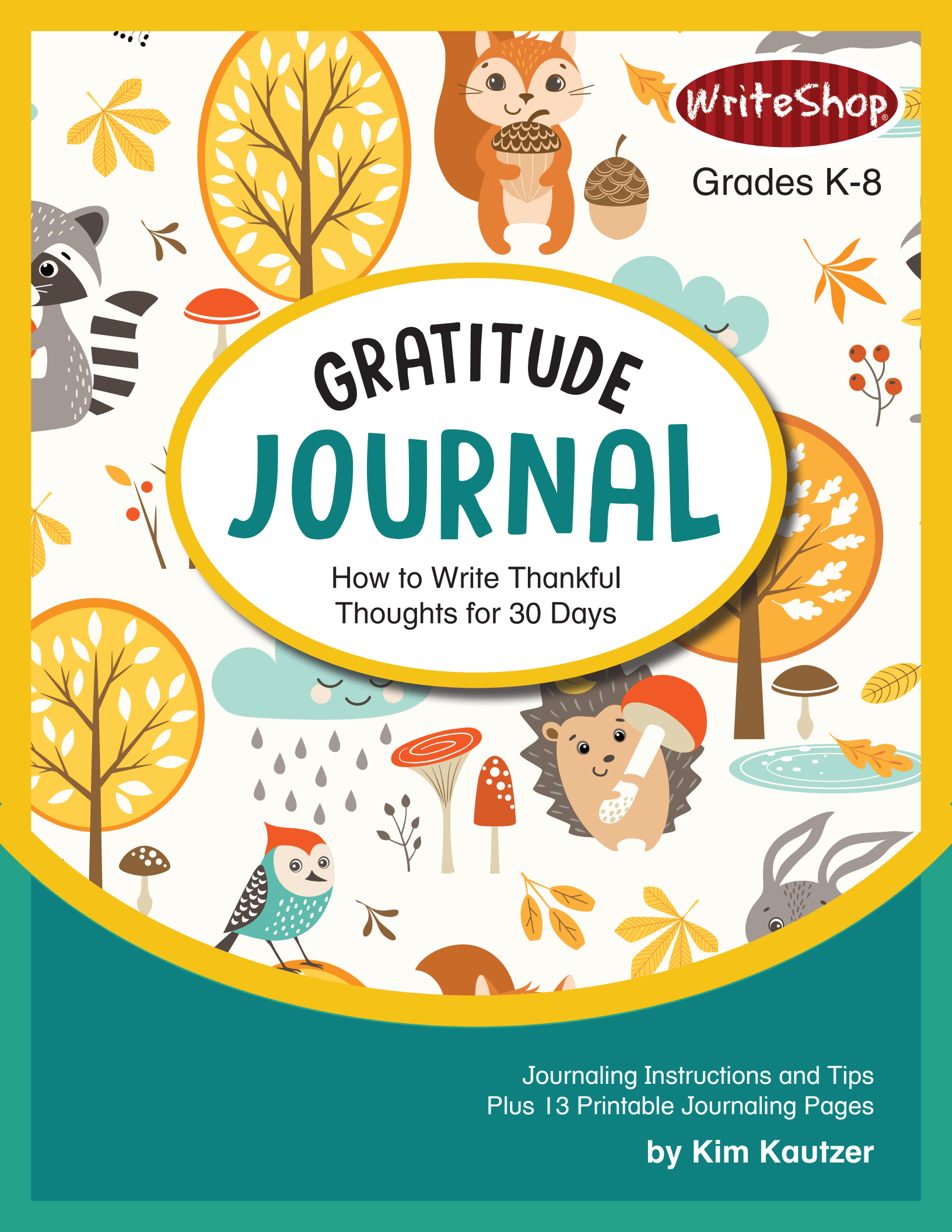


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The background of the cover is a whimsical autumn forest scene. It features stylized trees with yellow and orange leaves, a raccoon on the left, a squirrel at the top holding an acorn, a hedgehog in the center holding a mushroom, a woodpecker at the bottom left, and a rabbit at the bottom right. There are also various mushrooms, falling leaves, and a small pond with a lily pad. The entire scene is framed by a thick yellow border.

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

How to Write Thankful
Thoughts for 30 Days

Journaling Instructions and Tips
Plus 13 Printable Journaling Pages

by **Kim Kautzer**

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Keeping a Gratitude Journal: How to Write Thankful Thoughts for 30 Days (E-book)

Design Credits:

Layout and Cover Design: Becky Thomson

KEEPING A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

How to Write Thankful Thoughts for 30 Days

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Keeping a Gratitude Journal

Autumn is alive with the spirit of Thanksgiving. Around the U.S., families are planning menus, ordering turkeys, freezing pies, and thinking about how to set a festive holiday table.

