

# Characteristics of a Memoir

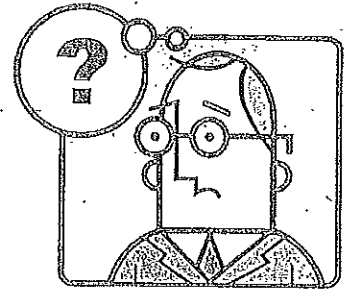
1. A \_\_\_\_\_; a description of an event from the past.
2. It \_\_\_\_\_ and reflects on the \_\_\_\_\_ between the \_\_\_\_\_ and a particular \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Based on the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Reveals the \_\_\_\_\_ of the writer.
5. Has meaning; \_\_\_\_\_

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**This is the theme of the memoir!!!**

6. \_\_\_\_\_ on one \_\_\_\_\_; about one point in the author's life.
7. About the \_\_\_\_\_ more than about the \_\_\_\_\_ itself.
8. It maintains a \_\_\_\_\_ point of view.
9. Includes rich \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Begins with an interesting \_\_\_\_\_ and ends with a strong \_\_\_\_\_ that ends the story.

## What is a Memoir?



A memoir is an account of an author's personal experiences.

Memoir writing is a collection of snapshot memories, like Jack (Thief and the Beanstalk) shares in his pictures or Rob (Seventh Grade Weirdo) shares in his flashbacks.

Snapshot memories are short and very specific. Each memoir is rich in detail and description.

Writing a memoir differs from writing an autobiography, in which you start with the day you were born and tell everything that has happened since then.

It also differs from a biography in that the person telling the story of the event is the person who actually experienced it, rather than someone observing the action.

An important part of memoir writing is the author's stated or implied message about why a memory is important enough to share. In other words, an effective memoir answers the question, "What difference does it make?"

## *LIFE LESSONS.*

1. Friends really do come and go. Some come back. Some don't. That's OK.
2. It's OK to be different.
3. The people who really care will still care whether they agree with you or not.
4. You're not as different as you think.
5. You might think you're not good enough, but you'll surprise yourself when you try.
6. You will make mistakes. So what? That's how you learn.
7. It's OK to feel sad.
8. You don't need as much money/things as you think.
9. Memories are priceless.
10. Don't make the same mistake twice. If you do, don't make it a third time.
11. Just because somebody tells you something is true, doesn't mean it is. Do your own research. Think for yourself!
12. Jealousy is mankind's most useless emotion. Instead of feeling jealous, feel happy.
13. Happiness is mankind's most useful emotion.
14. It's OK to be a follower. It's better to be a thought leader.
15. Don't wish, do. "I wish I could..." is a waste of thought energy.
16. Stop watching so much TV.
17. It's OK if you don't want to travel the world. There are lots of things to explore in your own backyard.
18. Show gratitude.
19. True Friends will always support you.
20. It doesn't matter what other people think.
21. Be true to yourself.
22. Siblings can be your best friends.
23. It's better to be right and stand alone than be wrong with a group.
24. Bad things do happen to good people.
25. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
26. Words matter. Think before you speak.
27. Never stop learning.
28. Remember that one of life's only constants is change.
29. Strive for excellence, not for perfection.
30. Fill your life with love.
31. There is a reason for rules and they should be followed.
32. Good does win over evil.
33. Life is not always fair, but don't give up.
34. Keep trying no matter what.
35. Family is most important in life.
36. It is important to be responsible.
37. Always try your best.
38. It's ok not to win if you tried your hardest.
39. Always have a good attitude.
40. Honesty is the best policy.
41. Don't lie.

# Beginning Your Memoir

## Introductions/Leads

An introduction should capture a reader's interest and tell what the writing will be about. Types of interesting introductions or leads include:

### 1. Lively Description

Sensory details and figurative language can add energy and interest to an introduction. Description can engage readers by painting a picture and establishing a mood.

*On a cloudy August afternoon, the cry goes up for a fishing party. We dig for worms, rustle through the barn for a net, check the hooks and leaders, grab a few poles, and soon we're off in the old red pickup, headed down to the trout stream through a narrow back road that is closed in winter.*

### 2. Surprising Statements

Grab a reader's attention by beginning with a surprising statement or a startling fact.

*Texting and driving injures or kills over 100,000 teens every year.*

### 3. Quotations

Beginning with a quotation can lend impact and authority to an introduction.

*"It's easy," they said. "Nothing to it. Wearing snowshoes is just like walking," they said. Boy, were they wrong!*

### 4. Questions

Starting with an engaging question involves the reader immediately by requiring at least a mental answer.

*What if you had the chance to skydive? Would you?*

### 5. Strong Opinions

Beginning with a strong opinion is likely to get your readers' attention because it might challenge their beliefs.

*Never, and I mean NEVER eat a big meal before riding a roller coaster!*

### 7. Dialogue

Begin with interesting dialogue that will interest the reader.

*"What a great day for the beach" I yelled as I splashed into the waves.*

### 7. Action/Sound

Grab the reader's attention with fast-paced action and/or sounds.

*Boom! Bang! Pop! The fireworks exploded in the sky on the fourth of July.*

## Ending Your Memoir

A closing/conclusion should wrap up the ideas and leave readers with a strong final impression.

A successful conclusion should

- sum up the ideas you have developed
- follow logically from what has gone before
- leave the reader with something to think about

A successful conclusion should NOT

- introduce new facts, ideas, or arguments
- repeat the introduction
- be a listing of information that was presented
- include words like "in conclusion" or "to summarize"

Types of interesting conclusions include:

### 1. Restate the Main Idea

Restate the main idea to reinforce the topic in the reader's mind.

*Their efforts show that although the forces of nature are mighty, the power of the human spirit is even stronger.*

### 2. Summarize the Major Points

Remind the reader of your key ideas by summarizing the major points of what you've written.

*We should always keep in mind that a tornado is a dangerous force of nature. The more we learn, the better we will be able to protect ourselves from their power.*

### 3. Issue a Call to Action

Write a call to action to lend energy to a conclusion, especially in persuasive writing.

*And once you've made some new animal friends, find out how to keep their wilderness homes from disappearing.*

### 4. State the Significance

You can effectively sum up your feelings about your topic by stating its significance.

*Warfare is a serious and deadly business, no matter what century you are in!*

### 5. Ask a Question

Ending with a question encourages your reader to reflect on what you've said.

*Where would flight designs be today without this fundamental approach pioneered by the Wright brothers?*