Writers Workshop Unit of Study
7th Grade – Launching the Writer’s Notebook

ELA
Common Core Standards

Memoir
# Writers Workshop Unit of Study

## 7th Grade – Launching the Writer’s Notebook

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Writers Workshop Unit of Study

7th Grade – Launching the Writer’s Notebook

Preface

The following unit supports and aligns to the Common Core State Standards. This research-based work is the outcome of a collective effort made by numerous secondary teachers from around the state of Michigan. Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) initiated a statewide collaborative project bringing together educators from around the state to create and refine a K-12 English Language Arts model curriculum. The launching unit is situated as the opening writing unit of study within a yearlong sequence of writing units. This unit develops foundational habits of mind, a process approach to writing, and reading like a writer. This foundation is essential to support writers in the complexities of subsequent writing units that focus deeply within the three main types of writing (opinion and argument, informational, and narrative). Each unit within the MAISA yearlong model curriculum presents a string of teaching points that scaffold and spiral the content and skills. Units of study are structured to be student-centered rather than teacher-driven. Sessions emphasize student engagement and strive to simultaneously increase critical thinking and writing skills. Writing and thinking processes are stressed and are equally important to the end-writing product. Sessions are designed as a series of mini-lessons that allow time to write, practice, and conference. Through summative and formative assessments specific to each unit, students will progress toward becoming independent thinkers and writers.

Significant input and feedback was gathered both in the initial conceptualizing of the unit and later revisions. Teachers from around the state piloted and/or reviewed the unit, and their feedback and student artifacts helped in the revision process. Special thanks go to lead unit writers Bryan Hartsig and Lisa Kraiza, who closely studied the CCSS, translated the standards into curriculum and practice, and revised with a close eye to classroom teacher feedback. Throughout the yearlong collaborative project, teachers who are reviewing units are finding how students’ habits of mind have shifted from task-oriented to big-picture thinking, utilizing a critical literacy lens.
## Launching the Writer’s Notebook Unit Learning Progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Personal Narrative</th>
<th>Memoir</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Use writers’ notebooks to gather, record, strategize, and recognize importance within personal narratives.</td>
<td>Establish a way of living as writers in an open, sharing community.</td>
<td>Establish a way of living as writers in an open, sharing community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Establish writing time as a way to build community within a classroom.</td>
<td>Establish a special time to share our stories within the classroom community.</td>
<td>Understand the writers’ workshop framework, in order to explore and analyze observations, feelings, and ideas of other poets in the class community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Develop writers to feel supported and encouraged by those around them.</td>
<td>Encourage developing writers to feel safe about the writers’ workshop format.</td>
<td>Develop habits and routines for a writer’s notebook such as: collecting entries, reading to survey and analyze a range of poetry, and writing to experiment with the elements of poetry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Becoming a Community
- Use writers’ notebooks to gather, record, strategize, and recognize importance within personal narratives.
- Establish writing time as a way to build community within a classroom.
- Develop writers to feel supported and encouraged by those around them.

### Reading Immersion and Drafting
- Discover the writer’s independence, using support structures provided within the community by peers and the teacher.
- Use anchor charts, partnerships, and other strategies to immerse students in the work of writers.
- Recognize strategies that teach students to identify long, drawn-out stories, as opposed to small, focused, meaningful stories.
- Use strategies to draw from events in our lives, pulling out the small moments in order to reflect on their meaning.
- Examine the memoir, in order to contemplate what we have learned from the small moments in our lives, and how we relate to others and live in the world.
- Use Think/Pair/Share while establishing a community to live wide awake, while sharing and responding to stories of others.
- Use poetry immersion to understand that poets use narrative poetry to deeply express themselves.
- Use strategies to generate poetry in a variety of ways, while studying the decisions of other narrative poets.
- With anchor charts and survey tools, understand the use of writing strategies such as listing, observing, describing, and telling stories.
- Reinforce community and the ownership of writing skills.

