thoughts and feelings about them. Reflection entries are excellent for processing recent learning experiences (e.g. your reactions to reading).

Reflective Journal Entry – The journal entry consists of two columns or two pages:

- The left side is for recording important things you saw, heard, read, and did.
- The right is for reflection (reactions to your observations: what you felt about what you saw, heard, read, did, etc., and/or what concerns, insights, desires you have).

Areas of Strength & Areas Needing Improvement – In words and pictures student will have two entries on separate pages:

- An area of strength in the classroom or outside the classroom (hobbies, athletics, subjects, or other skill or interest).
- An area the student would like to improve in the classroom or outside the classroom.

The student can additionally add what they have done to support the area of strength or will do to succeed in the area desiring improvement.

Statement or Question – a student or teacher poses a statement or question for the class to respond and reflect on in their Idea Book. It is very important for students to also contribute to the creation of statements and questions so they have ownership with the ideas. An example is if you could keep one memory, what memory would you keep? The entries in the Idea Book should vary with drawings &/or words.

Feelings – students use the Idea Book to record feelings that they record (diary), share as a journal, and use to see needs and growth.

Transitions – can be effectively used with transitions in the classroom (e.g. have the students do a reflective entry on what was just finished in the classroom).

Children Solve Problems – students are posed a question that requires higher order thinking skills to solve. It is very important to share their ideas upon completion to allow the students to build upon each other's ideas. Example questions include:

- How do you stop a dog and cat from fighting? Conflict resolution is an extension.
- How would you design and equip a spaceship? Links with observation and needs skills.
- How would you design a perfect room at home?
- How would you design and equip a classroom?
- How would you equip a person to fly?

