

Name _____ Date _____ Hour _____

What Will I Write About?

Memoirs include events, experiences, and emotional shifts that make the story important to the author. These emotions lead to a new understanding about the world. Now that you have created maps of your world, what events are you considering writing about for your memoir? What new understandings have you experienced?

Using your map(s) to guide you, generate ideas from different events in your life that may help you choose a topic for your memoir.

Event from your life	Your response to the event	New understanding?

Name _____ Date _____ Hour _____

Planning A Memoir

Part I: Choosing a Moment

- ✓ Needs to be a small moment (for example, not an entire trip to Cedar Point, but the first time you rode on a roller coaster)
- ✓ Needs to be meaningful
- ✓ Need to be able to answer: “What did you learn from this experience?” And: “What lessons do you want to communicate by writing about this topic?”

Take one of your Events from your **What Will I Write About?** sheet. Create a cluster or brainstorm web, or list the people, places, or things you associate with your topic. Identify the SMALL MOMENT.

Planning A Memoir

Part II: Memorable Moment

Keep the following in mind:

- ✓ Every event has to have a purpose.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show attitudes or feelings BEFORE, so that the reader understands the author's learning at the end.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show the BEFORE in several parts, not just one.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show the AFTER. How did the learning change the author's life? Why was it significant?
- ✓ Every event needs to be connected to the author's learning, by showing or explaining the event's significance. If the event doesn't have that connection, it shouldn't be included.

Example

Memorable Moment: The first time I got up on a surf board.

Event

Purpose

1. (before)

Getting thrashed by the waves

Shows how miserable I was

2. (before)

Watching others make it look so easy

Shows I felt like a failure

3. (before)

Getting cold, deciding to go in after one more try

Shows I was ready to give up

4. (memorable moment)

Successfully riding first wave to the beach

Shows my excitement and disbelief at success.

5. (after)

Staying out and continuing to surf

Shows how success totally changes my attitude about surfing and believing in myself.