

Memoir Assignment

After reading a memoir and exploring the characteristics of the genre, you will compose a memoir of a family or community member who is at least a generation older than you are. Your memoir will focus on one or two unifying themes rather than simply cataloguing events from the person's life. You can present your memoir in any of the following ways:

- a written memoir essay
- a collage of photos, words, and/or images
- a series of panels telling a story
- a painting
- a video
- a musical composition
- a sculpture
- a poem
- a song

In addition to your memoir presentation, you will keep an artist's journal, which explains why you have chosen the particular method of presentation you have and analyzes your own successes and shortcomings.

Generally, the process will follow these steps:

1. Choose the subject of your memoir. Your choice should be at least one generation older than you are. In your artist's journal, talk about your choice: both why you've chosen whom you have and things you might want to ask the person about.
2. Schedule an interview and generate interview questions. We'll look at example questions in class and spend time writing questions. In your artist's journal, discuss why you are choosing particular questions. What do you hope to learn by asking them?
3. Interview the person. We'll talk about interviewing techniques in class. After the interview, reflect on the experience in your artist's journal. Think about how the interview went, what worked and what didn't, what you learned from the person, and so forth.
4. Review your notes and any other information from your interview, and create your memoir presentation. As you work, be sure to note your decisions and the reasons for them in your artist's journal.
5. Share your memoirs in peer review, and make related changes to your work. Discuss the feedback and changes that you make in your artist's journal. Be sure to discuss both the changes you make and why you make them.
6. Prepare for and present your presentation to the entire class. If you have written a memoir, choose a paragraph to read to the class. If you have chosen another option, prepare to show your work and choose a paragraph from your artist's journal to read to the class.