

memoir

a type of autobiography focusing on significant events or persons other than the author, although the author was a witness

a narrative composed from personal experience

memoir characteristics

- focus on a brief period of time or series of related events
- narrative structure, including the usual elements of storytelling such as setting, plot development, imagery, conflict, characterization, foreshadowing and flashback, and irony and symbolism
- writer's contemplation of the meaning of these events in retrospect
- fictional quality even though the story is true
- emotional intensity
- personal reconstruction of the events and their impact
- therapeutic experience for the writer, especially when the memoir recounts a crisis or life-threatening experience

A memoir . . .

- ✓ focuses and reflects on the relationship between the writer and a particular person, place, animal, event, or object.
- ✓ explains the significance of the relationship.
- ✓ is limited to a particular phase, time period, place, or recurring behavior in order to develop the focus fully.
- ✓ makes the subject of the memoir come alive.
- ✓ maintains a first-person point of view.

A memoir . . .

- ✓ explores an event or series of related events that remain lodged in memory
- ✓ Describes events and then shows, either directly or indirectly, why they are significant—in short, why you continue to remember them
- ✓ is focused in time; doesn't cover a great span of years
- ✓ centers on a problem or focuses on a conflict and its resolution and on the understanding of why and how the resolution is significant in your life