

# Choosing the Best Journal for Daily Writing: A Practical Guide

For years I kept a journal on and off. I would buy a nice notebook, write for three days, and then let it gather dust on a shelf. The problem was never my desire to write. It was the journal itself. I had not found a journal for daily writing that fit how I actually think and work. Once I started paying attention to paper, binding, and layout, everything changed. Writing became a habit I looked forward to, not a chore I avoided.

This article walks through what I have learned after testing dozens of notebooks. I have used Leuchtturm1917, Moleskine, Rhodia, Field Notes, Hobonichi Techo, Midori MD Notebook, and Baron Fig. Some worked for a season. Others became permanent companions. The goal here is to help you pick a journal for daily writing that matches your own rhythm, not someone else's idea of what a writer should use.

## Why the Right Journal Matters

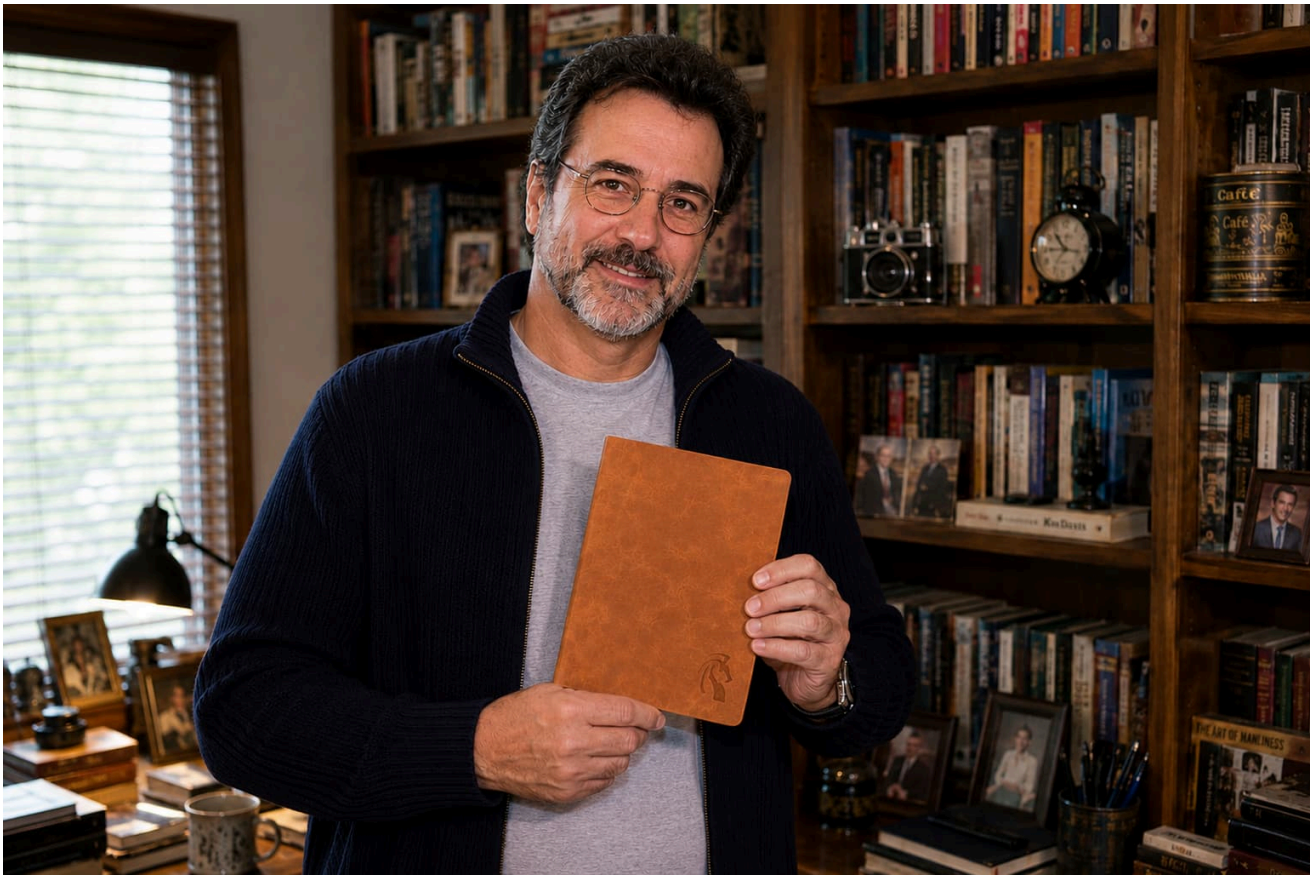
A notebook is a tool. Like any tool, it can either support your work or get in the way. If the paper bleeds when you use a fountain pen, you will hesitate before writing. If the binding is too stiff to lay flat, you will fight the book every time you open it. Small frustrations kill momentum. A good journal removes those barriers so you can focus on what matters: putting words on the page.

