

## Common Core Standards for Memoir Writing Unit

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.A

Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.C

Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.5

With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

### Essential Questions:

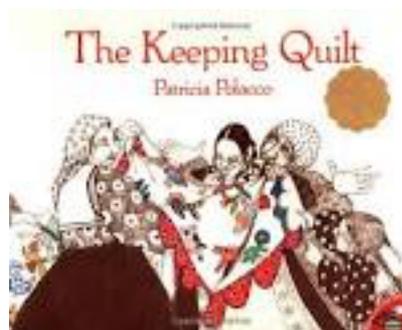
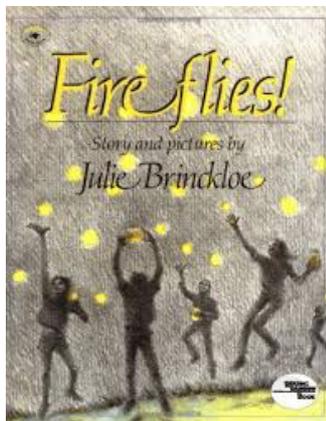
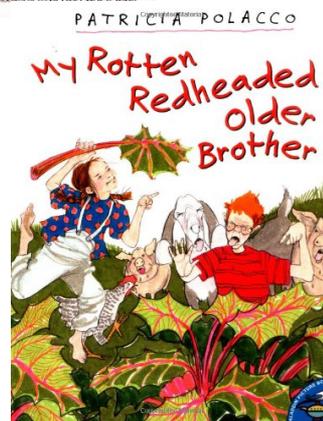
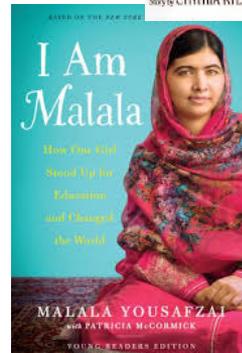
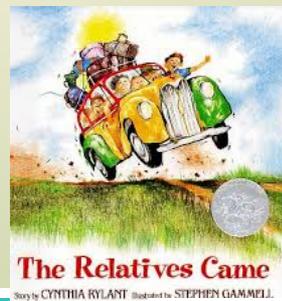
- How can I make my writing more powerful and impact my audience?
- What am I trying to show about myself through my memoir?
- What life lesson did I learn and want to share with my audience?
- How did I change as a result of this experience?

## Lesson 6&7 - Choosing a topic.

I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

How will my learning be assessed today:

-by choosing a topic for my memoir.



I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

In Writing Workshop we have been working on generating ideas for our writing. This is important work so we have a variety of options to choose from when we have to pick an idea to publish.

So far we have learned the elements of a memoir, set questions to ask ourselves as we write and we generated ideas based on important people, memorable moments and special objects.

Today I am going to teach you how to choose the best topic for my memoir so that you will have a strong idea to grow into a published piece.

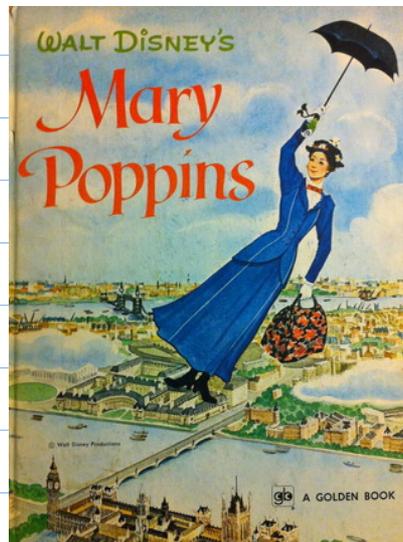
**Connection**

I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

Let me show you how to choose the best topic for your memoir so that you will have a strong idea to grow into a published piece.

Title	Is it about a person, place, object or event?	Does the story make you feel something?	Is the story something that happened to the author?	Is the story something that happened in the past?
She Remembers Mrs. Beasley	doll	Nostalgic about my parents and special tv shows from my childhood	Race to get ahold of her with my close friends in tow.	About 20 years ago.
Leaving for the first time	Leaving for camping	Nervous, anxious	Leaving home	6th grade
Beach	Beach	Peaceful, at home, relaxed	Visits to the beach	From childhood to present
The Day Mary Poppins Died	Event-series of events	Fear, nervous, anxiety, sadness, loss	Anger at loss of old possessions and memories they triggered	15 years ago

# Teach



I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

Now it is your turn to try to choose the best topic for your memoir so you will have a strong idea to grow into a published piece.

Which of my ideas would you want to see me publish and why?

