

## MEMOIR BOOKLET INFORMATION SHEET

Memoir writing is a compilation of snapshot memories, like those the Giver shares with Jonas. Snapshot memories are fairly short and very specific. Each memoir is rich in detail and description. It differs from writing an autobiography, in which where you start with the day you were born and tell everything that has happened since then. It also differs from a biography in that the person telling the story of the event is the person who actually experienced it, rather than someone observing the action. In other words, there is no bias in the writing except that of the person who took part in the event. An important part of memoir writing is the author's stated or implied message about why a memory is important enough to share. In other words, it answers the question, "What difference does it make?"

We will be writing our own memoirs. The "snapshot" memories you choose must be important enough to be shared with our Giver, if we had one. They are memories you would want to pass down to generations of Givers.

We will write about all of the memoir subjects listed below in descriptive mode: action verbs in the present tense, sensory detail, and figurative language. You will bring the memory to life by writing about it in "real time," as if you are in the moment. In addition, the style of each memoir must mirror that of Lowry. We will examine carefully the part of The Giver that detail the passing of memories from the Giver to Jonas. In the end you will choose, with my guidance, nine entries you want to include in your final booklet.

### Categories

- ◆ Name stories (See explanation below.)
- ◆ "Where I grew up" stories
- ◆ Love stories (first love, true love, end of love, etc.)
- ◆ Pain stories (someone hurt you, argument with best friend or parents, etc.)
- ◆ First day of school stories
- ◆ Rites of passage/realizing you are growing up stories
- ◆ Weather stories (tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms, etc.)
- ◆ Holiday Stories (traditions, memorable ones, when you found out there was no Santa Claus, etc.)
- ◆ Physical Hurt stories (broken bones, stitches, surgeries, bee stings, etc.)
- ◆ First-time-I... stories
- ◆ Funny family stories (Those your mother always tells at gatherings.)
- ◆ "Caught ya'!" stories (lying, cheating, writing a love letter, etc.)

To begin, we will create a Pictorial Timeline that will help you write about specific times in your life. (You will need 10-15 pictures of times in your life that are important to you. GET YOUR PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S PERMISSION because we will be cutting and gluing these pictures.) We will brainstorm 10-15 important moments in your life and create a time line of those events using photographs, magazine cutouts, or drawings. All moments must be identified by a picture, date, and caption. We will post our timelines around the room so that everyone can use them for inspiration.

Next, we will brainstorm memories and feelings associated with your name. Prior to this activity, ask your parents/guardians about your name. "Why was I given this name? Where did it come from? What does it mean?" You will then conduct formal research about the origins of your name and its meanings.

The final project will be out of 210 points, but you will also earn points for class activities along the way. As we work on our memoirs, keep The Giver in mind, and what we are learning about the importance of memories to our families, our communities, our world and ourselves.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Portfolio cover:

- Creative rendering of your first name
- Six to eight statements about your name provided (gathered from the formal and informal research you've conducted)
- Title of Portfolio
- Your last name and the date of completion
- Illustrations, pictures, or drawings that correspond to the themes shared between this project and Lois Lowry's The Giver.

Foreword:

- Place directly behind portfolio cover, before Table of Contents
- Expository Mode of Writing: statement, reason, example, explanation, example, explanation, "what difference does it make?"
- Include an explanation of the following:
  - Identify the person (or people) to whom you are dedicating your Memoirs
  - Explain why you chose this person (or people) to honor with the dedication
  - Summarize what you will "take away" from the entire project (In what ways have you been enriched by this project, and in what ways will it have a lasting impact on you?)
  - Draw conclusions between your memoir project and themes in The Giver by Lois Lowry

Table of Contents page:

- Place directly behind Foreword in booklet
- Format it exactly like those in your language arts binder
- Example: The First Time I Got Caught Swearing . . . . . 5

Entries

- At least six of the nine entries must be illustrated in a manner that shows their relationship to the themes shared between our personal memoirs and The Giver.
- Illustrations may be drawings, pictures, clip art, magazine clippings, border decorations, etc.

Writing process:

- Turn in all drafts of each piece
- Staple all peer and self editing and revision sheets to the entries with which they correspond
- Organize drafts and editing/revision forms in the order in which they appear in the portfolio, with the entries that did not make it into the book at the back of the packet
- Clip packet with a binder clip and file in your writing portfolio folder.