

Unit 8.2: Memoirs and Transformative Decisions
English as a Second Language
6 weeks of instruction

STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)

Unit Summary:	Through the reading of memoirs, the student analyzes transformative decisions that individuals make. The student engages in discussions and connects to texts by writing a letter to the author of a memoir. The student writes his/her own personal memoir depicting a transformative decision he/she has made in his/her life.
Transversal Themes:	Culture, Human Interaction, Life Experiences, Skills and Competencies, Technology
Integration Ideas:	History, Social Studies

Essential Questions (EQ) and Enduring Understandings (EU)

- EQ1.** What is a transformative decision?
EU1. Transformative experiences are crossroads in our lives where decisions have to be made, actions are made that cannot be undone, we experience moments of enlightenment, or we meet an exceptional person.
- EQ2.** What motivates authors to write memoirs?
EU2. Life can change course in a moment. Some experiences alter our path slightly, while others ‘rock’ our worlds to the extent that life is never the same.
- EQ3.** How is writing an extension of ourselves?
EU3. When we write, we share our experiences with the world. We share the details of our lives that make us who we are. Writing is both an intellectual and personal activity.

Transfer (T) and Acquisition (A) Goals

- T1.** The student will leave the class able to apply his/her knowledge of transformative decisions to the materials he/she reads. He/she will understand the relationship between transformative decisions in memoirs and how these decisions fuel human experience.
- T2.** The student will leave the class with the necessary ability to connect many texts and life experiences together. He/she will begin to look deeply at the authors of the works they read and will connect, not just to the written work, but to the person who wrote it. The student will be able to research and produce a letter to an author, expressing interest in both the author and his/her works.
- T3.** The student will leave the class with the ability to engage in deep and meaningful discussions with peers and teachers based on memoirs that have been read or heard aloud. He/she will bring his/her personal experiences to bear in these discussions, making personal connections to the text or illuminating key details or passages.
- T4.** The student will leave the class able to apply his/her knowledge of the elements of a memoir to write his/her own memoir. He/she will adapt writing techniques he/she has seen and will incorporate them into his/her own writing. The student will learn to share personal experiences in a manner that is balanced and honest.
- The student acquires skills to...*
- A1.** Read and analyze memoirs, making connections between memoir and his/her own experiences or the experiences of family members or friends.
- A2.** Engage in and extend discussions about memoirs with peers and the teacher.
- A3.** Research an author and write a letter to the author, making connection between the student’s life and the author’s own life and work.
- A4.** Consider important moments in his/her own life and to write a memoir based on personal life experiences.

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Puerto Rico Core Standards (PRCS)	
Listening	
8.L.1d	Listen, respond to, analyze, give, and discuss complex instructions, statements, and directions; answer and formulate closed and open-ended questions.
Speaking	
8.S.2	Respond orally to closed and open-ended questions.
8.S.2a	Memorize, analyze, and follow increasingly complex instructions and directions.
8.S.2b	Describe, explain, support, discuss, and synthesize information to express self.
8.S.2c	Answer and formulate closed and open-ended questions.
8.S.3	Use a growing set of academic words, content-specific words, synonyms, and antonyms to tell, retell, explain, and analyze stories, personal experiences, and current/world events with increasing precision and differences in meaning while speaking.
8.S.5	Describe, explain, and evaluate text, self, and world experiences, express thoughts and opinions to discuss current events, concepts, themes, characters, plot, and conflict resolution.
8.S.5a	Make predictions and inferences, as well as draw conclusions from listening to a variety of texts, performances, and multimedia sources.
8.S.5b	Adjust language choices according to purpose, task, and audience.
Reading	
8.R.3I	Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in an informational text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
8.R.3Ia	Interpret cause and effect relationships.
8.R.5I	Analyze the structure an author uses to organize an informational text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
8.R.6I	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from others.
Writing	
8.W.2	Write informational texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
8.W.4	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, revising, editing, use editing marks, rewriting, and publishing.
8.W.5	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
8.W.8	Write routinely for short and extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) for a variety of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. This includes, but is not limited to, narrative, persuasive, and descriptive writing and knowledge of their qualities.
Language	
8.LA.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
8.LA.2a	Use advanced punctuation (e.g., comma, ellipsis, dash) correctly.