I mention this because many people start a daily writing practice with whatever notebook is cheapest or closest at hand. That can work for a while, but if you are serious about building a daily habit, investing in a journal that feels right in your hands makes a real difference. You do not need the most expensive option. You need the one that feels good enough that you want to write in it every day.

## Paper: The Foundation of a Good Writing Experience

The single most important feature of a [journal for daily writing](#) is the paper. Everything else is secondary. If the paper is too thin, ink will show through to the other side. If it is too rough, your pen will drag and your hand will tire. If it is too slick, you may have trouble controlling the line.

Tomoe River Paper is widely considered the gold standard for fountain pen users. It is thin enough to keep the book slim, yet strong enough to handle wet ink without feathering or bleeding. The Hobonichi Techo uses Tomoe River Paper, which is one reason it is so popular among daily writers. The paper has a slight texture that gives your handwriting a pleasant feel, and it shows off ink shading beautifully.



Rhodia uses a coated paper that is smooth and consistent. It works well with most pens, including fountain pens and rollerballs. The paper is bright white, which makes your writing pop. I have used Rhodia notebooks for years when I want a no-fuss writing experience. They are reliable and widely available.

Leuchtturm1917 uses a lightly ruled paper that is good for everyday writing. It is not as fountain-pen friendly as Tomoe River, but it handles most inks well. The paper has a warm off-white color that many people find easier on the eyes for long writing sessions. The pages are numbered, which is a small detail that helps if you keep an index or table of contents.

Midori MD Notebook uses a cream-colored paper that is soft to the touch. It has a traditional feel that appeals to writers who want something simple and elegant. The paper is fountain pen friendly and ages well. I have a Midori MD that I started three years ago, and the pages still feel fresh.

Moleskine paper has a mixed reputation. Some people love it. I find it too thin for my taste. Ink tends to bleed through, and the paper has a slight yellow tint that bothers me. But if you use a ballpoint or a gel pen, Moleskine notebooks can serve you well. They are widely available and come in many sizes.

Field Notes notebooks use a thicker paper that is good for pencil and ballpoint pens. They are not ideal for fountain pens, but they work fine for quick notes and daily logs. Field Notes are

more of a pocket companion than a dedicated writing journal, but many writers use them for morning pages or short entries.

Baron Fig notebooks use a smooth, bright white paper that works well with most pens. Their Confidant line is a solid choice for daily writing. The paper is not as fountain-pen friendly as Rhodia or Tomoe River, but it handles gel pens and rollerballs beautifully.

## **Binding and Layout: Hard Cover vs. Soft Cover**

Once you settle on paper, the next decision is binding. Hard cover journals are sturdy and protect your pages well. They work best if you write at a desk or table. Soft cover journals are lighter and more flexible. They are easier to carry around and can be bent back to save space. I use a hard cover Leuchtturm1917 for my main writing journal because I like the structure it gives. But I keep a soft cover Field Notes in my bag for capturing ideas on the go.

