

# Memóir Unit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# What's a Good Idea?



Something you have **STRONG FEELINGS** about.



Something you **KNOW A LOT** about.



Something you can **DESCRIBE IN GREAT DETAIL**.



Something your **AUDIENCE** will be **INTERESTED** in.



Something your **AUDIENCE** will feel was **WORTH READING**.

# Characteristics of Memoirs

- ✓ A memory; a description of an event from the past
- ✓ Written in the first person; told from one person's point of view
- ✓ Based on the truth
- ✓ Reveals the feelings of the writer
- ✓ Has meaning; shows what the author learned from the experience
- ✓ Focused on one event; about one point in the author's life
- ✓ About the author's experience more than about the event itself



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Life Event</b>	Something you have strong feelings about: <b>list some feelings</b>	Something you know a lot about: <b>provide some information</b>	Something you can describe in great detail: <b>provide some details</b>	Something your audience will be interested in: <b>what makes it interesting?</b>	Something your audience will feel was worth reading: <b>why would your audience want to read?</b>

## Memoir Topics

1. "Where I Grew Up" Stories
2. Family stories
3. Pet stories
4. Friendship Stories
5. Defining Moments
6. Great achievements or creations
7. Pain/conflict stories
8. School stories
9. Stories about wishes/dreams that came true
10. Stories about disappointment or losses
11. Place stories
12. Rites of passage/Realizing you are growing up stories
13. Nature stories
14. Physical Hurt stories
15. Overcoming obstacle stories
16. First time I...stories
17. "Caught ya'!" Stories
18. Holiday Stories
19. Stories to go with a special photograph or object
20. Name stories

## Questions List to Use When Planning Your Memoir: What the Reader will Need or Want to Know

### Questions for memoirs when the subject is a person:

1. How long have you known this person?
2. When did you first meet and how did you meet?
3. What do you like about this person?
4. How has this person helped you?
5. Is there one thing that he or she always says?
6. How do you feel about this person?
7. What have you learned from this person?
8. What's the first thing you notice when you see this person?

### Questions for memoirs when the subject is a place:

1. What are your feelings when you think about this place?
2. When was the first time that you went to this place?
3. What's your favorite thing to do in this place?
4. Who else comes to this place?
5. If you could change one thing about this place, what would it be?
6. How often do you go there?
7. Does everyone feel like you do about this place?
8. Is this place the same today as it was in the past?
9. What's the most important object in this place? Why?

### Questions for memoirs when the subject is an animal (pet):

1. What physical feature of this animal do you like the best?
2. What's the first thing you notice about this animal when you see him?
3. Pretend this animal is with you right now. Close your eyes. What would you be doing with it?
4. What is this animal's favorite thing to do?
5. When did you get it?
6. How did you get it?
7. How do you feel when you are with it?
8. Does everyone feel the way you do about this animal?
9. What's one funny thing that it does?
10. How does this animal help you or how do you help it?

### Questions for a memoir when the subject is an object:

1. How did you get this object?
2. How long have you had it?
3. How do you feel when you're with it?
4. Where is it right now?
5. Has it changed any since you first got it?
6. What's your favorite thing to do with it?
7. Does everyone feel like you do about this object?
8. How has it helped you?
9. Is there a time when you really need it?
10. What if you lost it?

[http://web2.jefferson.k12.ky.us/CCG/supp/MS\\_Memoir.PDF](http://web2.jefferson.k12.ky.us/CCG/supp/MS_Memoir.PDF)



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_

## Planning A Memoir

### Part I: Choosing a Seed

- ✓ Needs to be a small moment (not a trip to Cedar Point, but the first time you rode on a roller coaster)
- ✓ Needs to be meaningful
- ✓ Need to be able to answer "What did you learn from this experience?" "What lessons do you want to communicate by writing about this topic?"

Take one of your Events/Experiences from your What Will I Write About? tool. Create a cluster, brainstorm web or list on your chosen seed identifying the people, places or things you associate with your topic. Identify the SMALL MOMENT.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_

### What Am I Going to Write About?

Memoirs include events, experiences and emotional shifts that make the story important to the author. These emotions lead to a new understanding or realization about being in the world. Now that you have created maps of your world, what events are you considering writing about for your memoir? What new understandings or realizations have you experienced?

Using your map(s) to guide you, generate ideas from different events/experiences in your life that may help you choose a topic for your memoir.

Event/Experience from your life	Your response to the event/experience	New understanding or realization?

# Planning A Memoir

## Part II: Memorable Moment

Keep the following in mind:

- ✓ Every event has to have a purpose.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show attitudes or feelings BEFORE, so that the reader understands the author's learning at the end.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show the BEFORE in several parts, not just once.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show the AFTER. How did the learning change the author's life? Why was it significant?
- ✓ Every event needs to build toward, show or explain the significance of the author's learnings. If it isn't doing those things it shouldn't be included.