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8.LA.2b	Spell correctly.
8.LA.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
8.LA.3a	Choose language that expresses ideas clearly, recognizing direct and indirect objects and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
8.LA.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on appropriate reading and content, choosing flexibly from a variety of strategies.
8.LA.4a	Use context clues to help determine the meaning of a word or phrase.
8.LA.4b	Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots correctly (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
8.LA.4c	Consult print and digital reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauri) to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

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STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)			STAGE 2 – (Assessment Evidence)		STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)
Alignment to Learning Objectives	Content Focus (The student understands...)	Content Vocabulary	Performance Tasks	Other Evidence	Learning Activities
<p>PRCS: 8.L.1d 8.S.3 8.S.5 8.R.3l 8.R.3la 8.R.5l 8.R.6l</p> <p>EQ/EU: EQ1/EU1</p> <p>T/A: T1/A1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to read independently. How to share ideas with others. How to consider ideas encountered in memoirs. How to discuss ideas with peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main idea Memoir Transformative 		<p><i>Decision Making Reading Log</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the student reads texts, the teacher has him/her complete the decision-making reading log to document the decisions characters make (See Attachment: 8.2 Other Evidence – Decision Making Reading Log). The teacher creates a Word Wall using unit vocabulary and new concepts/words students encounter in texts they read during the unit (See Attachment: 8.1 Other Evidence – Using Word Walls to Improve Instruction). The teacher has the student keep a word journal for this unit or for the entire school year (See Attachment: 8.2 Other Evidence – Word Journal). 	<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><i>Reading and Analyzing Memoirs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher reviews the features of a memoir with the student and has him/her compare and contrast memoirs from other texts (See Attachment 8.2: Learning Activity – Features of Memoirs). The teacher uses quotes from the memoir of Camara Laye and has the student identify if the quote is specific to his culture, or whether it represents a universal theme. For example: “We went back to look for her. We found her crushing millet for the evening meal,” or “You are nothing but an ungrateful son. Any excuse is good enough for you to run away from your mother” (See Attachment: 8.2 Text – Camara Laye Memoir, page 24). <p><i>Writing Memoirs Rubric</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher shares the Writing Memoirs Rubric with the student. The student is encouraged to review the rubric and ask questions. The student’s job is to understand what is expected of him/her when he/she writes the memoir later in the unit. The



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					<p>teacher revisits the rubric throughout the unit with the student to determine understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• http://www.slideshare.net/krobinson-ucn/memoir-rubric-9953981
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STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)		STAGE 2 – (Assessment Evidence)			STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)
Alignment to Learning Objectives	Content Focus <i>(The student understands...)</i>	Content Vocabulary	Performance Tasks	Other Evidence	Learning Activities
<p>PRCS: 8.L.1d 8.S.3 8.R.3l 8.R.3la</p> <p>EQ/EU: EQ2/EU2</p> <p>T/A: T2/A2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The connection between an author and his/her written works. That a memoir is a reflection of the self. The Writing Process. Prefixes (pre, un, re, pro). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memoirs Transformation 	<p><i>For complete descriptions, refer to the section ‘Performance Tasks’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><i>Engaging in Literature Circles</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The memoirs for independent reading relate to the unit focus: Memoirs and Transformative Decisions. The choices for independent reading are within the grade-band and English Language proficiency. TEXT FOCUS: The student independently reads texts that relate to the unit focus but are also memoirs, the subject of the anchor text. Through literature circles, the student determines the central idea; analyzes the author’s structure and purpose; analyzes the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text; and determines the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text. As the 		<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><i>Engaging in Discussions about Memoirs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher creates structured, independent reading of memoirs per above activity. As all students are reading the same text, the teacher provides opportunities for them to collaborate in reading and analyzing the texts. Note: The teacher makes sure the choices for independent reading are appropriate for the individual students as each has a different language proficiency level. The texts should be within the grades 6-8 text-complexity or above for advanced readers. The teacher has each student set a schedule and goal for his/her reading and keep track of it in a reading log or journal as he/she engages in discussions about Memoirs. Sample memoirs to use in the class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A Summer Life</i>, Gary Soto <i>At the End of Words: A Daughter’s Memoir</i>, Miriam Stone <i>Bad Boy: A Memoir</i>, Walter Dean Myers <i>Chinese Cinderella</i>, Adeline Yen Mah <i>The Circuit</i>, Francisco Jimenez <i>Guts</i>, Gary Paulsen