Layout matters too. Lined paper is the most common choice for daily writing. It keeps your handwriting straight and gives the page a clean look. Grid paper is popular among bullet journal users and people who like to sketch or diagram alongside their writing. Blank pages give you total freedom, but they can feel intimidating if you are not used to writing without lines. I have gone through phases with all three. For pure daily writing, I prefer lined paper. For a bullet journal, I prefer grid paper. For creative work, blank pages give me the most freedom.



## Building a Daily Writing Habit

Having the right journal is only half the battle. The other half is showing up every day. I have written about this before in the context of morning pages, the practice from *The Artist's Way* of writing three pages first thing in the morning. Morning pages are not about producing polished work. They are about clearing your head. For that practice, you want a journal that flows quickly. You do not want to worry about ink bleeding or pages not lying flat.

I have done morning pages in a Leuchtturm1917 and in a Rhodia. Both worked well. The key was that I kept the journal next to my coffee mug, so I saw it first thing. That small environmental cue was more powerful than any reminder app. Over time, the act of picking up the pen became automatic. That is what a daily habit feels like. It stops being a decision and starts being a reflex.

If you are new to daily writing, I recommend starting with a journal that has a moderate page count. A 200-page notebook can feel intimidating. A 100-page notebook is less daunting. You can finish it in a few months and feel a sense of accomplishment. Then you can decide whether to stick with the same model or try something new.

## Practical Tips for Choosing Your Journal

Here is a short list of questions to ask yourself before you buy:

- What pen do you use most? If you use a fountain pen, look for Tomoe River Paper or Rhodia paper. If you use a ballpoint, almost any paper will work.
- Do you prefer a hard cover or a soft cover? Hard covers are sturdy but heavier. Soft covers are portable but less protective.
- What size feels right? A5 is the most popular size for daily writing. It fits in most bags and gives you enough space per page. Pocket size is good for on-the-go notes. B5 is roomier but bulkier.
- Do you need numbered pages? Numbered pages help if you keep an index or want to track your writing over time. Leuchtturm1917 includes them. Most other brands do not.
- What layout helps you write most freely? Lined, grid, or blank. Try one of each over time to see which you prefer.

