

Eat-to-Write: A writing prompt by author Hena Khan

In *POWER FORWARD*, the first book in my *ZAYD SALEEM CHASING THE DREAM* series, Zayd is a 4th grader who's small but doesn't let his size get in the way of his dreams. Since he keeps getting stomachaches, Zayd's mother asks him to keep a food journal to help figure out what might be causing them, like an allergy or something else. She even labels the pages for him with *DATE, WHAT I ATE, HOW I FEEL*. But he thinks it's a drag.

When Zayd does write in the food journal, he ends up commenting on his meals and the things he eats (like, "pretty good with barbeque sauce," "not as good as beef, but edible") and how they make him feel ("like a basketball is dribbling on my insides," or "grateful"). He is very specific about quantities or flavors ("seven goldfish crackers," "watermelon jolly rancher") and adds extra details that probably won't help mom very much but make the journal a lot more fun to read.

Writing prompt: Think back on what you ate yesterday and create a food journal for the day. But not any regular old, boring food journal! Instead, bring each of the meals to life with descriptions that are as over the top and silly as you want. The wilted lettuce in your sandwich? Even it can have a starring role. Give each of the foods you consumed context and meaning. How did they make you feel about yourself? Can you find any connections between what you ate and your mood? Can you write any amazing metaphors or similes? Your journal entries for the day can be an ode to the food you ate, or hate mail, or a combination of both. You could keep the food descriptions simple and add categories if you choose, like "WHAT I WISH I ATE INSTEAD" or "HOW THIS RATES COMPARED TO THE BEST MEAL I EVERY HAD" Let your imagination run wild.

Don't forget snacks. And feel free to fictionalize if it's more fun. The pantry is the limit!