### Revising and Editing
- Consider activities in the workshop as a process to reflect, provide feedback, and grow as writers within a safe community.
- Use conferencing with peers and the teacher as a way to improve upon revision skills.
- Develop the understanding that personal narratives are valuable tool that can improve writing and share our most meaningful stories with others.
- Analyze the mood, tone, and characteristics of the memoir.
- Assess writers’ skills by conferencing with writers’ groups.
- Use peer discussions and sharing times to revise and edit for meaning and clarity.
- Develop the understanding that memoirs are powerful opportunities for writers to engage readers and share various perspectives and experiences.
- Consider enticing word choice, the use of sensory detail, and the free expression of self.
- Produce a narrative poem that expresses a powerful emotion, a meaningful experience, or a strong belief.
- Develop the understanding that narrative poems are powerful opportunities for writers to engage readers and share various perspectives and experiences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
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<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Personal Narrative</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Memoir</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Becoming a Community | • In a writer’s notebook, record memories, conversations, and bothersome things.  
• Recall an event with a strong emotional impact, and sequence the details to capture the problem and its impact on the narrator and other characters.  
• Respond non-judgmentally. | • Read and write, examining the voices of other poets, and developing a voice in one’s own writing.  
• Use strategies to generate ideas and writing. Use these strategies multiple times to promote new thinking.  
• Respond non-judgmentally. | • Write to discover an event’s personal meaning.  
• Use inquiry strategies for this exploration work.  
• Respond non-judgmentally. | • Explore ideas, feelings, or attitudes by generating poems from various angles.  
• Write every day.  
• Respond non-judgmentally. |
| Reading Immersion and Drafting | • While reading, notice the sequences of the details and the techniques a writer uses to convey a central idea or theme; capture admired techniques.  
• Write under the influence of another author.  
• Reread to discover the significance of stories and expand writing.  
• Reveal characters by describing their physical characteristics, behaviors and mannerisms, dialogue, and thoughts.  
• (Optional) Pay close attention to sensory detail, taking the reader to the place and situation. | • Read a range of poetry, looking for personal connections.  
• Read a range of poetry to admire the ways that poets structure their works.  
• Fall in love with and experiment with words.  
• Use details and figurative language to describe observations.  
• Reread and identify poems for publication.  
• Reflect on habits, writing strategies, and attitudes after rereading writer’s notebook. | • Determine how much truth to tell and what to leave out.  
• Determine the angle of the memoir/event.  
• Explore the emotions of the event.  
• Reread the writer’s notebook for a memoir topic and plan a project. | • Examine several poets’ beliefs about writing and poetry.  
• Compile a list of poets’ decisions.  
• Generate poems from the poet study.  
• Identify and study a mentor poet.  
• Experiment with the decisions of this poet.  
• Reread poetry generated in the writer’s notebook, in order to plan a series of poems.  
• Reflect on poetic decisions and their effects on the meaning of poems. |
| Revising and Editing | • Seek feedback to discover what a reader sees, and where new possibilities exist.  
• Use properly formatted dialogue so readers understand who is speaking.  
• Celebrate stories by sharing them with others. | • Revise line breaks to explore an emerging poem.  
• Create surprise or emphasis by creating and breaking patterns.  
• Use response groups to gain insight and make revisions to drafted poems.  
• Create a revision plan using a repertoire of decisions.  
• Edit punctuation and capitalization using universal and unique standards of poets.  
• Create a collection of poems. | • Explore both the memoirist’s mind and life experiences.  
• Revise for emblematic details, word choice, and stylistic decisions that convey tone.  
• Engage in response groups, acting as critical friends.  
• Create revision plans.  
• Edit with an eye toward sentence variety. | • Engage in response groups to provide feedback to peers.  
• Engage in response groups to gain insight into revision work.  
• Create a revision plan.  
• Revise while using a repertoire of decisions, collected while studying a mentor poet.  
• Edit to impact the pace and the reader’s ability to understand the poem’s intention. |
Writers Workshop Unit of Study
7th Grade – Launching the Writer’s Notebook

Abstract
WHAT IS A LAUNCHING UNIT?
The launching unit engages learners as partners in a year of learning, beginning with this brief, two- to three-week unit. The unit establishes the teaching and learning environment through writing tasks, mentor-text reading tasks, and decision-making, as students generate and nurture their writing. These tasks and decisions establish norms, writing and reading habits, and ways of living together in a classroom, in which all students develop confidence and competence. The non-negotiable results are student choice, teachers’ feedback that is focused on strengths, and student reflection. The launching unit helps students do the following:

- Imagine an identity as a writer
- Read in order to appreciate, study, emulate, and experiment with the decisions of other writers
- Develop a voice that expresses both emotions and ideas through a variety of genres
- Engage in a safe community of writers that encourages risk-taking and growth

PHILOSOPHY
In this unit, students are introduced to the concept of the reader’s/writer’s notebook. They build a community of readers and writers as they read, discuss, write, respond to and share their work. They read memoirs and generate their own memoir ideas using the same structures and devices. Students experiment with the skills that real writers use to create meaningful memoirs. By analyzing the memoir structure and maintaining a goal of crafting their own memoirs, students develop a disciplined writing life, one that’s focused on the generation of a wide range of ideas. This begins in the notebook, but students work to take one of their memoirs through the publication process.

BECOMING A COMMUNITY OF MEMOIR WRITERS
- Students will establish writers’ notebooks and use strategies to gather ideas for writing stories that matter. They will gather ideas by responding to content from mentor memoirs.
- Students will explore mentor memoirs and use strategies to develop questions for analysis.
- Students will understand how memoir, which focuses on a small moment in time, uncovers a new understanding about themselves.

READING IMMERSION AND DRAFTING MEMOIRS
- Students will analyze memoir structures such as: dialogue, description, and reflection, using mentor memoirs. They will experiment with the writing of such structures.
- Students will develop an understanding for literary devices in memoir. They will learn how these devices can be used to convey meaning. They will experiment with the use of literary devices in their writing.
- Students will experiment with possible memoir ideas, using previous notebook entries.
- Students will improve their writing skills through their evaluation and imitation of other memoir writers.
- Students will form reader-response groups to share their memoirs. These groups will help students determine if their memoirs convey the messages they are trying to get across. The groups will also analyze mentor memoirs.

ASSESSMENT
Working in a collaborative environment, students become a group of writers who support each other. Students mine their own lives for ideas; make revisions to their work; write with an authentic audience in mind; and learn from established writers, in order to add to the their repertoire of writing decisions. As a result, grades are not determined upon a list of writing elements or a rubric that defines product quality. Instead, students are assessed upon the enactment of a writing process, as well as the habits and strategies of a writer and critical reader. Students write in readers’/writers’ notebooks and develop portfolios of work. (The notebook is the primary tool by which the teacher and student assess growth.) Students also self-assess and prepare written reflections. This combination serves as evidence of a student’s growth over time and the metacognitive awareness of that growth.

STUDENT OUTCOMES
The launching unit provides students with these vital opportunities to see themselves as capable thinkers and decision-makers:
- Students become more flexible in their writing and thinking as they have time to experiment with words and ideas.
- Students practice a variety of ways to generate ideas and revise writing.
Students investigate the ways in which other writers work through complex ideas and face difficult writing decisions.

While students do create polished pieces of writing, the objective is much deeper: the unit establishes a writing community wherein each student is empowered with a repertoire of generative and revision strategies. This unit sets forth a workshop approach, which develops reading, writing, and thinking skills that resonate throughout the school year.