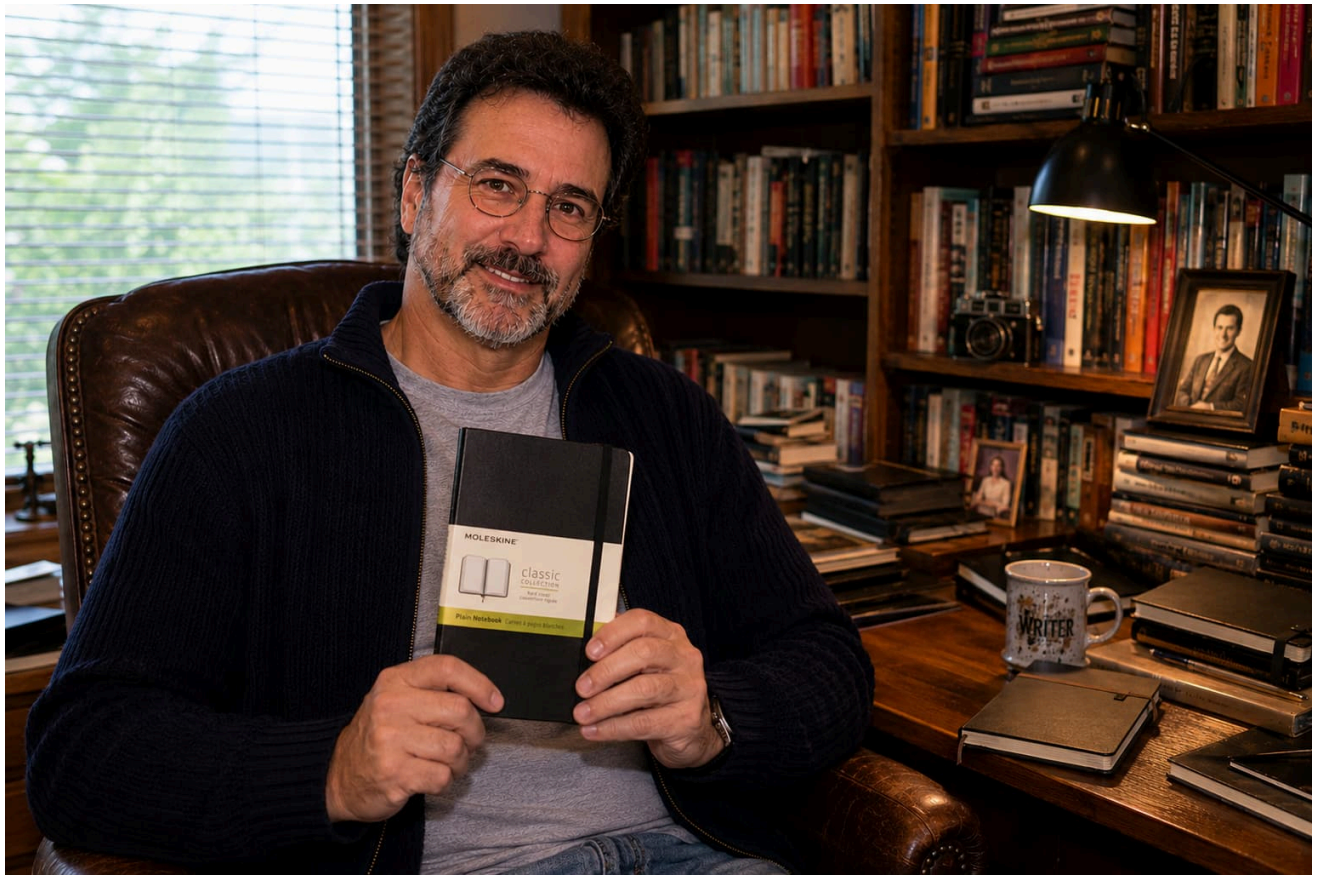
## My Personal Recommendations

After years of testing, I have settled on a few favorites. For a dedicated journal for daily writing, I recommend the Leuchtturm1917 in A5 with lined paper. It has enough pages to last a few months, the paper handles most pens well, and the numbered pages help me track my progress. The hard cover gives the book a solid feel, and the elastic closure band keeps it closed when I throw it in a bag.

If you prefer a softer feel, the Midori MD Notebook in A5 with lined paper is a beautiful choice. The paper is a joy to write on, and the minimal design lets you focus on your words. It comes in a soft cover that feels like a well-worn book from the first day.

For people who want a compact option, the Hobonichi Techo is hard to beat. It uses Tomoe River Paper, which is a dream for fountain pens. The daily pages give you a set amount of space each day, which helps you build consistency. The Hobonichi Techo has a loyal following for good reason. It was designed for daily use, and it shows.

If you are on a budget, Rhodia notebooks are excellent value. The paper is consistent, the binding is sturdy, and they come in a variety of sizes. I keep a Rhodia No. 16 in my bag as a catch-all notebook for random thoughts and lists.



Baron Fig makes a notebook called the Confidant that is also worth considering. The paper is smooth, the cover is cloth-bound and attractive, and the design is clean. It is a solid choice if you want something that looks good on a desk and writes well.

I avoid Moleskine for daily writing because of the paper issues I mentioned. But many people swear by them. If you use a Pigma Micron pen or a ballpoint, Moleskine paper works fine. The brand has a classic look that appeals to many writers.

## Final Thoughts

Finding the right journal for daily writing is a personal journey. What works for me may not work for you. That is okay. The important thing is to start somewhere. Pick a notebook that feels good, put it in a place you see every day, and write. The first few entries will probably feel awkward. That is normal. Keep going. After a few weeks, the habit will start to feel natural. After a few months, it will feel essential.

I still have the first journal I finished cover to cover. It is a Leuchtturm1917 filled with messy handwriting, crossed-out sentences, and half-formed ideas. It is not a masterpiece. But it is the proof that I stuck with something long enough to make it a part of my life. That is what a daily writing practice can give you. Not perfect prose, but the satisfaction of showing up for yourself.