

Inquiry Mini-Lessons

Keeping Track of Information and Thinking with Inquiry Notebooks

This lesson supports students' use of an Inquiry Notebook as they investigate their selected inquiry. It can contain a variety of information such as topics, project ideas, drawings, sketches, charts, observations, notes from research, interesting findings, and so on. Students will use their own personal inquiry notebooks to keep track of the information gathered and their thinking during their inquiry.

Time: 25 minutes

Materials:

- **Inquiry Notebook**, one per student
- enlarged version of the Notes/My Thinking Chart on chart paper or an interactive whiteboard
- marker (if using chart paper)
- a sample non-fiction reading from *Animals in Our Lives*, *Water Works!*, or *Inside a Story*, or one of your own

Grouping: whole class

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that researchers keep notebooks while engaging in inquiry so that all of the information they gather can be located in one place. Tell students that they will be using their own Inquiry Notebooks to keep track of topics, project ideas, drawings, sketches, charts, observations, notes from research, interesting findings, and so on.
2. Distribute the pre-made Inquiry Notebooks to students, and have them open up their books to the first blank page. Ask them to draw a line down the centre. At the top of the left column, ask students to write "Notes" (this is where students will record what the text is about) and at the top of the right column, ask students to write "My Thinking" (this is where students will record what the text makes them think about).

I am going to give you your own Inquiry Notebook, so you can keep track of the information we find, as well as jot down your thoughts or any new questions you may have as we proceed in our inquiry.

Notes/My Thinking Chart

Notes	My Thinking

3. Model for students how they will use their Inquiry Notebooks.
- Display an enlarged version of the Notes/My Thinking Chart.
 - Read aloud a non-fiction passage from one of the inquiry units or a selection of your own.
 - After reading a paragraph, stop and have students tell you what they learned from the reading, and if this information is relevant to the inquiry.
 - In the “Notes” column of the chart, demonstrate how to jot down what students learned. Model for students how to create notes by using bullets/dashes and not full sentences. (Each new note needs to begin on a new line. Notes should be in students’ own words and not copied from the text.)
 - Continue reading and jotting down information.
 - In the “My Thinking” column of the chart, demonstrate how to jot down any questions or wonderings students may generate as they gather their data.

Now that I have completed looking at this text, I wonder, “Do I have enough information? Do I understand my notes? Am I still wondering about anything?”

Teaching Tip: Record sentence stems on a chart and post them where they are clearly visible. If students are having difficulty with their thinking, demonstrate how they can use the sentence stems to extend their thinking when they are recording ideas:

- I saw... and I think...
- I am curious about...
- I wonder why...
- What if...?
- This is what I don’t get...
- I saw... and I want to know...
- I’m trying to figure out...
- Maybe... perhaps...