TEACHER DECISIONS FOR UNIT IMPLEMENTATION
This unit can be designed in many different ways with many different teaching points. However, it would be impossible to write one unit to meet the needs of all audiences. Knowing this, teachers should expect to adjust the lessons in order to meet the needs of their students—while staying true to the intent of the unit. We recommend that teachers study and understand the intent of the lesson series. The lessons have a purposeful sequence, but they may require that teachers make adjustments in pacing or to extension activities. Teachers are encouraged to gather their own sources (mentor texts, etc.) that reflect district curriculum and/or student interests. Please see the resources section for additional ideas.

UNIT ORGANIZATION
The unit is divided into three parts:

- **BECOMING A COMMUNITY OF MEMOIR WRITERS**: The sessions in this unit are typical of every launching unit. Students will develop a community by personalizing readers’/writers’ notebooks, and by developing a safe community in which they can take risks with their writing and thinking. Students begin with a few strategies to get started and grow their confidence as writers and peer-responders.

  The work in this unit is vertically aligned and extends prior learning with the expectation that students come prepared to generate on the first day, using strategies for early drafting from previous years of writing and study.

- **READING IMMERSION AND DRAFTING MEMOIRS**: The sessions in this part of the unit are focused on immersing students in the memoir genre. Students will be reading a collection of memoirs in order to dissect the writing process as well as the genre’s format. The focus will be on the event had a profound impact on the writer.

  The work in this unit is vertically aligned and extends prior learning with the expectation that students understand the repertoire of decisions taught in the Grade 6 unit.

- **REVISING AND EDITING A MEMOIR**: The sessions in this part of the unit encourage students to go deeper into the decision-making process. Students revise memoirs using specific technical decisions, as well as to use the repertoire of decisions they developed in Grade 6 or in the reading of mentor texts. In addition, students participate in writer-response groups, gaining feedback from peers in preparation for publication.

  The work in this unit is vertically aligned and extends prior learning with the expectation that students understand the repertoire of decisions taught in the Grade 6 unit.

**Instructional Sequencing, Scaffolding, and Pacing**
The daily pacing of the unit’s sessions is based on a 50-minute class period. Teachers’ pacing will change based on the duration of the class period, student population, familiarity with content, process, and/or instructional practices.

The instruction scaffolds students through a four-tiered process.

1. **Teaching Point**: The teacher models the strategy, process, skill, or habit of mind, using a mentor text written by the teacher, students, and/or published writers or other materials.
2. **Active Engagement**: Students rehearse the writing, thinking, and/or critical reading or viewing just modeled by the teacher.
3. **Independent Practice**: Students complete a mini-task independently or in small collaborative groups. During independent practice, the teacher confers with individuals or small groups to assess student performance, which allows the teacher to differentiate the lesson and task. The teacher may stop the independent practice to adjust the mini-task. The teacher may also stop the practice in order to adjust the teaching point, and to include teaching points that deepen the learning.
4. **Share**: Students share their work, in order to examine, analyze and/or reflect on the range of responses created by other students. Sharing also enables students to self-monitor the effectiveness of their writing strategies. The teacher may also share an exemplar to reinforce or enhance the session’s teaching point(s) and student performance.
Standards

Common Core Standards: Narrative: The following College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards apply to reading and writing in narrative template tasks. Refer to the 6-12 standards for grade-appropriate specifics that fit each task and module being developed. The standards numbers and general content remain the same across all grades, but details vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>CCR Anchor Standards for Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCR Anchor Standards for Writing Narrative</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
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Overview of Sessions: Teaching Points and Unit Assessments

TEACHING POINTS:
Becoming a Community of Writers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Unit Assessment Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher will share with the students an example of a memoir. Students will be asked to evaluate the memoir based on the lesson they felt the writer was attempting to reveal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Memoir writers record their thoughts, ideas, memories, and stories in a writer’s notebook for further development.
2. Memoir writers look for seed ideas that focus on a brief period of time, a place, or a recurring behavior.

Reading Immersion and Drafting

3. Memoir writers explore events that remain lodged in memory; they reconstruct those events to uncover the events’ significance.
4. Memoir writers take small moments and establish context, point of view, and sequence.
5. Memoir writers immerse themselves in the memoir genre in order to guide their own writing.
6. Memoir writers analyze the structures of memoirs in order to improve their thinking and writing about meaningful moments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-Unit Formative Assessment Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the end of session 5, students select a piece to work on, reflecting on the strengths of that piece. Use the reflection to determine students’ understanding of the narrative elements as well as their own writing process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revising and Editing

