

Memoir Notebook entries

During a unit of study in *memoir*, we fill our notebooks full of *memories* that are important to us.

You might have some memories like the ones below. You can make a notebook entry for each memory, writing as much as you can remember.

- Your earliest memory
- Birth of a brother/sister
- Getting a special pet or losing a special pet
- Learning how to do something new to you
- Discovering something that you do well
- Winning or losing at something
- Moving to a new country, neighborhood or school
- The first time you met your best friend
- A special birthday, holiday or vacation
- Doing something that took a lot of courage
- A time you were lost
- A time you felt “left out”
- A major illness or accident
- Death of a loved one

Other things to think about in your notebook:

- Can you point to a time in your life when everything seemed to change? When? What happened? How were things before that? And after that?
- Who have you made a lot of memories with? Who are the people that are almost always with you, or made a big impact on you, that you can write a lot about?
- What are the special *places* in your life? Tell us what the place looks like. Tell us why it is so special to you. What do you do there? How does it make you feel? Why do you think you feel that way there?
- Find some photographs of you —candid photographs, not posed school pictures or fancy studio portraits—and write about what comes to mind as you look at it. You can describe exactly what you see in the picture, but tell us things we can’t see, too, like how you were feeling at the time, how you feel about it now, what else the picture makes you think about, etc.
- What makes you who you are? What things are important to you and why? How has this changed over the years? What has stayed the same?

Created/compiled by Julie Patterson, with adaptations from Katherine Bomer’s *Writing a Life*, several books by Natalie Goldberg, and exercises facilitated by creative writing instructors including Rachel Manley, Hester Kaplan, and others.