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			student participates in literature circles, he/she engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions about the text; presents claims and findings with relevant facts, details, and examples from the text; and writes routinely over extended time frames in a reading log/journal.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Growing Up</i>, Russell Baker○ <i>Persepolis</i>, Marjane Satrapi○ <i>Stitches</i>, David Small○ <i>Zlata's Diary</i>, Zlata Filipovic
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Alignment to Learning Objectives	Content Focus (The student understands...)	Content Vocabulary	Performance Tasks	Other Evidence	Learning Activities
<p>PRCS: 8.L.1d 8.S.2 8.S.3 8.S.5 8.R.3l 8.R.3la 8.W.2</p> <p>EQ/EU: EQ3/EU3</p> <p>T/A: T3/A3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffixes-(ing, ation, ion, able). Main idea/theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student works with a partner reading the same text to record his/her efforts in his/her reading log or journal. This is ongoing throughout the reading of memoirs. The teacher has the student select 3 to 4 words that impede his/her understanding of the memoir as he/she reads. 		<p>Word Detective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word Detective: The teacher selects Seven vocabulary words from a text and has the student complete a Word Detective. 	<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p>Write a Letter to an Author</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student writes a reading response in the format of a letter to an author of a memoir. In the letter, the student relates how he/she connects to the life-altering decision that the author makes. The student provides details and examples from the memoir of events or experiences from the author’s life that triggered strong emotions. Lastly, the student concludes the letter with a realization or lesson learned about his/her own life from reading the memoir. <p><u>Pre-reading Activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion question: “Would you leave everything you have ever known and loved for a strange land, knowing it would break your mother’s heart?” The teacher reads aloud to the class facts about the author, Guinea, and colonial Africa. <p><u>During-Reading Activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has the student read the memoir, “The Dark Child,” by Camara Laye (See Attachment: 8.2 Text – Camara Laye Memoir). As the student reads the story, the teacher



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					<p>has him/her complete a decision-making reading log, which he/she uses to document the decisions the author makes (See Attachment: 8.2 Other Evidence – Decision Making Reading Log).</p> <p><u>After-Reading Activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher has the student re-read the memoir and complete a dialogue journal, which he/she uses to make connections to experiences of the author (See Attachment: 8.2 Other Evidence – Dialogue Journal). • The teacher has the student complete a T-chart, with one column for “Thoughts” and one column for “Emotions.” In the “Thoughts” column, the student lists specific details from the memoir that triggered a new realization or way of thinking about someone, someplace, or something. In the “Emotions” column, the student lists specific details from the book that triggered emotions in him/her. After completing the T-chart, the student draws conclusions about the information he/she listed in both columns using the following reflection questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What link did you discover between your thoughts and emotions and the characters or events in the memoir? ○ What did you learn about yourself after reading the memoir? <p><i>Rubric Letter to the Author</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://cavemanenglish.com
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					pbworks.com/w/page/8952528/Rubric%20for%20Letter%20to%20an%20Author
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STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)		STAGE 2 – (Assessment Evidence)		STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)	
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<p>PRCS: 8.S.3 8.W.2 8.W.4 8.W.5 8.W.8 8.LA.2a 8.LA.2b 8.LA.3 8.LA.4a 8.LA.4b 8.LA.4c</p> <p>EQ/EU: EQ3/U3</p> <p>T/A: T4/A4</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Drafting Editing Free-writing Prefixes Publishing Revising Root word Structure 	<p><i>For complete descriptions, refer to the section ‘Performance Tasks’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><i>Personal Memoirs About Transformative Decisions</i></p> <p><u>Brainstorming</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has the student make a list of significant moments in his/her life when he/she made transformative decisions. The teacher has the student select three ideas from his/her list that trigger strong emotions and memories. The teacher has him/her do a one-page, free-writing exercise for each idea, starting with the prompt, “I will always remember...” When the student runs out of ideas, the teacher has him/her come back to the prompt and continue writing. <p><u>Drafting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has the student do a memory map of one idea from his/her lists that 	<p><i>Writing Rubric</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization (Exemplary, Effective, Adequate, Limited, Minimal, Inadequate) Development-(Exemplary, Effective, Adequate, Limited, Minimal, Inadequate) Sentence Structure--(Exemplary, Effective, Adequate, Limited, Minimal, Inadequate) Word Choice/Grammar Usage--(Exemplary, Effective, Adequate, Limited, Minimal, Inadequate) Mechanics--(Exemplary, Effective, Adequate, Limited, Minimal, Inadequate) Create a Writing Assessment Score Sheet (a holistic score for the Writing Rubric) for example: The Organization includes (5 complete paragraphs, strong introduction, logical progression, strong conclusion, use of transitional words to convey relationships between ideas and paragraphs, does not repeat) holistic score 	<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><i>Learning How to Write My Memoir</i></p> <p>Grammar & Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-second spelling and grammar check activity: The teacher has students sit in two lines, each facing a partner. The teacher sets a timer to 30 seconds and has students edit each other’s work using the editing marks. After 30 seconds, the student at the beginning of one line moves to the end of his/her line and everyone moves up one seat. The second line of students stays in place. It is best if the teacher gives students an editing focus. For example, the students are instructed to only focus on checking spelling or end punctuation. You can do this activity at different points in the revision and editing process using different revision and editing foci. For warm-up activities, the teacher chooses a prefix, a suffix or a root word, and has students search for words with this particular prefix, suffix or root word in the text they are reading for the lesson. The teacher has them keep the list of words in their word journals. The teacher creates a word game chart where students combine prefixes, root words

