

QUEST WRITING GUIDE

The goals of writing a Quest include: learning more about the assets that your community has to offer, strengthening your ties to the place that you explore, using community resources as you learn more about those places, sharpening your observation and communication skills as you prepare the Quest about the location, and publishing your work to share with others in your area.

All work completed in the process of writing your Quest will be kept in a Quest Journal. The journal should be bound and will include the sections listed below. In this packet you will find a guide for each of the sections.

TO PREPARE YOUR JOURNAL:

1) On the first page of your Quest Journal, write your name and your phone number. Also write the name of the site for your Quest. 2) On the second page of your Quest Journal, make a table of contents. The table of contents should look just like the list below. Leave the page numbers in the table of contents blank for now. 3) Number all of the pages in your journal. You will not ever be removing pages. If you write things you don't want to use later, that is not a problem, but all notes, thoughts, and drafts will be kept in this Quest Journal. As you complete each of the sections below, go back to the table of contents and label the pages numbers.

1. Gathering background information
2. Surveying the property and making initial observations
3. Brainstorming for themes
4. Choosing a theme and sites to include in the Quest
5. Making a map of your site
6. Determining the order of your Quest and the Quest Box placement
7. Writing the movement clues for the Quest
8. Writing the teaching clues for the Quest
9. Modifying your teaching clues to make puzzle clues (optional)
10. Creating a stamp design

COMPLETING YOUR PROJECT:

Once you have finished all parts of your Quest Journal, you will need to type your edited Quest, draw a final version of your map, and carve your stamp and assemble the Quest Box.

Guide #1: GATHERING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Quests can be designed for any type of place. If you are writing a Quest to introduce new students to important places and people in your school, you may not need a background section to come before your Quest. If your Quest involves getting a visitor to a managed site such as a conservation property, you may need to provide some directions, hours, fees, or other information about that site. If you are doing a short background to go with your Quest, below are some suggested questions that you might answer in that background section.

Short Questions:

1. Official name of site?
2. Official name of the group who manages the site?
3. Contact information for group (phone and address, if available)?
4. Hours of operation (include seasonal/year-round)?
5. Fees charged to visit the site?
6. Are restrooms available?
7. Is parking available? Where do visitors park?
8. Does the group have a web site? What is the address?
9. Directions to the site?

Longer Questions:

How long has the site been open to visitors? What is the history of the site? How did it come into being?

What are the goals/mission for the group? If you are going to quote a mission statement, be sure to ask if that is allowed, and be sure to use quotation marks!

Does the group have any special annual events? What and when are they? (not specific dates, but is there something they do every August, for example)

What are the rules for the property?

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: at a minimum, answers to questions listed above

Guide #2: SURVEYING THE PROPERTY AND MAKING INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

As you begin to design your Quest, you should walk around the property. As you walk, you should sketch a rough map of the site in your journal so that you can remember locations that interest you.

Look for things like:

particularly beautiful views

unique pathways

special artifacts

special garden areas

unique physical features

memorials

pergolas

specimens

walls

benches

special buildings

plant or other labels

fenced areas

Make note of these places/things as you walk along, and note their locations on your map. If there are labels on the things, make note of the labels so that you can get information about the place/thing. Include everything that interests you on this list, as you will narrow down the list later as you choose a focus for your Quest.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: a list of locations /things that might be included in the Quest, a sketch of a map of the site with the locations of interest marked on it

Guide #3: BRAINSTORMING FOR THEMES

After you have found the places that interest you, sit down with your list and try to identify what strikes you overall about the place. What themes do you notice?

Think about things like:

Is your site reflective of a particular group, person, or philosophy?

For example, an arboretum might include particular types of specimens of interest to the collector

Is there a certain type of theme around which the site is built?

For example, a graveyard might include only people of a particular heritage or a conservation site might be primarily for hiking

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: a list of themes with explanations

Guide #4: CHOOSING A THEME AND SITES TO INCLUDE IN THE QUEST

Look over your list of themes and determine which theme you think is most important. There may be an obvious choice, or you may choose a couple of ideas that you want to weave together. Write the theme(s) that you really want to convey in your journal.

Now go back and look at the list of locations that you have. Narrow down that list to locations that are consistent with your theme. You should think about how long you would like your Quest to take. You might find that you need to cut/add locations so that your quest will be a reasonable length. Depending on the size of the property that you have chosen, you might have between 8-12 locations included in a Quest that might take 30-60 minutes to do. Make a tentative list of the locations in your journal.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: a choice for a theme and list of the locations/things to be included.

Guide #5: MAKING A MAP OF YOUR SITE

Once you have chosen the locations that you want to include in your quest, you will need to make a rough draft of a map that includes those locations. You could work from a published map for the property, make your own version of that map, and be sure to include an icon of some sort for each of your sites. Or, if there is no map available, you can use your sketch from section #2 and include icons for each of your sites. You may need to go back out onto the property as you work on your map, and you may need to visit each of the locations that you have chosen to get an idea for an icon to represent that location on the map.

