

Autobiographical Incident Assignment

DUE DATE:

Peer Editing:

For most of us, our favorite subject is ourselves. We love telling stories about our lives: our successes, our defeats, our joy, our fear. Sometimes, we tell the whole truth...sometimes we embellish our stories a little. When we write about something that actually happened to us, we are writing an autobiographical incident. The word “autobiography” is formed from the word “auto”, meaning self, “bio”, meaning life, and “graph”, meaning writing. An autobiographical incident is a story about something specific that happened in your life.

The incident has a **definite beginning, middle, and end.** It may have taken two minutes or two days to complete, but not longer. In other words, a summer trip to Canada is too long to be an incident.

Writing Assignment:

You will write about a specific time when an event happened that changed you in a way you didn’t expect. You should describe the situation that led to the unexpected consequences. Remember to use sensory details (vivid imagery) to describe the incident. Finally, your incident will end with a paragraph describing how you feel about the incident now and how your perspective has changed from when the event took place.

Autobiographical Incidents Should...

- Narrate a story with a central incident
- Provide background information that orients readers
- Reveal significance by giving insights and reflecting on incidents
- Have a voice and style that reveal the reader’s personality

Steps for Writing:

1. Brainstorm the incident you will write about
2. Select your incident
3. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - a. What made the event so memorable?
 - b. What sensory details do you recall at that precise time?
 - c. Who were the people with you when the event took place?
 - d. What did you think would change immediately after the event?
 - e. Did your feelings about the event alter with time?
 - f. Looking back, how has your perspective changed?
 - g. How does the event make you feel today?
 - h. What do you think the experience taught you?
4. Prewrite using an outline or cluster diagram – read samples for guidance
5. Write first draft
6. Peer Review (time in class)
7. Revise
8. Turn in final copy

Incident Must Include:

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Sensory Images | - High Interest Hook Sentence |
| - Dialogue (proper quoting) | - Emotional Connection with Audience |
| - Plot Curve | - Strong Narrative Voice |
| - Figurative Language | - Proper Grammar Usage |

Topic Brainstorming:

- *Most proud moment/accomplishment*
- *Memorable moment during a trip*
- *Significant experience with a role model or mentor*
- *Most embarrassing moment*
- *Funniest thing that ever happened to you*
- *A risk that you took*
- *Scary moment*
- *Getting into trouble*
- *An epiphany*
- *Rites of passages/growing older*
- *Defining moment in a relationship (beginning, end, loss of trust...)*
- *A difficult decision*
- *Significant item*
- *A loss person, pet, privilege, item*
- *Betrayal*
- *Injustice*
- *Disappointment*
- *Celebrations*
- *Biggest fight or argument*
- *A painful lesson*
- *Accident or illness*
- *Experience as an outsider*
- *Moving switching schools*
- *Family changes*
- *Memorable holiday event (specific)*
- *Discovery*