**Capturing Family History**

**A Small Moment Personal Narrative**

You have written your own small moments. Now it’s time to write a small moment about someone very special. Do you have a grandparent who has stories to share? What are some precious, irreplaceable memories in their life? How are you going to decide which grandparent to interview?

**Step 1:** **Share Your Writing Goals -** Talk to your parents about this writing project and show them your guidelines. Let them guide you in reaching out to your grandparent or special older relative. Let your grandparent know in advance that you will be writing their small moment, so he/she can think about it and plan/rehearse the story before the interview. Make sure that you explain the difference between a small moment and a memoir. Be clear about your writing goals!

If your grandparent is not sure what story to tell you, here are some ideas:

\*Grade School Days

\*A Favorite Pet Story

\*Ways They Played or Had Fun

\*A Bad Decision and What Happened

\*A Scary Moment

\*A “Learned From” Event

\*An Accident… What happened?

\*A Favorite Growing Up Memory

\*Something that makes him/her smile every time he/she thinks about it!

**Step 2:** **Preparing for the Interview** - Turn to the next clean/new page in your Writer’s Notebook. Plan on leaving a space between each line, so you can go back and add more details. You could also write on one side of the paper, so the other side would be available for added jottings. Plan to keep making a movie in your mind - envision your grandparent’s story - as you jot. Don’t hesitate to ask for more information or to clarify what is being said. Draw the moment out of your grandparent. You should have enough information to be able to type at least one page. Your mission is to capture the moment in every way!

**Step 3:** **Interview Your Grandparent -** Use the same process we modeled during class. Explain that you will be jotting down key words and phrases as the story is told. (It might be helpful for your parent to hear the story. Also, you could record the story on a recording device.)

**The Interview:**

1. Thank you for sharing this favorite or very special small moment in your life with me.

2. Thank you for gathering your thoughts about this story in advance.

3. Please tell me your story in chronological order.

4. As you tell me your small moment, don’t forget to add important details. I want to know everything. When did this happen? Where were you? What did it look like? How did you feel? Please be specific! (If other people were involved… get their names and find out who they were.)

5. Please help me to capture your moment by including what you were thinking at the time. That’s really important for my audience.

6. Don’t talk too quickly because I am jotting down what you say in memorable words and fragments.

7. OK… let’s get started.

8. What is your full name?

\*\*Remember, you may need to jump in and say, “Can you tell me more about that?” “What were you thinking at the time?” “Can you share some more details and/or sensory words that make what you just said paint a picture for my readers?”

9. Thank you so much for sharing your story with me.

10.I am going to type this up and then call you, so I can read it back to you. The next time we talk, you can fill in any gaps in my writing and/or share more details with me.

11. Thanks again… I need to get to work!

**Step 4:** **Organize Your Jottings** - Chunk out your fragments into paragraphs by drawing a box around the jottings that go together or are part of the same scene. Be thinking about a way to “hook” your audience. Your introduction and conclusion also require some thought. Is there a moral or life lesson to this story?

**STOP!**

**Step 5**: **Get My Approval** - Show me your completed prewriting. Once you have a solid plan and sense of direction, it will be time to start typing. You may not begin typing until you show me your work in your Writers’ Notebook.

**Step 6:** **Refer to Your Small Moment Checklist -** Craft a wonderful personal narrative that your whole family will love sharing! We will be teaching you prewriting skills, crafting skills, and grammar/sentence work throughout this unit. Impress us with your new skills! I can’t wait to hear the story!

The due date for this piece will be in several weeks. I want to make sure that all writing, grammar, and punctuation lessons are taught before the exact date is determined. Our focus will be on prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, and editing.