For icons, think about things like:

Leaves	Benches	Stones	Plant shapes
Trees	Flowers	Walls	Cones
Shrubs	Water	Nuts	Tools used for an area
Animals	Signs		

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: draft of a map, including icons for all chosen sites in section #4

Guide #6: DETERMINING THE ORDER OF YOUR QUEST AND THE QUEST BOX PLACEMENT

Look over your list of locations and your map. You will next need to determine the order in which you would like to have your visitors see the property. Also, you will need to determine at which location you would like to hide the Quest Box. The Quest Box will be at the last location that you are including.

Think about things like:

What is the best way to move around the property?

What is the important information you want to teach or point you want to make about each of the sites?

Are you telling a story? How should the sites go in an order to reflect that story?

Make a list in your journal of the order in which you'd like to include the sites.

You will need to think hard about where the Quest Box will go, and you will need to check with the property owner about leaving and maintaining the Quest Box. Please talk to the property owner about the project, and see who could periodically check the box. Summarize this discussion in your Journal.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: a list of the sites in the order they'll be included in the Quest, a choice for the location of the Quest box, a summary of your discussion with the property owner about the Quest box placement

Guide #7: WRITING THE MOVEMENT CLUES FOR THE QUEST

You will be writing two types of clues. The first type will be movement clues, and the second type will be teaching clues. You will find it easiest to start with the movement clues, and you will want to write them as you walk to the locations in the order that you chose. So, go to the starting place for your Quest, which will likely be the area in which the visitors park. You will need to look around, and then think of a clue to get the visitors from that starting place to your first location. The clues should be written as couplets (two successive rhyming lines), and you can look at example Quests to get an idea of how these are done. If you have trouble rhyming, just write it as regular text, leave some space, and work on the rhyming part later.

For movement clues, think about:

left/right

landmark elements

steps/paces

pathways

north/south/east/west

signs

estimation of feet/yards/meters

Examples of a movement clues:

Example 1:

In front of Mr. Smith's Visitors' Center,

Find two granite posts through which you must enter.

Follow the flagstone path until you find,

Pillared pine pergola covered with vine.

Example 2:

Go back out the door from which you came,

Pass the place where you light a flame.

Take your first right and then a quick left turn,

A seat in the locust bower you'll earn.

Walk through your entire Quest. Write a movement clue to get you from location to location. Try to limit the clue to one or two couplets (two to four lines), unless you really need to use additional lines. Again, you can go ahead and make the lines rhyme, or you can just write text, leaving space underneath the clue to rewrite it in poetry form.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: a movement clue to get to each location written in poetic form

Guide #8: WRITING THE TEACHING CLUES FOR THE QUEST

Once you have all of your movement clues, you will need to write teaching clues. This is something you can do either at school, home, or the property. Think about the key information that you want to communicate about each of the locations. You may need to do some research about a location, so be sure to document any sources you use. These clues should be written as couplets as well, so write and revise as needed.

The way you will put your Quest together will be:
A movement clue to get the visitor from the parking area to the first location
Teaching clue about location
Movement clue to next location
Teaching clue about location
etc.

For teaching clues, think about:

people	historical information
special trees/plants	names of trails
important locations	property background

Read the first movement clue, then write your teaching clue for your first location. Do the same for the other locations. Again, try to limit your clue to one or two couplets (two to four lines), unless you really need to use additional lines.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: a list of each location and the teaching clue that is used for it, the teaching clue must be in poetic form

Guide #9: MODIFYING YOUR TEACHING CLUES TO MAKE PUZZLE CLUES (OPTIONAL STEP)

Once you have a draft of your Quest, you may choose to make you Quest a little more challenging. If you like, you may alter/add to the teaching clues to make them fill-in-the letter style puzzles.

To make a puzzle, you have to have a clear location for the final Quest box, such as under a stone bench. Then, you need to find key words in your teaching clues that supply the letters for that final Quest box location. A place with lots of named locations/specimens would work well for this type of Quest.

In your Journal, write the location of your final Quest Box. Read over your teaching clues and determine which words you want to list as blanks to supply letters for the final Quest Box location. Make notes as to where the blanks belong, and come up with the numbering system needed to get the final location.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: the final location with numbers corresponding to letters, notes in section #8 about sources of each letter.

Guide #10: CREATING A STAMP DESIGN

The Quest Box at the end of your Quest will hold a stamp for visitors. You will need to purchase/obtain stamp making materials and design a small stamp (1-2 inches by 1-2 inches) that has an image that is reflective of the theme of your Quest or the property. You'll also need an ink pad for the stamp, a small box to use as the Quest Box, and perhaps a notebook and pen to include in the Quest box so that visitors can leave messages for you.

In your Quest Journal, make at least five sketches of possible designs, then circle the one of your choice.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: at least five sketches, with one chosen as the design

REMINDER ABOUT COMPLETING YOUR PROJECT:

Again, once you have finished all parts of your Quest Journal, you will need to compile for evaluation:

- Your completed Quest Journal

- The typed, edited Quest

- A final drawing of your Quest Map

- Your assembled Quest Box, including stamp, ink pad, and possibly a small notebook and pen

Please be sure to write a **THANK YOU NOTE** to anyone at the site who helped you with your Quest!