**Active Engagement**

I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

**So, writers, we have been learning to choose the best topic for your memoir by charting ideas and asking your fellow writers for their opinion so you have a strong idea to grow into a published piece.**

**Link**



I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

**Remember to have at least 4 ideas and fill out each box with a few words describing that section. You will need to be able to give a snapshot (very short idea of the story) to the people you share your ideas with.**

**Midworkshop  
Interruption**

I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

**Now that you have chosen your idea, we are going to "Go Public." Please add your topic to the "Going Public" chart.**

**Share**

I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

**For homework tonight:**

***The writer, Katherine Bomer has said this: "Memories come to people most often while they are doing something else: washing dishes, driving to work, listening to music, walking the dog. Memory comes in split second images, it hides in the cracks of daily activity, and to capture it, sometimes we have to sneak up behind, pretend we are doing something else like scrubbing the bathtub, and memories will come."***

***Tonight and throughout your writerly lives, be aware of the memories that come to you while you are busy doing something else. Record those memories as entries in your notebook, saving them for when you choose an idea and begin drafting your memoir.***

I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.

## Teacher Page

**Student Handouts:** What makes it a Memoir?

**Differentiation:** For students who are having trouble filling in the boxes, you should model again with a new piece of writing and then work in a small group, reviewing the boxes and allowing the students time to fill it in based on their own writing.

**Assessment:**

**Self-**Students will refer to the "How will I be assessed" slide in order to assess their abilities and understanding during active engagement, mid-workshop interruption, and share.

**Teacher-**conferring, collect a table's notebooks for reading, and listen to student's partner conversations.

**I can choose the best topic for my memoir by charting my ideas and asking my fellow writers for their opinion.**

**Choosing Seed ideas-Part Two: i CAN CHOOSE MY SEED IDEA BY NARROWING IN ON A FOCUS IDEA OR THEME.**

**CONNECTION:**

**Choosing Seed ideas-Part Two:  
I CAN CHOOSE MY SEED IDEA BY NARROWING IN ON A  
FOCUS IDEA OR THEME.**

As you've been gathering materials for a memoir, you've shifted between collecting, sorting, choosing and writers do this all the time. Narrowing in on the materials that will become a draft actually happens over a long period of time as you collect and as you reread thinking, "What do I really want to say?" To understand this process, it can help to study how other writers do this.

You already know that your goal is to make something--a true story that conveys an important message about the whole of your life. You will be writing a memoir. Like so many memoirists, you will be spending time choosing or creating the form, the structure that will best carry your message. As you think about your structure, you also need to think about your message or your content. In the end, the message and the form go together.

Some of you will be able to re-read your writing today and find your focus. Others of you will begin collecting material but you may still be unclear what shape your memoir might take or what the primary material might be. But you need to make some choices and to commit to a direction.

Let's go back to my theme, THE STRUGGLE TO FIT IN:  
The time my friend made fun of my dress and said it was antique looking  
The time I made fun of my friend to impress other girls in my class  
The time my entire class took a field trip to my house to see my pet monkey which I had pretended to have but I didn't  
The time my classmates finally invited me out to lunch but did so only to throw snowballs at me.

When I was a kid I knew I didn't fit in and that still haunts me. The funny thing is I don't exactly fit in now, either but I don't see it as a goal to do so. I am happy being the creative, unusual person who dances to the beat of her different drum.

Therefore I want to go back and mine my notebook some more to see if there are other issues or themes that have been important in my life. I found a bunch about my dad and I realized that my relationship with my father is an important part of my life. So I can put yellow post its around my stories about fitting in and green post its around the entries about my relationship with my dad. Some of those entries about my dad were also about fitting in so I can put two post its on those--like Day Mary Poppins died--about how upset I was with dad about throwing my stuff away but also about not fitting in with my classmates.