Thanksgiving isn't just a one-day holiday where we watch football and eat till we can't move. No, thanksgiving is an **attitude of the heart**, and whether or not you're American, developing this "attitude of gratitude" takes practice!

You may have noticed that it's way easier to be grouchy and grumbly than it is to be appreciative. That's because it's hard to be thankful when you're always thinking of yourself. And if we're honest, we know this is true of most of us.



I'd like to encourage you and your family to focus on **30 days of gratitude**. To help you do this, let's keep a **Gratitude Journal**.

Plan Your Journal

1. Decide where and how to record your thoughts. Each person needs an outlet—and the choices are many! Here are four ideas for keeping a gratitude journal:
 - **Notebook.** Keep a daily journal by writing in a something as elegant as a leather diary or as simple as a spiral notebook.
 - **Journaling Pages.** The back of this e-book includes an assortment of journaling pages. Print out your favorites and store them in a folder.
 - **Prayer Journal.** If faith is important to you, write each daily note of thanks as a prayer..
 - **Blog.** Record your journal online, if you have a blog.
 - **Journal Jar.** Write your thoughts on pieces of paper and store them in a mason jar or small box.

It's very possible that each person in your family will end up journaling their thankful thoughts in different ways—and that's okay! Don't start off on the wrong foot by criticizing your sister's choice or telling your brother that your journal is better than his. Instead, think of ways to offer encouragement.

2. Next, choose a name for your gratitude project. Here are a few ideas:
 - Gratitude Journal
 - 30 Days of Gratitude
 - Thankful Project
 - My Thankful Box (or Jar)
 - I Am Thankful

Count Your Blessings

Ponder a bit. What makes you thankful? At first, the obvious will pop into your minds: *food, family, friends, faith.*

Those are great, and we're all thankful for them. But look also for **hidden, unexpected, or less obvious** things too, such as the smell of clean hair, a delicate seashell, hugs from Nana, a cup of cocoa, a kind deed, or a gold star on your piano piece.

What else can you be thankful for?

- **Nature.** Do you love fresh snow, purple sunsets, autumn colors, grass and flowers, giraffes, the ocean's roar, or a perfectly smooth stone?
- **Provision.** Think about things such as a home, food, clothing, toys, books, pets, family and friends, Dad's job, hot water, warm blankets, and comfortable beds.
- **Gifts and talents.** Are you musical, athletic, or smart? Be thankful! Are you a talented photographer? Are you good at building with LEGO® bricks, playing soccer, or baking? Be thankful! Do you know how to raise goats or plant a garden? Are you kind, loyal, or faithful? Be thankful! Are you a hard worker? Can you dance? Do you excel at computers, math, or science? Do you love reading, writing, drawing, or building with your hands? Give thanks!



Every day, look for ways to be thankful for big and little things.

Write Them Down

Younger children can write one thing every day. They may also enjoy the printable page where they can draw pictures instead.

Older children (and parents) can write 3-5 things you're grateful for. Whether each note is brief or lengthy, it should be personally meaningful.

Write Correctly

This is a journal, but it's also a writing assignment. Therefore, make sure to **use complete sentences, punctuate properly, and choose strong, interesting words.**

Make it Personal

If you wish, you can make your notebook or journal box even more personal by including quotations, verses, or photographs. If you do, make sure you **include personal writing**, too.

- [Quotations about gratitude](#)
- [Inspirational Thankful Quotes](#)

Journal Faithfully

We should be thankful all year long, not just in November! Keep your gratitude journal for 30 days in a row, whether it's an **entire calendar month**, the 30 days that lead up to your birthday, or any other 30-day period during the year. If your family is doing this activity together, each family member can share one or two excerpts from their journals during a special family dinner.

Gratitude is an amazing thing.

- It's **good for our health** and well-being.
- It helps us **choose contentment** over want, self-centeredness, and entitlement.
- It makes us easier to please.



Being thankful helps us put aside our “me first” mindset and become more focused on others. With everyone’s hearts and minds turned toward giving thanks and recording blessings, **your home will be refreshed** with better attitudes and kinder thoughts and deeds.

Here’s to happy (and thankful) writing!

Other Activities That Encourage Gratitude

You can express thanks and appreciation in many ways. Journaling is just one idea! Try some of these suggestions this month—and throughout the year—to help you remember to be thankful.