7. Memoir writers use narrative techniques such as dialogue to demonstrate why events are significant.
8. Memoir writers use a variety of transition words and phrases, signaling shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
9. Memoir writers use relevant descriptive details and sensory language, capturing action and conveying events.
10. Memoir writers provide conclusions that reflect on the meaning of events.
11. Memoir writers celebrate their journey toward a new understanding or realization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Unit Summative Assessment Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will use memoir-writing techniques to publish one full memoir. The memoir will be based on a significant event in which the student gained a new understanding about himself or herself; other people; or the broader world. The conclusion of the memoir will reflect on the meaning of the event. Student memoir writers will celebrate and share this new understanding.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Session 1</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Preparation** | - Provide composition notebooks for all students.  
- Offer an example of a teacher’s notebook, as well as any other examples available from previous students, etc.  
- Magazines, colored paper, markers, craft supplies, and any other items that would assist in personalizing notebooks. |
| **Teaching Point** | **Memoir writers record their thoughts, ideas, memories, and stories in a writer’s notebook for further development.** |
| **Active Engagement** | - Teacher explains to students that we are on a journey to become better writers. On that journey, we will be using writers’ notebooks.  
- These notebooks are for students to record thoughts, ideas, stories, notes, and images that will lead us on the journey to become a writer.  
- Everyone’s notebook is his or her own, and no one else will read your notebook unless you have given permission. Discuss how the teacher will be checking the notebooks, but not reading personal entries without the student’s permission.  
- Discuss that writing time is sacred and that we will honor that time with quiet, respect and tolerance. |
| **Independent Practice** | - Students will be given this time to personalize their notebooks.  
- Explain that personalizing their notebooks gives them ownership and self-awareness. Teacher will show and explain how she or he decorated the notebook. |
| **Share** | **Focus Question:** *How does having a personalized writer’s notebook enhance the journey of becoming a writer?*  
- Students can show off their work to decorate notebooks. Continue to explain that personalizing notebooks will occur over time and does not need to be done in one session.  
- Finally, have a last chat about being respectful with our minds, hearts, and bodies with what we say and do in regards to each other’s notebooks.  
- Last, explain that students will only share what they want to share. They are writing in their notebooks for themselves only. |
| **Homework/ Extension** | Students can bring in other items from home to continue to personalize their notebooks. |
| **Assessment** | Every student should have a notebook.  
Pre-unit assessment task: The teacher will share with the students an example of a memoir. Students will be asked to evaluate the memoir based on the lesson they felt the writer was attempting to reveal. |
<table>
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<th>Session 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
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</table>
| • Composition notebooks for all students.  
• *My Map Book* by Sara Fanelli |
| **Teaching Point** |
| *Memoir writers look for seed ideas that focus on a brief period of time, a place, or a recurring behavior.* |
| **Active Engagement** |
| • Tell students that they will be writing a memoir. Explain that a memoir is a piece of narrative writing that is based on an author’s past experience. The memoir reflects on what was learned from that experience and usually focuses on a brief period of time, a place, or a recurring behavior.  
• Explain that writers need to look inside their lives for ideas to write about.  
• Memoir writers gather topic ideas that cover a brief period of time, a place, or a recurring behavior, as they contemplate their place in the world.  
• Let’s make a “map” of our worlds in our notebooks.  
• Teacher will read/show *My Map Book* by Sara Fanelli. It is best projected on a screen, so students can see the colors and the words on the pages.  
• Explain that the writer has created maps of his most special places. The maps are labeled and decorated with important memories and details.  
• Tell the students that they will also create maps in their notebooks of their special places.  
• They will use these maps to search for writing ideas that will be developed over the length of this unit.  
• The teacher will demonstrate by creating a map of his/her own on the overhead, projector, or chart paper.  
• Teacher will talk aloud about what s/he is drawing and why s/he is labeling various locations. For example, “This is a map of my room growing up. Here is the window I would look out, watching my grandma in the garden instead of napping.”  
• Teacher will begin to create anchor charts on the characteristics of memoir. These will hang in the classroom. |
| **Independent Practice** |
| • Students will work on their maps. Limit maps to 2-3 places so as not to cloud the memory pool.  
• Students should label the locations and be able to speak to the memory of that place. |
| **Share** |
| *Focus Question: What strategies help reconstruct a memory and reveal the feelings of the writer?*  
• Students can turn and talk to their shoulder-partner about their maps.  
• Teacher will debrief with the class about the mapping experience and review the definition of memoir. |
| **Homework/ Extension** |
| Students will need to begin thinking about and writing down possible memoir ideas, using their maps as guides. |
| **Assessment** |
| Teacher may assign points for the students’ maps, as well as circulate and check in during the pair-and-share time. |
Memoir Topics

1. “Where I Grew Up” stories
2. Family stories
3. Pet stories
4. Friendship stories
5. Defining moments
6. Great achievements or creations
7. Pain/conflict stories
8. School stories
9. Stories about wishes or dreams that came true
10. Stories about disappointment or losses
11. Place stories
12. Rites-of-passage (realizing you are growing up)
13. Nature stories
14. Physical hurt
15. Overcoming obstacles
16. First time I…stories
17. “Caught ya’!” stories
18. Holiday stories
19. Stories that go along with a special photograph or object
20. Name stories
### Session 3

#### Preparation
- Composition notebooks for all students.
- Students’ maps from the previous session.
- My Map Book by Sara Fanelli
- **What Will I Write About?** sheet *(see attached sheet)*
- A folder for each student. This is a Writing Folder, in which students keep and maintain all the tools for the remainder of the unit.
- Print copies of **Sentence Starters** sheet *(see attached sheet)*

#### Teaching Point
*Memoir writers explore events that remain lodged in memory; they reconstruct those events to uncover the events’ significance.*

#### Active Engagement
- All memoirs have a purpose.
- Memoirs are about specific periods of time, places, and events.
- Memoirs give authors insight into what they have learned about themselves or about others.
- Now that you have mapped out your world, let’s narrow the focus to a few events or moments that could potentially be turned into a memoir.
- Use the **What Will I Write About?** Tool to organize your thoughts into possible memoir writing topics.
- Teacher will demonstrate how to use the tool with his/her own map on the overhead, projector, etc.
- Begin to create anchor charts that list the characteristics of Memoir.
- Have students keep their tools in their Writing Folder that will be referred to throughout this unit.
- Share and discuss the Sentence Starters sheet. This gives students several template sentences that they can use to begin sentences.

#### Independent Practice
Students will complete their **What Will I Write About?** sheet using the maps they created in the notebooks from the previous session.

#### Share
**Focus Question:** How do the writer’s feelings about a memory help to explain the significance of the event?

Students can turn and talk to their shoulder-partner, discussing their findings and how these events/experiences hold personal significance.
- Teacher will debrief with the class about the **What Will I Write About?** sheet and have students report their findings.

#### Homework/Extension
Students will need to begin thinking about and writing down possible memoir ideas.

#### Assessment
- Teacher may assign points for the **What Will I Write About?** sheet, as well as circulate and check in during the pair-and-share time.
- Teacher may also use the Writing Folder as a way to assess.
Sentence Starters:

I believe that...
There are times when...
When I was younger...
I think...
I wish...
I sometimes wonder...
(Topic) is...
I always thought that...but now I think/believe...
(Topic) means...
Sometimes there are...