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			<p>he/she wants to write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draw a detailed illustration of the moment when you made your life transforming decision. ○ Use the senses to illustrate details about the memory. ○ What did you see around you? ○ What smells were around? ○ What and how did you feel? ○ What things did you touch? ○ How would you describe the taste of the particular moment? <p><u>Revising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher has the student look at his/her memory from a different point of view. "What if the story were told from another person's perspective, such as someone who figures prominently in his/her memoir? How would the story change?" • The student has someone 	<p>is___.</p> <p><i>First, Second, and Published Drafts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-created prefix, suffix, and root word quizzes 	<p>and suffixes to create new words (See Attachment: 8.2 Learning Activity – Word Game Chart).</p> <p><i>Writing Process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher reviews the steps of the writing process (below) and places them on the board making a circular representation with arrows going back and forth from each step. The illustration shows students that the writing process is a circular and not a linear process and that you move back and forth between each step. The teacher posts this process on the wall in the classroom as a reminder. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prewriting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Draw a picture. b) Talk it out. c) Make a web. 2) Write a rough draft. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Guess and go. b) Get ideas on paper. 3) Revise. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vary beginnings of sentences. b) Vary length of sentences. c) Use more vivid words. (Both nouns and verbs) d) Avoid overused words. Use "instead of" words. 4) Edit your work. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Peer conference. b) Correct spelling. c) Check punctuation. d) Correct Grammar. 5) Type your work. Publish!
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who was present in his/her life at the time he/she made a transformative decision read the draft. The student asks him/her to share any details he/she remembers. The student includes some of these ideas into his/her draft.

Editing

- The teacher has the student peer-edit his/her work using editing marks (See Attachment: 8.2 Writing Tool – Editing Marks).
- The teacher has the student reference a dictionary to confirm correct spellings of words.

Publishing

- The teacher holds an authors' circle and has the student share his/her work. The author's circle can take place in the classroom or at a local bookstore/library/coffee shop and the student can invite other teachers, students, parents, and people from the community.



