

Autobiography

LANGUAGE ARTS



Book Builder

Overview

Students write and illustrate the story of their own life so far, practising personal narrative and selective detail.

Steps for Teachers

1. Discuss what makes a life story interesting: turning points, not just facts
2. Students list ten memories that matter to them
3. Students choose the six that show how they changed
4. Students plan one page per memory, in order
5. Students write each page in first person, with sensory detail
6. Students photograph themselves and add cut-outs, or draw themselves at each age
7. Students add a dedication page at the front
8. Bind or print the books so families can keep them

Example

A student's autobiography covers the day her sister was born, learning to swim after being afraid of the deep end, moving house in the middle of second grade, the first time she cooked dinner alone, and the day she read a whole chapter book. The dedication reads: 'For Mum, who kept every drawing.'

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Personal Voice	Writing sounds unmistakably like this student	Writing is clear but could be about anyone	Writing is a list of facts with no voice
Selective Detail	Every memory chosen shows growth or change	Most memories are meaningful; some are filler	Memories are chosen at random
Storytelling	Clear beginning, middle and end; each page turn moves the story forward	Story is organized but some pages stall or repeat	Story is disorganized or hard to follow
Book Craft	Text is easy to read, art supports every page, and the layout is consistent throughout	Pages are readable with some crowding or uneven placement	Text overlaps art or is hard to read; layout is inconsistent