Sentence Enders:

Now I think that...
Now I understand...
In conclusion, I believe...
It is sad to think...
I only wish that...
It made me realize that...
I now know...
Although I cannot prevent/stop...
I wish I could have...
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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event from your life</th>
<th>Your response to the event</th>
<th>New understanding?</th>
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<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
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<td>- Writers’ notebooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <strong>What Will I Write About?</strong> sheet from previous session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Planning a Memoir <em>(see attached sheets)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Writing Folders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The web is a great resource for information. You may want to share the following link with your students on the fine points of memoir:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw2U42FoZls">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw2U42FoZls</a> If the link does not work search under Composition Personal Memoir Essay.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Teaching Point</strong></th>
<th><strong>Memoir writers take small moments and establish context, point of view, and sequence.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Engagement</strong></td>
<td>- “Last session we chose a few events that have potential to be the focus of memoir writing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “I will now ask you to choose one to work with, and see what from your reflection will make for a worthy memoir.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher will refer to the anchor charts that have been posted in the room, and which focus on the structure and characteristics of memoir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher will give students the Planning a Memoir Part I sheet. Students will be asked to choose one of their events and pull out an idea using the guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The teacher will model this process on a projector, etc. with his/her own writing example, talking aloud so the students can hear the thinking behind the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- While modeling, give the students the leeway to change their topic if they are not getting anywhere with their first choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Students will complete Planning a Memoir Part I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The teacher will then place on the overhead, projector, etc. Planning a Memoir Part II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The teacher will review that events in memoirs have purpose. “Memoirs show what the author has learned AFTER experiencing a memorable moment. In order to do that, they also need to show feelings from BEFORE the moment as a way to build up to this realization.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “Using this tool, we are going to practice the same thing with our own events.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher will demonstrate how to use the tool with his/her own writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Students will complete Planning a Memoir Student Worksheet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Independent Practice** |
| - Students will complete Planning a Memoir Part I. |
| - Students will complete Planning a Memoir Student Worksheet. |
| - Teacher will judge how much time is needed for the students to complete these tasks. |

| **Share** | **Focus Question:** What strategies or techniques can be used in a memoir to express feelings and emotions? |
| - Between each part, students can turn and talk to their shoulder-partner, discussing their findings and what they are choosing to write about. Always remind the students to be respectful in how they reflect, share, and discuss each other’s writing. |
| - Teacher will debrief with the class about the Planning a Memoir Student Worksheet and have students report out the writing decisions they have made. |

| **Homework/Extension** | Students will need to begin thinking about and writing down possible memoir ideas. This is a good place to discuss the Memoir Rubric and the expectations for the task. |

| **Assessment** |
| - Teacher may assign points for the What Will I Write About? sheet, as well as circulate and check in during the pair-and-share time. |
| - Teacher may also use the Writing Folder as a way to assess. |
## Planning A Memoir

**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

Fill in the chart and answer the questions regarding your chosen event for your memoir.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Purpose—why include the details?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (Situation before the event)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (Situation before the event)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Situation before the event)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (The event itself)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (The situation after the event)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your memorable moment?

What was your learning or realization from that moment?
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (before) Getting thrashed by the waves</td>
<td>Shows how miserable I was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (before) Watching others make it look so easy</td>
<td>Shows I felt like a failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (before) Getting cold, deciding to go in after one more try</td>
<td>Shows I was ready to give up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (memorable moment) Successfully riding first wave to the beach</td>
<td>Shows my excitement and disbelief at success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (after) Staying out and continuing to surf</td>
<td>Shows how success totally changes my attitude about surfing and believing in myself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 5

Preparation

- Writers’ notebooks
- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart
- Memoir Study (*see attached sheet*)
- Reader Response Chart (*see attached sheet*)
- Writing Folders (*see attached sheet*)
- Excerpts of a variety of memoirs that will fit the culture of your classroom.
  Recommendations are: *Bad Boy: A Memoir* by Walter Dean Myers; *When I Was Your Age, Volume I Original Stories About Growing Up* (there is a Volume II as well); *13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen* by James Howe; *Harris and Me* by Gary Paulsen. There are numerous possibilities here. Use what you enjoy and the students will enjoy the stories as well.

Teaching Point

**Memoir writers immerse themselves in the memoir genre in order to guide their own writing.**

Active Engagement

- “Writers look to other writers for inspiration. When writing your own memoir, it is helpful to look at other authors in the same genre. This allows you to see how they have crafted their events and expressed their understandings of those moments.”
- “We are going to read and study a collection of memoirs. This will allow us to look for the elements we’ve studied of memoir.”
- “All of you are going to be reading a selection of memoir stories. I will give you a tool to reflect on these memoirs. As readers, you will respond to the memoirs.”
- Teacher will give students the Memoir Study tool along with their Writing Folders.
- Teacher will have students group into fours. Call these groups Reader Response Groups, as they will be responding to what they are reading. There should be enough copies of each memoir for the group, as well as the Memoir Study sheet.
- Teacher will model how to read and answer the sheet. This is where it is important to have established turn-and-talk protocols. Explain to the students that each group member has important insights to add to the conversation. It is acceptable for everyone to have different responses to the reading.
- Have the Reader Response Chart posted in the room and review the questions.
- Students are to read together and answer the questions. You may time the task as you see fit depending on how many memoirs you will have the students reading.
- Repeat the process with the remaining memoirs.

Independent Practice

Students will read the various memoirs in their reader response groups, using the Memoir Study tool.

Share

**Focus Question:** *How do others’ memoirs help us to gain insight into our own stories and realizations?*

- At the end of the reading and responding time, the teacher will facilitate a class discussion on the findings and the students’ responses to the Memoir Study sheet, as well as use the guiding questions on the Reader Response Chart.

