**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Unit 1 Writing Assignment: The Personal Memoir**

To show your understanding of narrative writing and memoir, you will compose a personal memoir. Your memoir should include the following requirements:

* **At least one page (300 words)**
* **Reflection on a *single*, *significant* personal memory or experience**
* **At least three pieces of imagery**
* **At least three other pieces of figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.)**
* **Strong language, vocabulary, and basic grammar (capital letters, punctuation, spelling, etc.)**

**Writing Tips:**

* **Model your memoir on some we know are good (i.e. *HOMS*.) Steal from others!**
* **First-person!**
* **Be honest, authentic, and believable. What can others learn from your memoir?**
* **Describe, describe, describe.**

**Rubric (please attach this rubric to your final draft!)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description & Detail:**  The memoir is packed full of details that allow readers to accurately and vividly visualize the scene.   * At least 3 pieces of Imagery * At least 3 pieces of Figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, etc.) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Significance & Theme:**  The memoir relates a significant and interesting story. The importance of this event in your life and how it affected you is obvious. It shows (implicitly OR explicitly) what the author learned and how they changed. The memoir leaves readers thinking and emotionally moved. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Organization:**  The memoir:   * focuses on one specific moment/event/memory * has a lead that hooks readers * ends with a “punch” that leaves readers thinking and emotionally moved | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Voice & Believability:**  The memoir is narrated in the first person. The word choice, sensory details, honesty, internal thoughts, and reflection make your voice authentic and interesting. The memoir is believable from top to bottom – it is never overly dramatic and never feels forced. Readers connect with it – and with you, the author – easily and deeply. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Grammar & Editing:**  The memoir has been edited closely and repeatedly. It contains no errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, “typos,” etc. It flows smoothly and is crystal clear. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Formatting & Length**  The memoir meets the following criteria:   * at least one page long * Creative, appropriate title * Headed in MLA Style | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

**MEMOIR IDEA LIST**

**(Also good for college essays)**

**Tell a story about . . .**

• classic family or friend moments

• important family of friend moments

• traumatic family or friend moments

• moments in which you had to make a choice

• confessions

• a lie you told or was told to you

• history of your hair

• history of your scars

• an object that is special to you or your family

• what is in a storage unit, closet, drawer, garage, or special box

• a time you did something forbidden

• a time someone let you down

• a time someone unexpectedly came through for you

• an encounter with a stranger (planes, buses, park benches . . . )

• something you have lost (objects, friends, an old idea, your innocence)

• a time someone broke a stereotype for you

• an important relationship

• the day everything changed

• someone who was a true teacher for you

• a time you were in conflict with someone

• a time you escaped

• a particular piece of clothing

• being outside a night

• trying to fix something

• how you are different from most people

• a death

• an historical event that touched your family

• a gift given or received

• the day you were no longer a child

• an opportunity you missed

• secrets

• what you didn’t want to know

• where home is for you

• something you know by heart

• losing your temper

• finding home

• a change (school, country, opinion, historical events, hair style, personality, etc.)

• apologizing or not apologizing

• something missing

**Other suggestions:**

• Begin your story with “The first time I saw . . . “

• Begin your story with “The last time I saw . . . “

• Graph the ten most important moments of your life. Write about one of them.

**Shame** is a terrible feeling, but a great source for stories!

Think about a time you did one of the following; observed someone doing one of the following and didn’t do anything about it; or had to make a decision about one of them.

**Write about a time you:**

• Stole something

• Told a lie

• Got caught

• Got in trouble

• Was mean to someone

• Felt like an outcast/made someone feel like an outcast

• Were overheard saying something unkind

• Did something you regret

• Believed something that wasn’t true

• Someone said something painful to you

• Felt ashamed about a family secret

• Didn’t keep a secret

• Got stood up

• Tried to hide something about yourself from others: (religion, sexuality, thumb sucking)

• Felt someone made a false assumption about you

• Did something to avoid looking like a fool.