

Revision Work ... making your memoir even better

Draw a section

Draw part of your memoir. Talk about what you drew with a partner. Are there things in the drawing that can be added to your draft? What were you thinking about as you drew this picture?

After talking for five minutes with your partner, write down in your notebook what you talked about so you won't forget it. Then, look over your draft to see where these new pieces of information will best fit.

Write five different titles

In your writer's NB, write at least five different possible titles for your memoir. A good title makes a reader want to read your piece - avoid something boring like, "All about me." Instead, try something poetic, or one that gives a tiny bit of information about you, try using a meaningful word or phrase from inside your memoir, maybe use the pattern you discovered about your life as a title, or a theme that would work. Make it a question or something utterly mysterious.

Find five things to name with proper nouns

For example: not 'cookies' but "Nutter-butters" or not 'my street' but "the corner of Colorado and Mossman Place."

Read your memoir draft out loud

Read your memoir draft out loud to as many people as you can. As you read, listen for places that your voice might stumble over. Maybe some words need to get rearranged in the sentence, or perhaps there are too many words in that spot. Be ready with your colored pen to change words, add things, or delete things right there, as you are reading.

You can also ask someone else to read your memoir out loud to you. Again, listen as if you have never heard it before, and you are ready to be critical of it. Make notes on a piece of paper about things you want to be sure to change when you get your draft back.

Describe the internal you and the external you

Choose two or three meaningful events or memories from your draft. Rewrite them to include what was happening to the external you and then again to include what was happening to the internal you.

Write more about one sentence.

Find a part of your memoir where you write only one sentence or two about something important. In your writer's notebook, write that sentence up at the top of a blank page. Then squeeze and squeeze your memory to write one page all about that one sentence.