Homework/Extension

Students can take the inspiration from these memoirs and apply it to their own writing, as they are to begin drafting their own memoirs.

Students also complete a reflection. Have students look through their entire notebooks while home. Reread entries to siblings, relatives, and parents as they sift for the right story idea to pursue.

After students have selected their best piece to continue working on, they should write a reflection in their writers’ notebooks explaining why they chose this particular piece. The reflection should address:

1. The current strengths of the piece in terms of its narrative elements. What narrative elements did you include that make this piece worth working on more? Be specific.
2. Also discuss the process you undertook to draft this piece. What steps did you take
| Assessment | Teacher may assign points for the Memoir Study, as well as circulate and check in during the Reader-Response time. Points may be allotted for participation. Writing Folders may also be used as an assessment tool.  
Mid-unit assessment: At the end of session 5, students select a piece to work on, reflecting on the strengths of that piece. Use the reflection to determine students' understanding of the narrative elements as well as their own writing process. |
Memoir Study

While writing your own memoir, it is helpful to read other examples to get ideas for expressing meaning and realizations. Answer the questions on our readings as we discuss the various memoirs.

Title ___________________________________________________________ Author __________________________________________________________

What moment or event is being described in the memoir?

What were the author’s feelings BEFORE this moment or event?

What are the author’s feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain the author’s new realization or understanding, following from this moment or event.
Title_________________________________________________________Author__________________________________________

What moment or event is being described in the memoir?

What were the author’s feelings BEFORE this moment or event?

What are the author’s feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain the author’s new realization or understanding, following from this moment or event.
Title __________________________________________ Author ______________________________________

What moment or event is being described in the memoir?

What were the author’s feelings BEFORE this moment or event?

What are the author’s feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain the author’s new realization or understanding, following from this moment or event.
What moment or event is being described in the memoir?

What were the author’s feelings BEFORE this moment or event?

What are the author’s feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain the author’s new realization or understanding, following from this moment or event.
Reader Response Group

ALL QUESTIONS & UNDERSTANDINGS SHOULD REVOLVE AROUND THE FOLLOWING:

“What is the meaning of this piece?”

❖ I wonder…
❖ What is this about…
❖ I notice…
❖ This makes me think of…
❖ I like how…
### Session 6

#### Preparation
- Writers’ notebooks
- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart
- Memoir Study sheet
- Writing Folders
- **Memoir Structure Chart** *(see attached sheet)*
- Excerpts of a variety of memoirs that will fit the culture of your classroom.
  Recommendations are: *Bad Boy; A Memoir* by Walter Dean Myers; *When I Was Your Age, Volume I Original Stories About Growing Up* (there is a Volume II as well); *13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen* by James Howe; *Harris and Me* by Gary Paulsen. There are numerous possibilities here. Use what you enjoy and the students will enjoy the stories as well.

#### Teaching Point
**Memoir writers analyze the structures of memoirs in order to improve their thinking and writing about meaningful moments.**

#### Active Engagement
- “Memoir writers make very specific and purposeful decisions about what they’ll include in their memoirs.”
- Remind students of the following:
  - Every event in the memoir has to have a purpose.
  - The memoir needs to show attitudes or feelings *before* the event, so that the reader understands the author’s learning at the end.
  - The memoir needs to show the *before* part several times.
  - The memoir needs to show the *after*. How did the learning change the author?
  - Every event needs to build toward, show, or explain the significance of the author’s learning.
- “Let’s look at the memoirs we have read, as well as the ones we are writing ourselves, and pull out the *before*, *after* and the *learning.*”
- Teacher will model the Memoir Structure Chart. Students will continue to analyze the memoirs they were reading from the previous session.

#### Independent Practice
- For this task, students may remain with their Reader Response Groups to complete the chart.

#### Share
**Focus Questions:** *How does understanding the writer’s feelings about a memory help to explain the significance of the event? How do the narrative components of memoir aid in the telling of the story?*
- Groups will report their thinking and the teacher will chart the information on the overhead, projector, chart paper, etc. for the class to see.

#### Homework/Extension
Students can take the inspiration from these memoirs and apply it to their own writing.

#### Assessment
Teacher may assign points for the Memoir Structure Chart, as well as circulate and check in during the Reader Response time. Points may be allotted for participation. Writing Folders may also be used as an assessment tool.
MEMOIR STRUCTURE
Fill in the chart, explaining with details from the text on the author’s experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Memoir</th>
<th>BEFORE Event</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>AFTER Event</th>
<th>Learning or Realization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How was the author feeling or dealing with life?</td>
<td>What happened that changed the author?</td>
<td>Now how was the author feeling or dealing with life?</td>
<td>What did the author learn or realize from this experience?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Session 7

### Preparation
- Writers’ notebooks
- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart
- Writing Folders
- Copies of the students’ memoirs, as well as good dialogue examples from the mentor memoirs that you have been using.
- For this session, the following text is recommended: *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s Workshop* by Jeff Anderson and Vicki Spandel (Paperback - Jan 1, 2005). Any mentor text or grammar book on the fundamentals of dialogue would also work.
- There are also many web resources to use with students. Suggested websites include:
  - [http://www.fictionfactor.com/guests/dialoguebasics.html](http://www.fictionfactor.com/guests/dialoguebasics.html)

### Teaching Point
**Memoir writers use narrative techniques such as dialogue to demonstrate why events are significant.**

### Active Engagement
- “Writers, let’s go back to our memoirs and see what we can learn about the narrator, which is ourselves. Remember that memoirs have something to say or teach about the author’s memorable experience.”
- “It is important to show what the narrator is experiencing, *not just tell* the experience, and one of the ways is through the use of dialogue.”
- Review how dialogue can directly and indirectly reveal information about characters in memoir, in addition to revealing why events are significant.
- We learn a lot about a character in a story by the things that they do and the things that they say. Memoir writers use a variety of dialogue to add interest and depth to the story they are telling. Dialogue also gives insight into what the characters are thinking, their feelings, and how they act. Understanding how to punctuate and use dialogue is an important skill for a memoir writer to have.
- Teacher will review on the overhead, projector, etc. the rules and uses for dialogue. The students should contribute to the list of rules.
- Use copies of mentor texts with dialogue to show these rules; also, show text with errors so students can see errors corrected.
- Conclude with a discussion on tagging dialogue with action, emphasizing that *how something is said* reveals information about a character as well.
- At the end of this session create a “Dialogue Rules” Anchor Chart to post in the room, capturing the class discussion.

