

# Unit 11

## Writing a Memoir

(narrative)

### Part 1: Standards Addressed in This Activity

- W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.6.3.A Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.6.3.B Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.6.3.C Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- W.6.3.D Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- W.6.3.E Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- W.6.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.6.5 With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- W.6.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### Part 2: Description of Activity

The student will brainstorm using a graphic organizer and write a memoir about an earlier event. The assignment includes rereading the selections in Unit 11, which are primary sources, to understand how the subjects' words recreate a memory. Students will use the selections in Unit 11 as models for this assignment.

## Part 3: Teacher and Student Instructions

### Task A: Pre-writing

1. Have students reread the passages in Unit 11 with a focus on how the author’s words recreate an event and arouse emotion.
2. Students will complete the **Writing a Memoir Graphic Organizer**, listing as many “I remember when...” ideas as they can generate.
3. With a partner, students will choose one or two ideas and retell the stories in detail. After this, each student should decide which idea will be used for the memoir’s first draft. Begin writing by “stretching” the memory as appropriate.

### *Directions for the Student*

The selections in Unit 11 are all primary sources that retell memorable moments in the lives of the subjects. We all have unforgettable moments in our lives. Yours may be happy, sad, scary, thrilling, or proud. A memoir is a narrative of an important life event and how it affected the author. It describes the author’s personal experience.

1. Reread the passages in Unit 11. Think about the people, their experiences, and how their words made you feel.
2. Complete the **Writing a Memoir Graphic Organizer** with “I remember when...” and “I felt...” statements.
3. Recall important, vivid memories and how they made you feel.
4. Tell one or two of your stories to a partner.

You are getting ready to write a memoir by “stretching out” the story. This means adding lots of details and using sensory words.

### Task B: Write a Narrative

#### *Prompt*

Use your graphic organizer to help you write a memoir. Describe a single event from memory. Include plenty of details about how you felt and how the event changed you. Use descriptive and sensory words. Use a variety of transition words.

## **Part 4: Handouts/Suggested Responses**

Writing a Memoir Graphic Organizer (Sample)

Writing a Memoir Graphic Organizer (Blank)

Transition Words list (see Unit 3)

Prompt (Blank)

Name: Sample

### Writing a Memoir Graphic Organizer

I remember when...	I felt...
I fell at Squires Castle and needed stitches in my head. I was 5 years old.	scared
I went to Italy with my grandmother.	excited and worried
My grandmother died.	sad
I used to go to school with my dad and help him.	useful and proud
I went to kindergarten at Lincoln School, and there was a sliding board in the playroom upstairs. I hoped we'd be able to play in that room.	disbelief

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Writing a Memoir Graphic Organizer

I remember when...	I felt...

# Unit 11

## Writing a Memoir

(narrative)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use your graphic organizer to help you write a memoir. Describe a single event from memory. Include plenty of details about how you felt and how the event changed you. Use descriptive and sensory words. Use a variety of transition words. The Proofreader’s Checklist will help you edit your work.

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### **Proofreader’s Checklist**

Did I...

- tell a clear memory and how it made me feel?
- use narrative techniques (dialogue, sequenced events, characters)?
- use descriptive details, sensory language, and precise words?
- use a variety of transitions to show sequence and time shifts?
- write a conclusion that follows from the experience?
- use correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling?