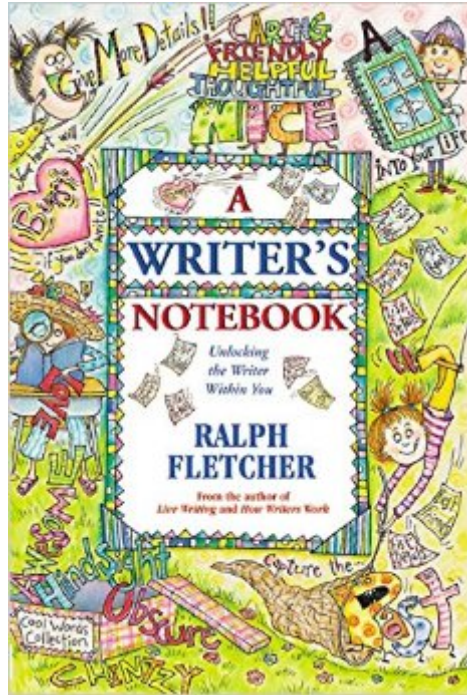


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# A Writer's Notebook: Unlocking The Writer Within You



## Synopsis

Writers are like other people, except for at least one important difference. Other people have daily thoughts and feelings, notice this sky or that smell, but they don't do much about it. Not writers.

Writers react. And writers need a place to record those reactions. That's what a writer's notebook is for. It gives you a place to write down what makes you angry or sad or amazed, to write down what you noticed and don't want to forget . . . .

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

I began the school year by reading Ralph Fletcher's *A Writer's Notebook* aloud to my fourth grade class. This book details how writers get ideas through keeping a notebook-- a place to record and respond to events we observe in the world. We have set up our own writer's notebooks and add to them each day after reading a chapter of Fletcher's book. This is the first year my students are actually excited about writing! One of the biggest hang-ups for my young writers is thinking of ideas about which to write. Fletcher's book provides many "seed ideas" to get my students' brains churning. Now, even my less motivated students look forward to writing time each day. I even have students ASKING to take their writer's notebooks home to work on during their own time! Fletcher's book is a great motivator for young writers. Its ideas are practical and easily applicable to the classroom. I recommend it to any young writers, ages 8 and up!

I am studying how to better teach writing as part of my Rank 1 program (the highest level teachers in our state can achieve), and this is one of the books I highly recommend to other writing teachers. The best way to use it is to buy a classroom set (if possible), and read 4 chapters a week the first month of school. Each chapter Fletcher has something for the kids to try in their Writers Notebooks, so by all means, have them try whatever it is. Let kids decorate their Writers Notebooks too before you begin, so it's personalized and it feels more important to them. One of the chapter is about making lists...any kind of lists. He gives lots of examples from kids, which is one of the strong points about this book. It is aimed at kids, not adults. Another chapter is about snatches of talk that you overhear in a store or the mall. Write down these snatches and later they might form the basis of a story idea or poem. Again, he gives excellent examples that kids can relate to. After using the ideas in this book, all my kids want to do now is WRITE! What a great thing that is.

I teach second and third grade, and I use this and Ralph Fletcher's other books in this series, regularly in my classroom. I read parts of them out loud to my students, then we discuss how we can use Fletcher's ideas in our own writing. Fletcher writes to his young audience with a great deal of respect. He addresses them as authors in a way that both makes them believe that they really ARE authors, and also gives them the tools to really BE authors. This book influenced how I helped my students set up their writing notebooks, and has also influenced how I have set up my own. While these books are written for upper elementary-middle school students, I find that as read alouds they are accessible to younger kids; they are also helpful to anyone beyond middle school age who wants writing to become more a part of their own life.

This is a small 133 page paperback book that is loaded with ideas for using notebooks to improve your or your student's writing. There are interesting comments from other writers as well as from the author, Ralph Fletcher, noted author of writing books. Fletcher encourages us to "write small" and capture all the little details using a writer's notebook. There, we should put descriptions of hands, gestures, objects, and anecdotes that we observe throughout our days. The author lists many ways to use these notebooks in this small book, making it easy to read yet very helpful. Highly recommended to any writer. John Dunbar Sugar Land, TX

While this book is written for a Young Adult audience, I just love reading about writing (of course hoping to jump in someday and do it) and this is a very good book to get you going. Fletcher takes

you step by step into the hows and whys of creating and keeping a Writers Notebook, and discusses the birth of great ideas from little notes on life. He also touches on great tips like writing with honesty, including about things that hurt the most. While I believe this to be an inspiring book for all (I now have 2 notebooks for my writing observations) I see it as an impressive gift, along with a small nice notebook, of course, for that little someone in your life who may have the gift to see, and write, life as it is to them. If you enjoy the idea of writing your self, this is a great place to start.

I came across this book during my student teaching and fell in love with it! Ralph Fletcher writes in a simple style that helps students understand what a writer's notebook is meant to be as well as exploring several different avenues for collecting thoughts and ideas. My students went on to write wonderful stories using their own ideas that they generated in their writer's notebooks.

This is a wonderful book for the young writer, and I wish I'd read it when I was in school. Ralph Fletcher encourages the reader to observe the world around her, document her observations, and use them as a foundation for future written works. He has also incorporated the thoughts and poetry of many young writers, his own, as well as those of other established authors. I think that many adults who've considered writing could also use this book as a starting point.

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