### Independent Practice
Have students return to their own memoirs to revise dialogue, incorporating a variety of uses that directly and indirectly reveal information as the memoir progresses.

### Share
**Focus Question:** *What strategies or techniques can be used to express emotion in a given memoir?*
- If time allows, students can turn and talk to peer edit with each other. They can do this with their Reader Response Groups, too, checking for the correct use of dialogue.

### Homework/Extension
Students should continue to revise and edit their memoirs as they work toward a final piece. Refer back to the Memoir Rubric.

### Assessment
Teacher will circulate and check in during the independent revising time. Points may be allotted for participation. Writing Folders may also be used as an assessment tool.
### Session 8

#### Preparation
- Writers’ notebooks
- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart
- Writing Folders
- Copies of the students’ memoirs, as well as good transition examples from the mentor memoirs that you have been using.
- For this session, the following text is recommended: *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s Workshop* by Jeff Anderson and Vicki Spandel (Paperback - Jan 1, 2005). Any mentor text or grammar book on transition words would also work.
- Transition Words Chart Copies of lists can be found in *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s Workshop* by Jeff Anderson and Vicki Spandel (Paperback - Jan 1, 2005), as well as other resources that your district may already have on hand.

#### Teaching Point
*Memoir writers use a variety of transition words and phrases, signaling shifts from one time frame or setting to another.*

#### Active Engagement
- “Adverbs and conjunctive adverbs can add depth and coherence to texts. Often they act as transition words to help guide a reader through a writer’s ideas, signaling a contrast or comparison, or supporting an idea.”
- Memoir writers use transition words to signal shifts in time and sequence.
- Transition words link sentences and paragraphs.
- Teacher will review on the overhead, projector, etc. the rules and uses for transition words.
- Teacher will also display a list of common transition words for the students to review.
- Teacher will also need to review comma usage as it relates to transitions, i.e. adverbs and conjunctive adverbs.

#### Independent Practice
Have students return to their own memoirs to revise the use of transition words.

#### Share
**Focus Questions:** *How do the narrative components of memoir aid in the telling of the story? What are the ways in which these narrative components can be manipulated to write an effective memoir?*
- If time allows, students can turn and talk to peer edit with each other. They can do so in their Reader Response Groups, too, correcting the use of transitions in their memoirs.

#### Homework/Extension
Students should continue to revise and edit their memoirs as they work toward a final piece.

#### Assessment
Teacher will circulate and check in during the independent revising time. Points may be allotted for participation. Writing Folders may also be used as an assessment tool.
Session 9

Preparation

- Writers’ notebooks
- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart
- Writing Folders
- Copies of the students’ memoirs
- Examples of good descriptive details, including sensory-language examples from the mentor memoirs that you have been using
- A list of definitions of figurative-language devices and descriptive words
- The web is a great resource for literary devices and figurative language. Here are some suggestions:
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKexdSZNiLc
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQL-wEeO3hc&NR=1
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1c6zf9aJxs

Teaching Point

Memoir writers use relevant descriptive details and sensory language, capturing action and conveying events.

Active Engagement

- Memoir writers use imagery and figurative language to create an effect on the reader.
- Memoir writers make use of descriptions that create vivid pictures in the minds of the readers. The most common types of figurative language are similes, metaphors, and personification.
- Teacher defines similes, metaphors, and personification for the students and provides examples from the texts.
- Teacher will model for the students how to take some “plain” description and make it more powerful through the use of imagery and figurative language.
- Read aloud a passage from a text or other source, and ask students to point out phrases or sentences that help them “see” the experience.

Independent Practice

Have students return to their own memoirs to revise their use of imagery and figurative language.

Share

Focus Question: How do the narrative components of memoir aid in the telling of the story? What are the ways in which these narrative components can be manipulated to write an effective memoir?

- If time allows, students can turn and talk to peer edit with each other. They can do so in their Reader Response Groups, too, correcting the use of transitions in their memoirs.

Homework/Extension

Students should continue to revise and edit their memoirs as they work toward a final piece.

Assessment

Teacher will circulate and check in during the independent revising time. Points may be allotted for participation. Writing Folders may also be used as an assessment tool.
### Session 10

#### Preparation
- Writers’ notebooks
- Memoir Reflection sheet
- Elements of Memoir Anchor Chart
- Writing Folders that include all the drafts, charts, notes and copies of the students’ memoirs
- Copies of mentor memoirs that you have been using in class that have strong conclusions. “Everything Will Be Okay” by James Howe, from When I Was Your Age: Volume I Original Stories About Growing Up, is a good example here, but any memoir will do.