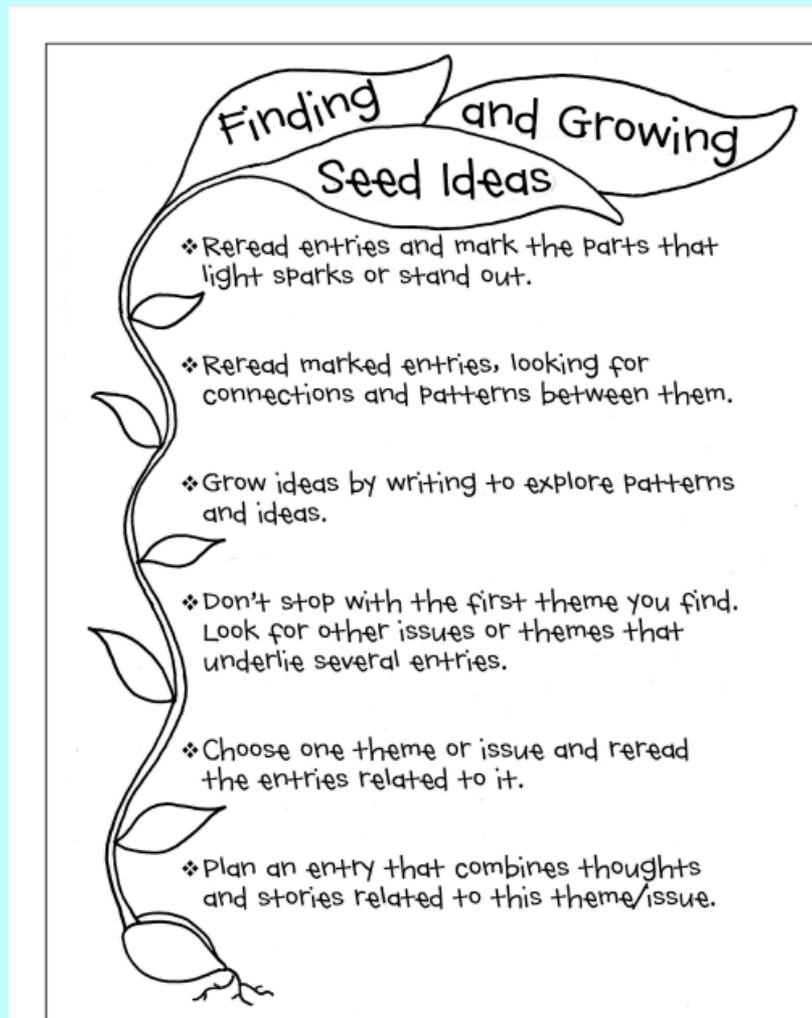
After I finished, I thought about which category felt most powerful and I chose fitting in. Now I have been reading all the entries that relate to my fitting in and I am getting ready to write. I have been thinking about what to say that is deep and true and surprising to me.

## Choosing Seed ideas-Part Two: I CAN CHOOSE MY SEED IDEA BY NARROWING IN ON A FOCUS IDEA OR THEME.

Active engagement:

Writers, what did you notice that I did?

**So writers today, here are the steps you will take as you find and grow seed ideas:**

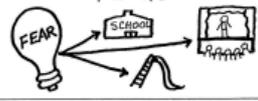
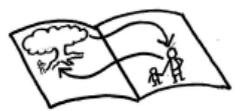
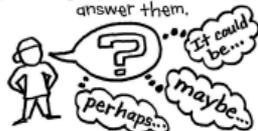


**Choosing Seed ideas-Part Two:  
I CAN CHOOSE MY SEED IDEA BY NARROWING IN ON A  
FOCUS IDEA OR THEME.**

**MID WORKSHOP INTERRUPTION:**

Writers, I want to talk to you about a concern I have. Some of you are filling in your notebooks but losing sight that you are on a journey to develop deeper, stronger ideas. Step back and take a more reflective stance. Dig a little deeper to uncover what is most important about your ideas. Ask yourself the following questions:

**Strategies for writing with Depth**

<p>Try to understand what is so important about your topic by asking questions.</p> 	<p>Take topics and territories you know well and ask, "Where's the mystery here?"</p> 
<p>Return to the topics, ideas, and themes you write about again and again, mining them for new stories and ideas.</p> 	<p>Imagine how an idea or topic applies to multiple situations in your life.</p> 
<p>Look for connections between entries that seem disconnected.</p> 	<p>Ask tough questions and try to answer them.</p> 
<p>Write with both BIG insights and SMALL details.</p> 	<p>Don't worry about finding "perfect" thoughts. Let your pencil fly freely!</p> 
<p>Write about the same idea or topic repeatedly, from different perspectives.</p> 	<p>Link your topic or idea to one thing, then another, then another.</p> 

What are the reasons I keep writing about this topic?  
I've written what's obvious about this--what else can I write?  
What do I want to show about myself? What does this say about me?

**Choosing Seed ideas-Part Two:  
I CAN CHOOSE MY SEED IDEA BY NARROWING IN ON A  
FOCUS IDEA OR THEME.**

Share: What did you do today as a writer?  
How were you able to write with depth?

Tonight, you will go off the beaten path. Try to do something new. Can you write about something from a different perspective? Ask yourself the following questions:

What are the reasons I keep writing about this topic?  
I've written what's obvious about this--what else can I write?  
What do I want to show about myself? What does this say about me?

But also consider the following as you push your thinking:

Ways to Push Our Thinking 

In other words...

That is...

The important thing about this is...

As I say this, I'm realizing...

This is giving me the idea that...

An example of this is...

This connects to...

I see...

The thought I have about this is...

To add on...

The reason for this is... Another reason is...

This is important because...

On the other hand...

This is similar to... this is different from...

This makes me think...

This proves...