坚持写暑假日记，原来不难

放假第一天，爸爸就给我布置了一个任务：整个暑假每天写一篇日记。我一听就头疼，平时学校一周才写两篇周记，暑假六十天，那得写多少字啊？第一天我咬着笔杆憋了四十分钟，写出来一看，全是流水账：今天起床，吃饭，写作业，睡觉。爸爸看了只说了一句话：流水账也是账，先记上。

第二天我换了个办法。我不再憋大段，就给自己定个小规矩：每天只写三行，写当天最有意思的一件小事。结果那天我写的是：蚂蚁把我掉的饼干渣搬走了，排成一队，像放学路队。写完一数，才用了五分钟。原来日记难的不是写字，是不知道写什么；一旦只写一件小事，反而马上就想起来了。

从那天起，我的日记再没断过。我把时间定在晚饭后洗澡前，那会儿一天刚过完，事情还热乎着。记卖冰棍的三轮车，记停电那晚的蜡烛，记我学游泳呛的那口水。有天晚上我困得睁不开眼，还是爬起来记了一行：今天太累了，但日记不能断。就这一行，也算一天。

暑假过半，我发现自己变了：以前玩完就忘，现在玩的时候会自动留意，因为知道晚上要记。看爷爷钓鱼，我会多看两眼他怎么挂饵；和小伙伴打仗，我会记住谁的水枪先没水。日记像给我安了个小钩子，把每天的好玩事都钩住了。

最见效的是开学第一周。语文老师让每人上台分享暑假生活，别的同学站在台上嗯嗯半天，说我玩了，挺开心的。我翻开我的日记本，从第一页挑了停电那晚：蜡烛油滴在桌上凝成一朵小白花，我们全家围着蜡烛影子在墙上跳舞。我讲了不到两分钟，底下笑成一片，老师说明天把这段扩成作文交上来。

那本日记我数过，六十天记了五十八天，断的两天是回乡下路上太颠没带本子。它让我明白一个道理：坚持一件事，靠的不是狠劲，是把它变小。每天三行，谁都能做到；可五十八个三行连起来，就是一本属于我自己的暑假。

现在我把这个方法教给了同桌。她怕写周记，我让她也从每天三行开始。第一个月她坚持下来了，上周她的周记第一次被老师贴到墙上。她说原来写日记不难，我说对，难的是把它想成一件大事。定好时间，只写小事，尽量不断档——这就是我这个暑假学到的最管用的学习方法。

Keeping a Summer Diary Is Not as Hard as I Thought

On the very first day of vacation Dad gave me a mission: write one diary entry every single day for the whole summer. Just hearing that gave me a headache, because at school we only write two short weekly journals, and summer vacation has sixty days, so how many words would that be in total? On day one I chewed my pencil for forty minutes and produced what I later recognized as a pure running account: got up, ate, did homework, slept. Dad read it and said only one sentence: a running account is still an account, write it down first.

The next day I changed my method completely. I stopped forcing myself to write

big paragraphs and made a small rule instead: only three lines a day, about the most interesting little thing that happened. That day I wrote that the ants carried away my dropped cookie crumbs in a single file, like our line when school lets out. When I finished I counted the time and it had taken only five minutes, which surprised me completely.

It turned out that the hard part of a diary is never the writing itself, it is not knowing what to write, and once you promise to record only one small thing, the memory comes back instantly. From that day on my diary never missed a beat, and I fixed the time for it after dinner and before my evening bath, when the day was still fresh and warm in my mind.

I recorded the ice pop tricycle and the candles on the blackout night, and I recorded the mouthful of pool water that made me cough during swimming class. One night I was so sleepy I could barely keep my eyes open, but I still dragged myself up and wrote one single line: today was exhausting, but the diary cannot break. That one line counted as a day too, and I was proud of it.

By the middle of vacation I noticed that I had changed without realizing it. Before, I would play and forget, but now I paid extra attention while playing, because I knew I would record it at night. When I watched Grandpa fish, I studied how he baited the hook, and when I had water fights with my friends, I remembered whose water gun ran dry first. My diary had installed a little hook inside me that caught all the fun of every day.

The method paid off most in the first week of the new term, when our Chinese teacher asked everyone to stand up and share their summer vacation. Other students mumbled on stage for ages, saying only that they played and it was nice. I opened my diary and picked the blackout night from the early pages: candle wax dripped on the table and froze into a little white flower, and our whole family danced with our shadows on the wall around the candle.

My talk lasted less than two minutes and the classroom was a sea of laughter, and the teacher told me to expand that exact entry into a composition and hand it in tomorrow. I counted my diary later and found I had written on fifty eight of the sixty days, missing only the two travel days when the bumpy bus ride to the village left my notebook out of reach.

This taught me a lesson I will keep forever: sticking with something does not depend on fierce willpower, it depends on making the task small. Three lines a day is something anybody can do, but fifty eight groups of three lines joined together become one whole summer that belongs to you alone, and that is worth more than any single long essay.

Now I have passed this method to my deskmate who is afraid of weekly journals, and I told her to start with three lines a day as well. She kept it up for the first month, and last week her journal was posted on the classroom wall for the very first time. She said keeping a diary is not hard after all, and I agreed: the hard part is imagining it as a giant task.

Fix a time, write only small things, and try never to break the chain, that is the most useful study method I brought back from this summer vacation, and I plan to keep the habit all the way through sixth grade and beyond, one small line at a time.