### *Example*

Memorable Moment: The first time I got up on a surf board.

#### Event

#### Purpose

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. (before)<br>Getting thrashed by the waves                         | Shows how miserable I was   |
| 2. (before)<br>Watching others make it look so easy                  | Shows I felt like a failure   |
| 3. (before)<br>Getting cold, deciding to go in after one more try    | Shows I was ready to give up  |
| 4. (memorable moment)<br>Successfully riding first wave to the beach | Shows my excitement and disbelief at success.                                       |
| 5. (after)<br>Staying out and continuing to surf                     | Show how success totally changes my attitude about surfing and believing in myself. |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_

# Planning A Memoir

## STUDENT WORKSHEET

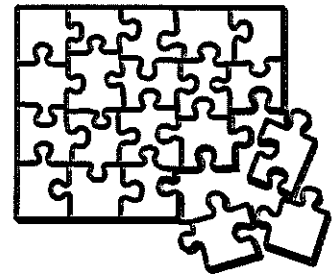
Fill in the chart and answer the questions regarding your chosen event/experience for your memoir.

Event	Purpose
1. (Before)	
2. (Before)	
3. (Before)	
4. (Memorable Moment)	
5. (After)	

What is your memorable moment?

What was your learning or realization from that moment?

# Bold Beginnings - Memoir

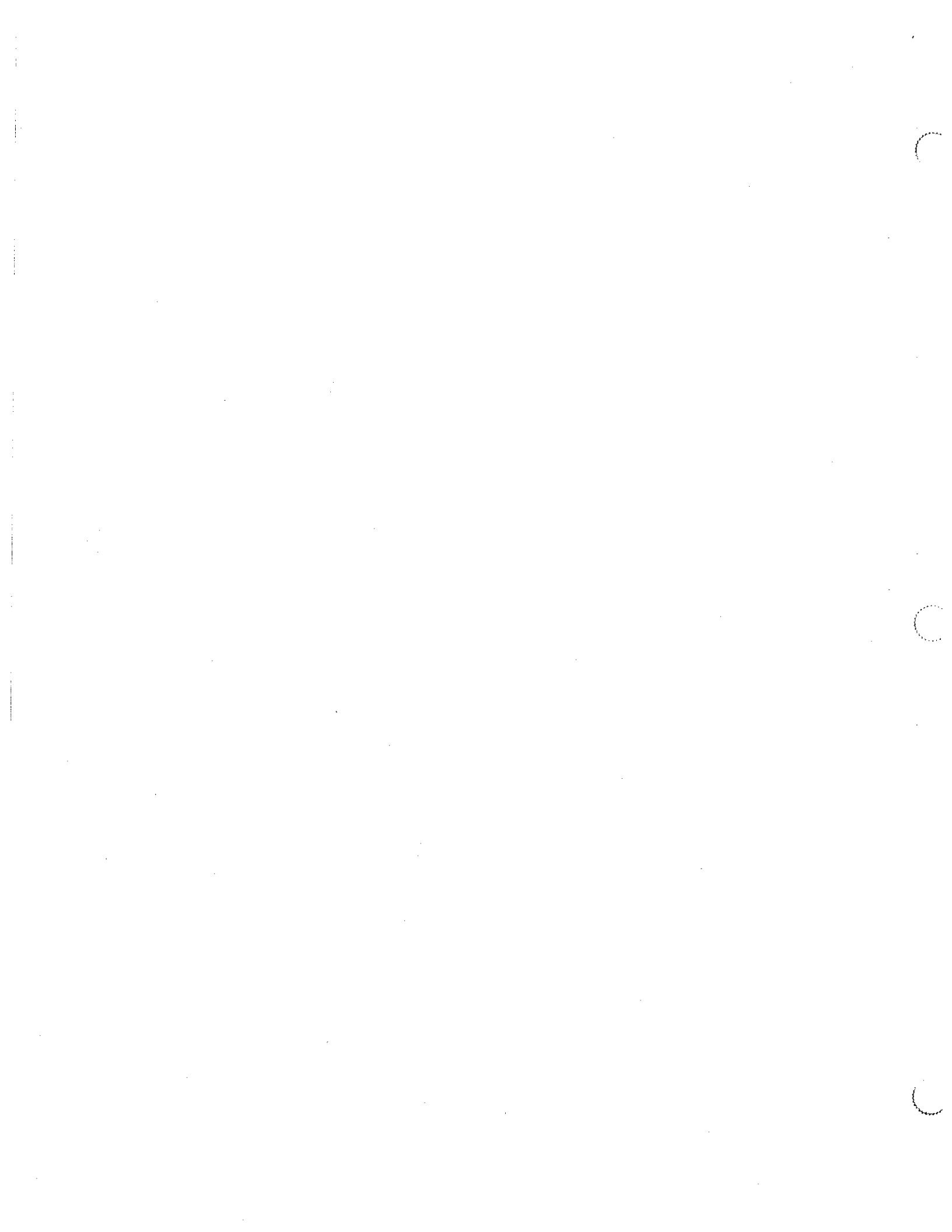


**ACTION**

**DIALOGUE**

**A THOUGHT, A QUESTION, OR FEELING**  
*(What might you be thinking or feeling?)*

**A SOUND EFFECT** *(What sounds might you hear?)*



# Improving Word Choice - Vivid Verbs

Original Verb:  
\_\_\_\_\_



Synonyms:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Original Verb:  
\_\_\_\_\_



Synonyms:

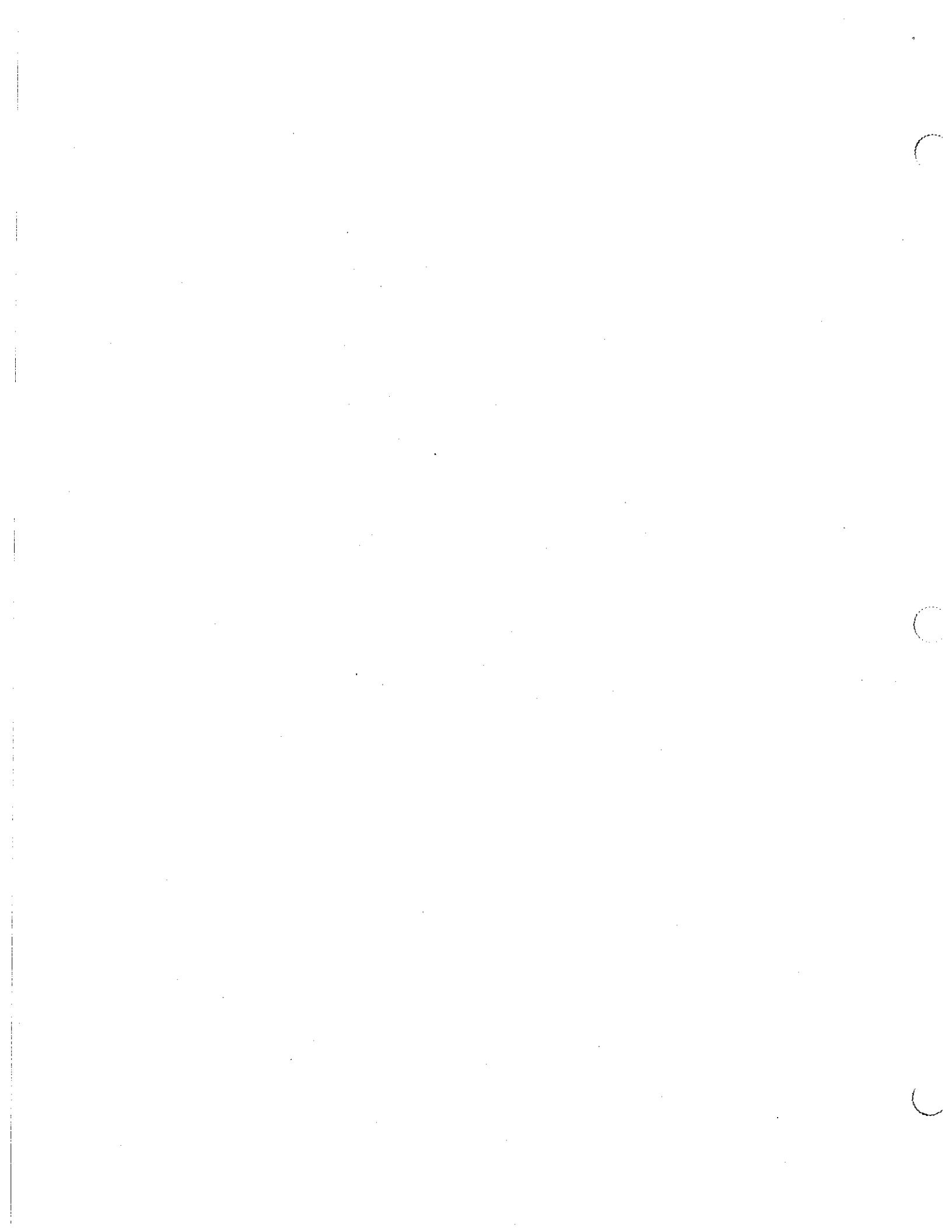
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Original Verb:  
\_\_\_\_\_



Synonyms:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_





Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_

Memoir Reflection II

Student Memoir Title: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What moment or event is being described in the memoir?
2. What were the author's feelings BEFORE this moment or event?
3. What are the author's feelings AFTER this moment or event?