Do Unto Others

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

—William Arthur Ward

Make a list of things you can do to express gratitude to someone who has been kind to you or to show kindness to someone who needs it. Once the list is complete, act on at least one of them.

Your list can include things like:

- Bake cookies.
- Give a handmade card.
- Mow the neighbor's lawn.
- Obey the first time Mom or Dad asks me to do something.
- Do a favor without being asked.
- Do one of my brother's chores ... just because.
- Invite Grandma over and make breakfast for her.
- Write a poem for my auntie because she's so kind to me.
- [Sponsor a child](#) because I'm thankful I have a family.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, or food bank because I'm thankful I have food and a roof over my head.
- Donate chickens, medicines, or soccer balls to a family that doesn't have [basic necessities](#), because I'm fortunate to have food, good health, and toys.
- Be kind to someone who doesn't deserve it because others have done that for me.



Thank You For...

Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. —Marcel Proust

Everyone knows it's important to write a thank-you note when someone gives you a gift, but it doesn't have to stop there. Think of a person who has made an impact on your life. Get out the stationery and writing tools (or download the "I'm Thankful for You!" letter template included with this lesson) and think of deeper reasons you can express your thanks.

Need some ideas? Start here!

- **Dad.** Thank him for making you feel safe and loved, for working hard for your family, for playing football in the yard, for showing you how to fix a flat on your bike, for being honest and trustworthy, for playing Monopoly with you.
- **Mom.** Thank her for being your teacher, for driving you to all your activities, for cooking tasty meals for your family, for showing you how to bake a chocolate cake, for helping you become kind and compassionate, for setting a good example.
- **Grandparents.** Thank them for things you often take for granted, such as coming to your soccer games or school performances. Thank them for holding a special place in your life and for encouraging, supporting, and loving you.
- **Teachers or mentors.** Thank them for caring about you, for teaching you new things, for taking you on special outings, and even for bringing donuts each week!
- **Soldiers.** Our servicemen and women love to get mail, especially when they are far away from family and friends. If you don't personally know someone who is serving in the military, visit a website such as [Any Soldier.com](http://AnySoldier.com), [A Million Thanks.org](http://AMillionThanks.org), or [Letters to Soldiers.org](http://LettersToSoldiers.org), and send a letter of thanks and appreciation.
- **Newspaper deliverer or postman.** People who provide services don't get thanked very often. Why not thank someone for delivering your mail or paper every day, no matter how hot or cold or rainy or snowy, or for being a dependable worker?
- **Pet.** Yes—you can even write a note to thank your dog or cat for being faithful, friendly, loyal; for being a playmate; or for providing companionship, entertainment, and smiles.



It's Been Said...

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. –John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Copy favorite quotes about gratitude and thanksgiving and pin them to a wall or bulletin board in your room. For starters, find gratitude quotes [here](#) and [here](#). Then, try one of these ideas:

- Copy each saying using your neatest penmanship. The “Gratitude Is an Attitude” printable at the back of this e-book has space to copy three short quotes.
- Write the quote on fancy paper using calligraphy or italic handwriting.
- Type it on the computer, choose an appropriate font, enlarge the text to fill the page, and print it on pretty paper.

Spreading Blessings

Who does not thank for little will not thank for much. –Estonian Proverb

All that we behold is full of blessings. –William Wordsworth

Gratitude doesn't always mean saying "thank you." Simply stepping out of self-centeredness and considering other people's needs and feelings is a form of gratitude, too.

Here's an easy way to make people smile or feel better about themselves: Write inspiring or uplifting thoughts, kind words, and encouraging quotes on a sticky note and place it somewhere random, such as a mirror in a public restroom. [Operation Beautiful](#) is a great example of this!

Try similar activities at home, too.

- **Thankful Board.** With a parent's help, mount a large sheet of poster board on the wall of your kitchen or family room, and keep a jar of colored markers nearby. Encourage your family to write things you're thankful for, no matter how small. Young siblings can simply draw pictures on the poster board.
- **Post-It® Blitz.** Ask a parent for a stack of sticky notes on which to write down words of gratitude or appreciation. Talk with your family about making a centralized spot for these thankful thoughts, or simply pepper the house with encouraging notes! You'll find yourself thinking better of your family members when you write kind notes to each other instead of teasing, whining, or complaining.

Don't just save gratitude for Thanksgiving. Look for ways throughout the year to express thanks, turning the focus outward. Everyone—especially you!—will be the better for it.