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			<p><i>Writing Memoirs Rubric</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The teacher uses the Writing Memoirs Rubric to score the memoir. The student should be very familiar with the rubric at this point and know what is expected of him/her. http://www.slideshare.net/krobinson-ucn/memoir-rubric-9953981		
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STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)

Suggested Literature Connections

- **Mariama Ba**
 - *So Long a Letter (1979)*
- **Ferdinand Oyono**
 - *Houseboy*
- **Chinua Achebe**
 - *Things Fall Apart*
- **Esmeralda Santiago**
 - *When I was Puerto Rican*
- **Gary Soto**
 - *A Summer Life*
- **Miriam Stone**
 - *At the End of Words: A Daughter's Memoir*
- **Walter Dean Myers**
 - *Bad Boy: A Memoir*
- **Adeline Yen Mah**
 - *Chinese Cinderella*
- **Francisco Jimenez**
 - *The Circuit*
- **Gary Paulsen**
 - *Guts*
- **Russell Baker**
 - *Growing Up*
- **Marjane Satrapi**
 - *Persepolis*
- **David Small**
 - *Stitches*
- **Zlata Filipovic**
 - *Zlata's Diary*

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Additional Resources

- Resource for editing writing for punctuation: http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/cavalcade/PDF/jan2004/p21-22_survival_guide_semicolon.pdf
- Resource for editing sentence structure: http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/cavalcade/PDF/sept2004/reality_grammar_p22_to_p24.pdf
- Resource about using the senses to craft descriptive memoirs: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/memoir/draft/pdfs/sensememory.pdf>
- Tips for writing a memoir: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXM1bqTCNsM>

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Performance Tasks

Engaging in Literature Circles

- The memoirs for independent reading relate to the unit focus, Memoirs and Transformative Decisions. The choices for independent reading are within the grade-band and English Language proficiency.
- **TEXT FOCUS:** Students independently read texts that relate to the unit focus but are also memoirs, the subject of the anchor text. Through literature circles, the student determines the central idea; analyzes author's structure and purpose; analyzes the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text; and determines the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text. As the student participates in literature circles, he/she engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions about the text; presents claims and findings with relevant facts, details, and examples from the text; and writes routinely over extended time frames in his/her reading log/journal.

Personal Memoirs About Transformative Decisions

Brainstorming

- The teacher has the student make a list of significant moments in his/her life when he/she made transformative decisions.
- The teacher has the student select three ideas from his/her list that trigger strong emotions and memories. The teacher has him/her do a one-page, free-writing exercise for each idea, starting with the prompt, "I will always remember..." When the student runs out of ideas, the teacher has him/her come back to the prompt and continue writing.

Drafting

- The teacher has the student do a memory map of one idea from his/her lists that he/she wants to write about:
 - Draw a detailed illustration of the moment when you made your life transforming decision.
 - Use the senses to illustrate details about the memory.
 - What did you see around you?
 - What smells were around?
 - What and how did you feel?
 - What things did you touch?
 - How would you describe the taste of the particular moment?

Revising

- The teacher has the student look at his/her memory from a different point of view. "What if the story were told from another person's perspective, someone who figures prominently in his/her memoir?" How would the story change?
- The student has someone who was present in his/her life at the time he/she made a transformative decision read the draft. The student asks him/her to share any details he/she remembers. The student includes some of these ideas into his/her draft.

Editing

- The teacher has the student peer-edit his/her work using editing marks (See Attachment: 8.2 Writing Tool – Editing Marks).
- The teacher has the student reference a dictionary to confirm correct spellings of words.

Publishing

- The teacher holds an authors' circle and has the student share his/her work. The author's circle can take place in the classroom or at a local bookstore/library/coffee shop and the student can invite other teachers, students, parents, and people from the community.



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Writing Memoirs Rubric

- The teacher uses the Writing Memoirs Rubric to score the memoir. The student should be very familiar with the rubric at this point and know what is expected of him/her.
- <http://www.slideshare.net/krobinson-ucn/memoir-rubric-9953981>
- Literature Circles Expectations and Rubrics: <http://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?code=J64AAW&sp=yes&>

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Suggested Sample Lessons

- Lesson on writing memoirs: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/family-memoir-getting-acquainted-998.html?tab=4#tabs>
- Lesson on using interviews, photos and memories to write memoirs: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/introducing-each-other-interviews-17.html?tab=4#tabs>
- Lesson on prefixes and creating a word journal: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/using-word-journal-create-20.html?tab=4#tabs>
- <http://writingfix.com/genres/narrative.htm>
- Eight Narrative Writing Lessons solely intended to give guidance and suggestions for 6th-12th grade. These could be adapted to 8th grade.