Explain what the author's new realization or understanding is from this moment or event. Include the following:

- ◆ What is significant for the author?
- ◆ What do you feel the author is really trying to say to the reader?
- ◆ What new learning or realization has the author achieved?
- ◆ Think on a deeper level.

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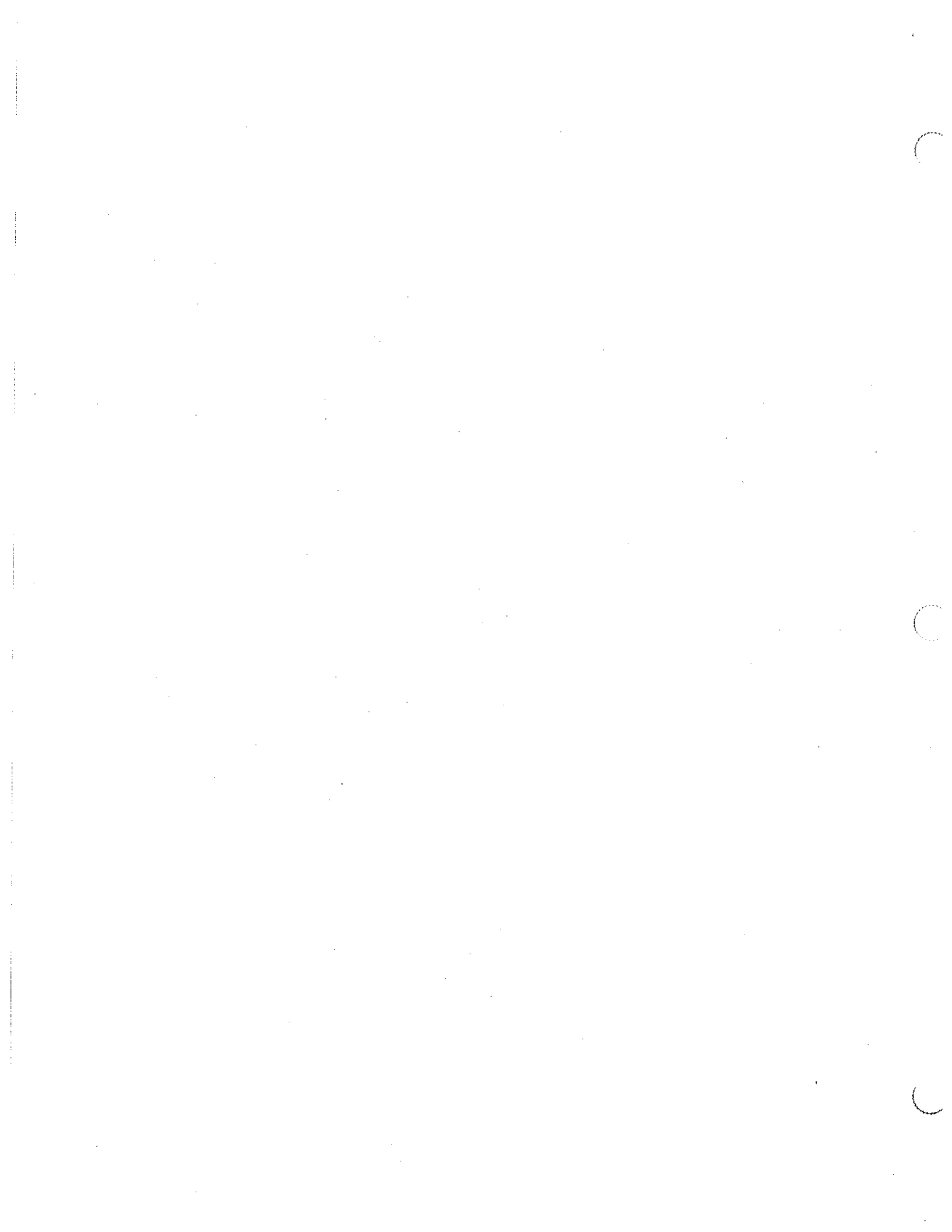
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## Memoir

Author's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of memoir: \_\_\_\_\_

is the title catchy? is it appropriate for the piece? comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Memorable moment: \_\_\_\_\_

Structure: feelings before: \_\_\_\_\_

feelings during: \_\_\_\_\_

feelings after: \_\_\_\_\_

Style/voice: literary devices are present. simile: \_\_\_\_\_

metaphor: \_\_\_\_\_

personification: \_\_\_\_\_

onomatopoeia: \_\_\_\_\_

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