Write On!
Life’s Important Events

Writing Warm Up
Spend at least five minutes writing about the topic below. Do not worry about spelling or grammar.

Write about an event in your life that has caused a change in you.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Developed by the National PASS Center with funding from the Strategies, Opportunities and Services to Out-of-School Youth (SOSOSY) Migrant Education Program Consortium Grant (2013)
Writing About You

You just wrote about yourself and how a certain event changed your life. It is fun to learn about people this way. There are many reasons people write or talk about themselves. Writing your story is a way to let your children know about the way you lived. Telling your story is a way to document history. It lets people know what it was like during your lifetime. Many books and movies are made about people’s lives. Have you ever read a book about someone’s life? Have you ever seen a movie about someone’s life? Do you know about Cesar Chavez? He was a Mexican-American farm worker who helped others. *Fight in the Fields* is a movie about him. If someone else writes about your life, they are writing your **biography**. When you write a story about your own life, it is called an **autobiography**. In this lesson, you will write about something from your life. Let’s get started.

Brainstorming: Coming Up with Ideas

Today you will write about an event in your life. Choose an event that is important to you. Here are some ideas:

- your first day of school
- the first day you rode a bike by yourself
- the day a brother or sister was born
- your first car
- learning to play a musical instrument
- your first date
- your first day of work
- a time you moved to a different place
- pick one of your own

Once you have decided which topic to write about, you will use a graphic organizer to help come up with ideas. You will write your topic in the rectangle and your reasons in the circles.
This is called a graphic organizer. It helps you organize your thoughts.

Here is an example:

**Topic**
The day I plowed my first field

- **Reason**
The pull of the...
- **Reason**
  A feeling of freedom
- **Reason**
  Changing gears
- **Reason**
  Helping out
- **Reason**
  Making straight rows
- **Reason**
  The smell of the dirt
Your Turn
Write your topic in the rectangle. List the reasons why that day was important to you in the circles.
Writing an Essay

The Opening: Paragraph One

When you write about yourself, you are the narrator. That means you are the person telling the story. How would you start to tell someone a story about your life? It doesn't have to be hard. Think about when you are talking with a friend. Think of your friend as your audience. You probably would say something like, “The first time I plowed a field was an important day to me.” In this exercise, you will write three sentences about your topic.

If you pretend that you are telling this to a friend, your writing will have your voice. Voice is the way you make your readers feel and the way your paper sounds when you read it aloud. Does it sound like the way you speak? Will your writing be funny? Sad? Angry?

Here is an example:

It was an important day when I plowed my first field. My mom and dad owned a small farm. We planted crops every spring and one year my dad asked me to help. I loved it. I got to drive the tractor by myself. It was kind of scary because I wasn’t used to driving it or the way it pulled. I really enjoyed trying to make straight rows. Helping my dad out was important to me. I was proud of myself after I plowed that field.
Your Turn

On the lines below, you will write at least three complete sentences about your topic.

1. Answer the question: What was an important day in your life?
2. Give one reason why this day was important to you.
3. Tell how you felt about the day.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Great job! You have finished your first paragraph. Your first paragraph of writing is called an introduction or an opening. It lets your audience know what you will be writing about.

Remember:
Try using adverbs and adjectives (words that describe things or actions) to make your writing interesting.
The Body: Paragraph Two

In the second paragraph, you will tell why this day was important. Write at least three sentences about the reason you listed in your first paragraph. Use details to help the reader understand why this was important to you.

Details help the reader create a picture in his mind. For example, if you write the word *flower*, your reader can pick any flower to think about. What flower are you thinking about right now? __________________________

If you want your reader to think of a special flower, then write the word *daisy*, or *sunflower*, or *rose*. Now the reader is thinking of the same flower you are.

*Hint:* Using details that make people think about the five senses—smell, touch, taste, sound, sight—makes your writing interesting to read. Use words that make people smell, feel, taste, hear, or see what you are describing.

Also use people’s names. Instead of saying, “My sister and I went to the store,” you could write “My sister, Maria, and I went to the store.” It is good to add the detail of your sister’s name. Now if a family member is reading what you wrote, they will know which sister went with you.

Here is an example:

Driving our small, red Farmall® tractor was the most exciting thing I did. I had ridden with dad many times, but this time he put me in the big driver’s seat. I got to sit behind the huge, black wheel and steer the tractor through the field. One of the hardest things was learning how to change the gears. I had to step on the clutch and then change the gear and then let the clutch up. I jerked the tractor several times. Although I tried hard to keep the tractor straight, that jerking made my rows crooked.
Your Turn
Write at least three sentences about the reason you listed in your first paragraph. Don’t forget to add details like names of people, descriptions, or important information.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
Yay! You have finished your second paragraph.

Remember:
Use words that make people smell, hear, feel, taste, and see.
**The Conclusion: Paragraph Three**

The final paragraph is called the conclusion. It ties your story together. It lets the reader know the story is over.

**Here is an example:**

In conclusion, one of the most important days in my life was the first day I plowed a field. I enjoyed driving the tractor. The best part of the day, however, was spending time with my dad.

**Your Turn**

On the lines below you will write your conclusion.

1. Your first sentence should remind your reader that this was an important day to you.
2. Your conclusion should start with a word to show that your essay is coming to an end. Here are some words to choose from: *Finally, So, To conclude.*
3. Remind the reader of the reason this day was important. Remind your reader how you felt about it.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Congratulations, you have finished writing a story about a day in your life.
Finishing Up

What you have written is called a rough draft. It is a great start. It may have mistakes in it. Some sentences may not sound good to you. Now is the time you can make it better.

Go back and read each sentence. This is your chance to correct mistakes. Did you spell the words correctly? Did you use capital letters and punctuation? Did you remember to use paragraphs and indent. If you need help in this area, more help can be found in the Reading on the Move lessons that can be found on the Internet at www.migrant.net. Use the checklist at the end of this lesson to help you correct your work.

Is your essay as good as you can make it? If you can, type it on a computer and print it out. If you do not have a computer, use your best handwriting and copy it over on a piece of paper or in the space provided here.

___________________________________
___________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Check it Out!

What's the Point in the Reading on the Move lesson series can also help you with writing your story. Find it on the Internet at www.migrant.net/migrant/publications/index.htm
Essay Writing Checklist

☐ I have three separate paragraphs: an opening, a body, and a conclusion.
☐ I use capital letters when needed.
☐ I use proper punctuation.

Writing Traits Scored in this Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Great Job</th>
<th>Almost There</th>
<th>Keep Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● There is a consistent tone.</td>
<td>● The tone is fairly consistent.</td>
<td>● The tone is unclear and inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● The audience wants to read more.</td>
<td>● It could be made more interesting.</td>
<td>● The piece is not interesting to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Sentences are complete.</td>
<td>● Sentences are complete.</td>
<td>● Sentences run together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Punctuation and capitalization are used correctly.</td>
<td>● Capital letters and periods are used.</td>
<td>● Punctuation and capitalization are inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Spelling is correct.</td>
<td>● Spelling is mostly correct.</td>
<td>● Several words are misspelled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words to Know

**biography:** a story that someone writes about another person’s life

**autobiography:** a story a person writes about his/her own life

**narrator:** the person telling the story

**audience:** the people who will read what you wrote

**voice:** word choice and tone that gives the writing its own personality

**rough draft:** the first copy of a piece of writing