

## How to Write Powerful Personal Narratives

- Think of a person, place, or moment in your life (maybe a first or last time, or a time when you realized something) that matters, and write a story about it.
- Focus on one episode, write with detail (don't summarize a stretch of time).
- Help readers picture the episode—a small action and exact dialogue.
- Climb inside the moment and write within the narrator's point of view.
- Make characters say the words and use the tone that shows their personalities and hints at the bigger meaning of the moment.
- Explain why the characters act the way they do.
- Zoom in on the small but powerful details that really capture big moments and feelings.
- Use the Narrative Writing Checklist to ask, "As a writer, what are my strengths? What are my needs?" Then, plan your next steps as a writer.
- Craft a memorable lead.
- Ask, "What is my story really about?" and include descriptors, dialogue, and inner thinking that convey that meaning.
- Elaborate on important scenes that show what the story is really about.
- Include new scenes, remembered from the past or imagined in the future, that help show what the story is really about.
- Craft an ending that delivers a powerful message.