Memoirs

A memoir is a first-person narrative which focuses and reflects on the relationship between the writer and a particular person, place, animal, event, or object; it is an account written from personal knowledge.

You will progress through a series of “mini-lessons” aimed at helping you to produce an effective memoir and to hone your skills as a writer.

Stage 1: Brainstorming

Take considerable time to uncover memories that matter to you by engaging in the process of answering questions offered in the “Questions for Memoirists” handout. These questions are meant to help you “mine” your memories - to dig into, capture, and consider a range of possible topics that could become the focus of your memoir.

Stage 2: Dig Deeper

Choose at least 2 of your most significant memories from your brainstorming. “Web” your memory in order to make them come alive and discover whether or not they have the detail needed to make them a memoir-worthy topic.

Stage 3: Experiment with Alternative Leads

Pick the event/moment/memory that will be the focus of your memoir- narrow it down (e.g. not “my holiday in the Maritimes” but “beach combing at low tide with my cousins” or “getting over my fear of storms”). Now, use the “Narrative Leads” handout as your guide. Experiment with at least 3 different possible leads for your memoir (5-7 sentences each would be a good goal). The main types of leads are: action, dialogue, reaction, and description. Remember- these are just drafts/ideas/experiments – don’t judge- just give it a go!