

## HOW TO USE THE STUDENT REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

**T**he purpose of the Student Reporter's Notebook is to engage the students in an entertaining way and provide them with resources to write stories. Teachers should read the notebook before distributing to students. Students can use the notebook to identify story ideas, track down potential sources, and model their stories after industry standard-bearers.



The notebook is designed for one student to use. If necessary or appropriate, students could collaborate on stories or the class as a whole could act as an investigative reporting team. In the latter case, classroom discussions could identify what questions should be asked of which sources and what angles should be pursued. Each individual student is then responsible for writing a story. This approach likely would teach an ancillary lesson about point of view, as students with the same basic background material produce different stories.

In the notebook, the students are greeted by an animated cartoon pencil named Ace Escribo, a.k.a. 'Scoop', who acts as a guide and mentor. Scoop explains each of the sections of the Student Reporter's Notebook.

The Student Reporter's Notebook is based partially on the curriculum and partially on the contents of a typical press kit. The sections are:

- Introduction
- Press Pass
- Sample Interview Questions
- Story Tips
- Sample Articles
- Reference Guide
- Production Note

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction, Scoop reinforces a number of concepts from the GET IT! curriculum:

“See, what we do is find out everything we can about goods and services that people can buy and then write about them, so consumers can make good buying decisions.” (GET IT! curriculum, page 9)

“If consumers knew all that, they might be willing to pay a little bit more for organic flowers, which are grown without the use of chemicals.” (GET IT! curriculum, page 80-83)

“Fair trade is a way of buying and selling products to help the producers/ growers make a living wage.” (GET IT! curriculum, page 60)

“Before I started working here, I had no idea how people’s everyday actions affect the environment – and other people – all over the world.” (GET IT! curriculum, page i)

“Even if I am not writing an article about a product, I can still do the research to find out if I am making a smart choice.” (GET IT! curriculum, page iv)

“Third, know the environment. What kinds of natural resources are used in the growing and making of the product? What effect does processing it have on the local environment and the global environment?” (GET IT! curriculum, page iv)

“With a firm grasp of the background, you will be able to write a much better article. Remember, it has to be clear and to the point. You should think always about your readers. What questions would they have? Have you answered them?” (GET IT! curriculum, page iv)



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## PRESS PASS

The press pass is a perforated insert into the Student Reporter’s Notebook. It has a GET IT! brand and a blank space for the student to write in his or her name. Each pass identifies its bearer as a “GET IT! Investigative Reporter.” Giving each student a press pass is intended to build a sense of inclusiveness and ownership with the program.

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## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Some students may have a difficult time calling up strange adults and interviewing them. The purpose of the Sample Interview Questions section is to give them a head start on the types of questions they should be considering and to illustrate how to approach different sources differently. Teachers should emphasize that students will need to be prepared and versatile when they start calling sources.

Students may want to use one or two of these questions in their own interviews but students should come up with their own interview questions. Their questions should be very specific to the story they are researching.

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## **STORY TIPS**

This section is designed to catalyze students' thinking to help them come up with their own story ideas. It provides a good basis for discussion, either as a class or with the students breaking up into small groups.

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## **SAMPLE ARTICLES**

This section contains three samples of investigative journalism. Each of these articles was selected as particularly relevant to GET IT! participants. The purpose of this section is to illustrate some good, professional investigative journalism for the students to emulate.

### ***Bauer 5000's***

**Source:** TeenInk.com

This article is an example of a product review. As a review written by a teen, it illustrates how young consumers can make a difference by speaking out. The source of the article is TeenInk.com, a monthly print magazine, website, and book series written by teens for teens. There are more than 16,000 pages of student writing on this site.

### ***Behind Roses' Beauty, Poor and Ill Workers***

**Source:** The New York Times

**Date:** February 13, 2003

This New York Times investigative piece is especially relevant to the GET IT! featured materials of flowers, coffee and bananas. It is a sample of consumer journalism that investigates a consumer-based industry, shedding light on some of the complex questions that can arise when a consumer is making decisions.

***The Age of Excess: Do Today's Teens Have Too Much Stuff?***

**Source:** Teen Newsweek

**Date:** September 13, 2004

This article is consumer journalism from the consumer's point of view, investigating youth consumer culture.

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**REFERENCE GUIDE**

The Reference Guide gives students a list of resources for stories. The list includes names, short descriptions, and contact information of organizations and agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) involved in international trade, the environment and conservation, the food industry, transportation, hunger, and poverty.

Teachers should monitor who students intend to call to ensure appropriateness. Some of the numbers are long-distance, so it is important to make sure parents give permission if their children are calling sources from home.

The organizations listed may also have materials and information that can be used to supplement the GET IT! curriculum. Some additional references are listed at the end of this Leader's Guide.

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**PRODUCTION NOTE**

In this section, Scoop shares his investigation into how the Student Reporter's Notebooks were produced. The booklets were printed on recycled paper at a printing plant fueled by natural gas. The facility is totally enclosed to prevent pollutants from being released into the air.