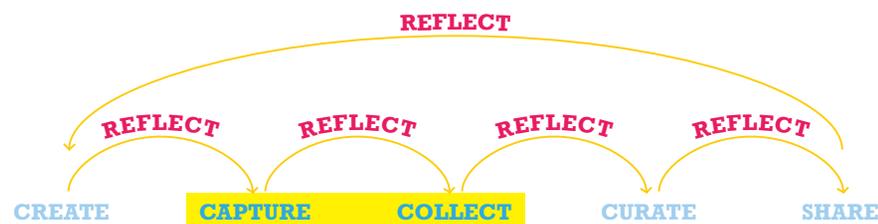


# DOCUMENTATION PROMPT JAR

This resource offers an accessible and adaptable array of documentation prompts—written on paper and contained in a jar or box—to support learners in capturing their work, process, experience, and thinking as they make and learn. Use of this prompting tool can be woven seamlessly into any lesson, activity, unit, or progression and can support both facilitated and unfacilitated documentation.

## WHY DOCUMENT?

Documenting learning-in-action serves as a powerful reflection tool in your learning environment. Learners use documentation to reflect on their own experience or to assess their own learning. By collecting and curating what they've documented, learners also tell a story that highlights important parts of their journey or process. The [Open Portfolios: Journey Map](#) offers an overview of the different stages involved in portfolio creation. The prompts here support the "Capture" and "Collect" stages in documentation.



## USING THE PROMPT JAR

1. Cut out the prompts on the last page of this resource. Add custom prompts (optional).
2. Put the paper prompts in a jar, box, or similar container (whether one or many).
3. Place the container(s) of prompts on tables or other shared work surfaces.
4. Make sure a variety of documentation tools (listed on following page) are readily available.
5. At specific intervals (e.g., 10 or 15 minutes) throughout any learning or making experience, pause the activity and ask learners to each select one prompt slip from the container.



**Tip:** Consider pausing the activity table by table, so that not all learners are documenting at the same time, in case the prompt involves supporting or being supported by someone else.

6. Give each learner 2 minutes to follow the prompt and set aside their document.

**Note:** Documents can be collected in a number of ways. Your learners can assemble what they capture in a journal or notebook. If their documentation media is digital, they can upload files to a digital portfolio they curate or to a group drive or folder for collective review and sharing.

Over the course of the activity, lesson, or unit, your learners will accrue a variety of artifacts that capture different aspects and stages of their work, process, and thinking. If you routinely use this tool with your learners, documentation will become second nature for them—you won't have to pause the activity anymore.



## DOCUMENTATION TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Even pens and paper are powerful documentation tools. Here's a list of potential tools and materials you may make available to learners, depending on what you have in your learning environment.

**Writing implements:** Pens, pencils, markers

**Paper:** Provide an assortment, including plain, ruled, graph, dotted, loose-leaf, or bound in a journal

**Camera:** Built-in camera on phones, computers, or tablets or dedicated cameras (such as InstaX, Polaroid, or other)

**Video camera:** Built-in video camera on phones, computers, or tablets

**Audio recorder:** Built-in recorders on phones, computers, or tablets

**Drafting tools:** Compass, ruler, tracing paper

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

**What** is being captured?

The prompts in this resource focus on capturing in-the-moment thinking and process. Documents of process aid learners in seeing the development of their ideas, the various decisions they make, and any mistakes, corrections, or changes in direction they take.

Consider the learning goals you set for any given activity: Are there additional prompts you can add to capture specific aspects of your learners' work and process?

**How** is it being captured?

Photos and videos are common ways to capture learning-in-action, but any variety of media can be used in documentation, including written reflections, sketches, blueprints, or even lists. The [DIY Documentation Tools for Makers](#) resource has helpful suggestions.

**Who** is capturing it?

Some of the prompts in this resource have learners document their own work, while others have them document the work of others. How will you distribute or balance the roles and responsibilities of documentation across your learning environment?

**Where** will what is captured be collected?

Your learners may keep a journal or binder in which they gather together what they've captured to revisit at a later date. Digital files can be uploaded onto a group drive or folder for collective review and sharing.



**WILD CARD!**  
CHOOSE HOW AND WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO DOCUMENT



INTERVIEW THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU  
ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND RECORD IT



MAKE ONE OBSERVATION ABOUT YOUR  
EXPERIENCE MAKING SO FAR

# DOCUMENTATION PROMPT JAR

Below are a series of suggested documentation prompts, meant to be a starting point. Edit, add to, or subtract from these prompts to best suit your unique learners, environment, and the available tools and materials. Then print and cut out the prompts. Finally, place them in a container for use.



**TAKE A PICTURE OF  
WHAT YOU'RE DOING**



**TAKE A PICTURE OF WHAT THE PERSON  
NEAREST YOU IS DOING**



**WRITE DOWN A QUESTION  
YOU'RE WORKING ON ANSWERING**



**INTERVIEW THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU  
ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND RECORD IT**



**NOTE ONE CHANGE OF DIRECTION  
YOU'VE TAKEN SINCE BEGINNING**



**DRAW A SKETCH OF WHAT THE PERSON  
NEXT TO YOU IS DOING/MAKING**



***WILD CARD!***  
**CHOOSE HOW AND WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO DOCUMENT**



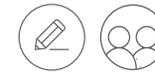
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# DOCUMENTATION PROMPT JAR

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**DESCRIBE WHAT YOU'RE DOING  
IN 3 SENTENCES**



**DESCRIBE WHAT THE PERSON NEAREST YOU  
IS DOING IN 3 SENTENCES**



**RECORD VIDEO OF THE NEXT 2 MINUTES  
OF YOUR WORK**



**LABEL THE STAGES OF YOUR THINKING PROCESS  
(FOR EXAMPLE, VERSION 1, VERSION 2)**



**PRODUCE A TIMELINE  
OF YOUR IDEA(S)**



**ASK SOMEONE TO DOCUMENT WHAT YOU'RE DOING  
FOR THE NEXT 2 MINUTES**



**MAKE ONE OBSERVATION  
ABOUT THE PERSON NEAREST TO YOU**



**MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE MATERIALS  
YOU'RE USING**