#### Teaching Point
**Memoir writers provide conclusions that reflect on the meaning of events.**

#### Active Engagement
- “We have talked about memoirs’ being used to show a personal understanding or realization based on an event in an author’s life.”
- “Memoirs are structured so that there is an understanding BEFORE the event and then the realization or final understanding AFTER the event.”
- Explain to the students that a memoir’s conclusion is the anchor to the story. This is where the final realization is revealed to the reader. The “ah-ha” or “I see” moment. A reader connects with the author at this juncture.
- Distribute copies of the example memoir you are using so that each student has a copy to mark up.
- Read the story as a class and then ask the students to mark what they feel is the BEFORE, AFTER, and new understanding or realization.
- Have students complete the Memoir Reflection sheet. First they’ll do it on their own, then they’ll turn and talk with a shoulder partner.
- Teacher will model, and when class completes the task, students will share responses.

#### Independent Practice
- Students now move to their own memoirs. With the same shoulder partner, the students will fill out a Memoir Reflection sheet for their partners’ memoirs.
- Student partners will discuss each other’s BEFORE, AFTER, and new understanding or realization. When completed, the students will return the Memoir Reflection sheet to their partners so that they may use them for revision.

#### Share
**Focus Questions:** *What is the definition of a meaningful conclusion and how does the conclusion enrich the memoir? What does it mean to be reflective? How does being reflective make one a better writer?*
- Have students share their reflections about each other’s BEFORE, AFTER, and new understanding or realization.
- This is a good place to chart any new thoughts on the writing of memoir.

#### Homework/Extension
Students should continue to revise and edit their memoirs as they work toward a final piece. Refer back to the Memoir Rubric.

#### Assessment
Teacher will circulate and check in during the independent turn-and-talk time. Points may be allotted for participation and for the Memoir Reflection sheets. Writing Folders may also be used as an assessment tool.
Memoir Reflection

Title and Author of Memoir used__________________________________________

1. What moment or event is being described in the memoir?

2. What were the author’s feelings BEFORE this moment or event?

3. What are the author’s feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain the author’s realization or new understanding from this moment or event. Include the following:

♦ What is significant for the author?
♦ What do you feel the author is trying to say to the reader?
♦ What is the author’s realization?
♦ Think on a deeper level.
## Memoir Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memorable Moment</strong></td>
<td>Clear memorable moment.</td>
<td>Memorable moment is somewhat clear.</td>
<td>Memorable moment is unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Understanding or Realization</strong></td>
<td>The writer has made clear what he or she has learned or realized from this memorable moment.</td>
<td>The writer has made it somewhat clear what he or she has learned or realized from this memorable moment.</td>
<td>Meaning or learning is unclear from the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure/Organization of Memoir</strong></td>
<td>Writer shows attitudes and feelings through events BEFORE the moment, during the meaningful moment, and AFTER the moment.</td>
<td>Writer somewhat shows attitudes and feelings through events BEFORE the moment, during the meaningful moment, and AFTER the moment.</td>
<td>Writer is not able to show attitudes and feelings through events BEFORE the moment, during the meaningful moment, and AFTER the moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style/Voice</strong></td>
<td>Meaning is shown through several literary devices weaved into text, including similes, metaphors, personification and onomatopoeia.</td>
<td>Meaning is shown through few literary devices weaved into text, including similes, metaphors, personification and onomatopoeia.</td>
<td>Limited use of literary devices. Weak contribution to meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates solid grasp of standard writing conventions and uses them effectively.</td>
<td>Writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions.</td>
<td>Errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points ___________________ Final Grade ___________________

Teacher's Comments:
Memoir Reflection II

Student Memoir Title: ____________________________________________

1. What moment or event is being described in the memoir?

2. What were the author’s feelings BEFORE this moment or event?

3. What are the author’s feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain the author’s realization or new understanding from this moment or event. Include the following:

♦ What is significant for the author?
♦ What do you feel the author is trying to say to the reader?
♦ What is the author’s realization?
♦ Think on a deeper level.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Preparation** | - Clean, typed copies of all the students’ final memoirs  
- A treat/snack for the class such as juice and doughnuts  
- A podium or lectern  
- An author’s chair  
- Post-it notes |
| **Teaching Point** | Memoir writers celebrate their journey toward a new understanding or realization. |
| **Active Engagement** | - “Today we are going to celebrate the writing that we have done as memoirists. You have worked hard to be reflective, thoughtful, and purposeful in your writing.”  
- “We have read, shared, and revised, and now it is time to celebrate our accomplishments with each other, because that is what writers do and that is who we are: writers.”  
- Explain to the class that authors give readings of their work for audiences. On a voluntary basis, and in no particular order, students will come up and read their memoirs to the class. If students feel their memoir is too personal to read aloud they do not have to, but they could choose to have it read by another student or the teacher. This is something that you may need to have arranged in advance, depending on the length of the class period.  
- Remind students that this time, like writing time, is sacred and we honor everyone with good audience skills. Again, this is something that will have needed to be established in advance.  
- Once the readings are done, students will lay their memoirs on their desks. The class will circulate the room with their post-it notes around, going to each desk and giving a word, phrase, or sentence of encouragement and positive feedback; this is similar to a gallery walk.  
- When students return to their seats, they may take the comments that were left and put them in their Writing Folders or writers’ notebooks. |
| **Independent Practice** | - Students will read their memoirs as though at an actual reading. They are expected to take this as a serious, reflective moment that aids in their growth as writers.  
- Those in the audience must demonstrate good audience skills with respect and quiet. |
| **Share** | Focus Question: How can celebrating the writer and writing make one a more thoughtful and reflective writer?  
- Students can reflect on this experience in their writers’ notebooks and share with the class if time allows. |
| **Homework/Extension** | N/A |
| **Assessment** | Students’ final memoir piece is the formal, summative assessment, based on the rubric provided. You may also provide points for good audience participation.  

Post-unit summative assessment task:  
Students will use memoir-writing techniques to publish one full memoir. The memoir will be based on a significant event in which the student gained a new understanding about himself or herself; other people; or the broader world. The conclusion of the memoir will reflect on the meaning of the event. Student memoir writers will celebrate and share this new understanding. |