Name: _____

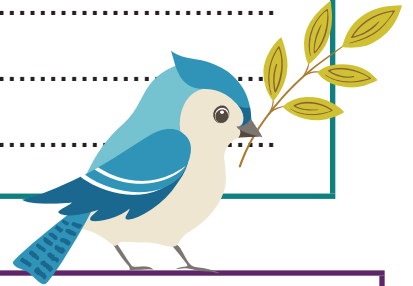


My Gratitude Journal



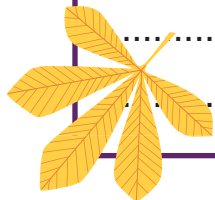
Date: _____

Handwriting practice area with 10 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Date: _____

Handwriting practice area with 10 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

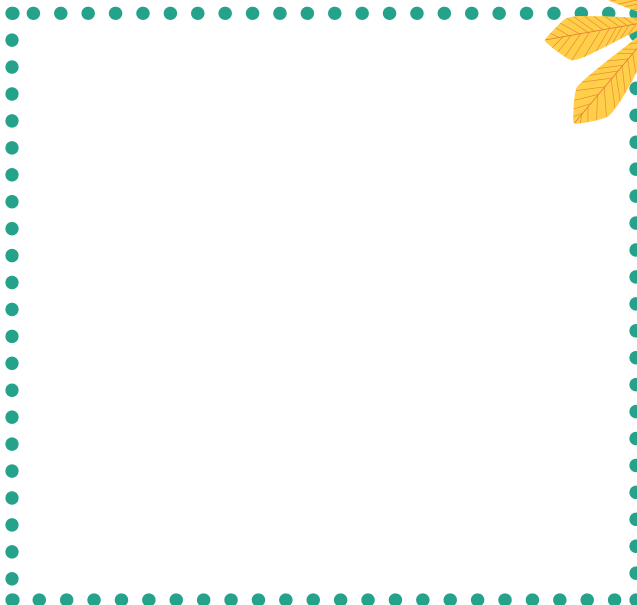


Name: _____

It's Good to Be Thankful!

Each day, draw a picture of one person, place, or thing you are thankful for.
Describe it on the blank lines, or ask someone to write the words for you.





Name: _____

15 Things I'm Grateful For

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____

14. _____

15. _____



Name: _____

15 More Things I'm Grateful For

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____



Name: _____

This Week, I'm Thankful For...



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Name: _____

The Best Thing About Today

[illegible]

Draw a picture of the best thing that happened today. On the lines below, journal about your experience.


[illegible]

Name: _____

The Best Thing About Today



Draw a picture of the best thing that happened today. On the lines below, write a sentence or two about your drawing.



Name: _____

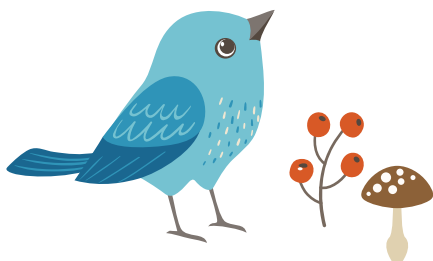
Date: _____

Today I am grateful for ...



A notepad with a red cover and a green back, featuring a list of 11 horizontal lines for writing. Each line is preceded by a small square checkbox.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Name: _____

Gratitude Is an Attitude!

My favorite quotes
about being thankful.



Name: _____

Thankful for the Little Things

Something
from nature that
makes me happy

A person I
appreciate


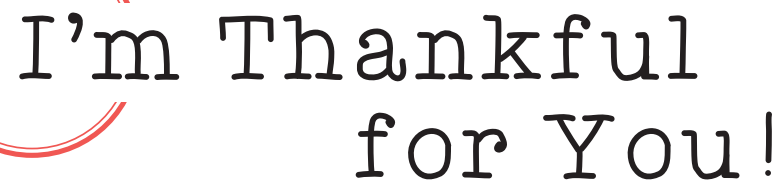
Something I
am grateful to have

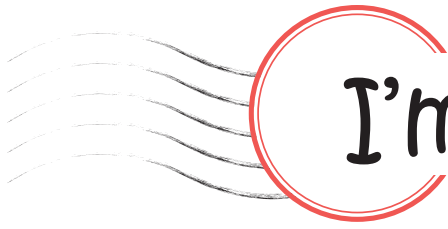
A kind thing
someone said or did

A book I love

A lesson I am
learning







I'm Thankful for You!

Dear _____,

,





JOURNAL JAR STRIPS



Directions: Print several copies of this page and cut the out the prompt strips. Each day, fill in one strip and add it to your special Journal Jar.



Today I am thankful that _____
_____.



I love _____
_____.

I'm grateful for _____
_____.



Today was a great day because _____

_____.

This made me smile today: _____
_____.



So thankful for _____ because
_____.