

Memoir Assignment

Your assignment is to write a memoir exploring a memorable event in your life.

Rough Draft Due: Friday, October, 31st. Final Draft Due: Friday, November 7th.

**Specifications: 2-4 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, size 12 font.
Counts as a paper/test grade.**

What is a memoir? It is a non-fiction work that highlights meaningful moments from the author's past. It doesn't cover a great span of years, and focuses on a particular theme or aspect of the author's life. It includes the author's feelings, thoughts, and reflections on the meaning of his/her experiences, and reveals a universal message to which a reader can connect.

What are the characteristics of an effective memoir?

- **TITLE:** The title invites and fits (*it came last; it was chosen from among possibilities that the writer brainstormed*)
- **LEAD:** The lead brings readers right into the action of the story
- **BACKGROUND:** Background information that a reader needs is woven in--*the who, what, when, where, why context is embedded in the narrative*
- **SETTING:** There's a setting: *a time and places*
- **FIRST PERSON:** There's lots of "I": *lots of thoughts, feelings, and observations of the memoirist*
- **VIVID DETAIL:** A reader can see, hear, and feel the experience because the writer provides concrete, sensory details and descriptions of people in action
- **VIVID VERBS:** The language is interesting: *verbs like sputter, knead, spy, curl, polish, pinch, and grip that a reader can see, feel, and hear*
- **SLOW PACE:** The pace is slowed down: *readers can make a movie in their minds*
- **ZOOMED-IN:** The small details show what matters to the people in the memoir
- **DIALOGUE:** There is dialogue; *the writer uses it to show what people are like and how they're feeling*
- **FLASHBACK(S):** The action flashes back and forward in time and creates questions in the readers mind about what will happen next (Only one required).
- **SO WHAT?:** There's a "So What?" or lesson: *A meaning or significance that that was discovered by the memoirist during the act of writing the memoir. It leaves the reader thinking.*