

SHORT MEMOIR ASSIGNMENT & CHECKLIST

See the NFSB evaluation breakdown for the descriptors of work from 1-5, F-A, or 0-100%

The author of a memoir is concerned with **re-creating** the times that s/he has lived through. Therefore, once in the act of re-creation and re-collection, we are already in the realm of embellishment. A memoir can be focused on a particular time period, an event, an experience or series of like experiences, or centred on a value, quality, or theme about which the author feels strongly. This window is chosen by the author on purpose, to put under the microscope, to reflect on its value or importance in the author's life. So often, this reflection is a meditation on a realization or epiphany the author has had which s/he shares with the reader. In this way it is unlike an autobiography which portends to tell the whole story of a person's life as a cataloguing of events. So the memoirist gets to **select something significant** in her or his life in order to examine it and **what it has meant** to her/him in terms of personal development and life lessons.

The memoirist often has a **reminiscent or nostalgic tone** when talking about the past, sometimes using her/his own story to lament on the current state of things. The voice is highly personal and individualistic, lending itself to the unique use and combination of various conventions such as sense of humour, melodrama, diction. The memoirist uses structures and features of **narrative storytelling** to draw the reader into her/his story in a way that is captivating, sometimes raw, and often unflinching and honest. The goal is to create a sense of intimacy and rapport with the reader – to be relatable and believable. In order to do this, the memoirist must be conscious of how they choose to represent real people, and that any embellishment, overstatement, or hyperbole in the description of events is seen for what it is, and not mistaken for dishonesty. This is the careful tightrope of creative non-fiction: how to re-create a story in an engaging way without betraying the reader's (or anyone else's) trust.

Total # of points lost due to missed checkpoints and lates, _____% will be deducted from this competency.

PRODUCTION Competency Criteria (total _____%)

CONTEXT

- Is this a memoir? i.e.** it is a true re-counting of an aspect of your life for the purposes of sharing, enlightening, informing others. ALL five literary elements of narrative: setting, character(s) / YOU, conflict, plot, and theme
 - Does it have **IMPACT?** (how well it interrelates the 5 elements AND audience, purpose, voice, form, style, and language?)
 - Is your memoir well-developed, **detailed**, in-depth in terms of characterization (of YOU), plot... BUT at the same time is it **concise** and tight, like the models, focusing on **an** aspect in your life – did you resist the urge to tell your whole life story or wrap everything up with a tidy bow? Life is not like that.
 - Is your theme/idea/concept developed **BOTH literally and figuratively**, BOTH concretely and abstractly, i.e. could we analyze it in class because it has those deeper levels of meaning built in?
 - Is your **choice of narrator** interesting, riveting? Have you used the POV chosen to the maximum effect?
 - Have you adjusted the register in your memoir to create rapport with the reader – is the reader invested in you – have you created a level of intimacy and trustworthiness that is engaging and believable to read
 - Have you created **a consistent tone and mood?** (e.g. ironic, suspenseful, melodramatic, nostalgic, etc.)
 - Minimum word limit 800 (2 pages typed FULL, Maximum word limit 1700 words (4 pages typed FULL, NO more. 1.5 line spacing, not single, 1-inch margins etc.)
- ___ -1% for each MLA formatting infraction

STYLE

Structure and Features of Text

- A **LEAD** that captures the reader's interest
- Use and control of a **structural device** (from the workshops – e.g., diary/journal entries, artefacts, famous quotes, flashback, stream-of-consciousness monologue, etc) OR use the structure provided
- Development:** features of narration including description, dialogue, anecdote, flashback
- Organization:** a rationale for prioritizing and sequencing ideas and events; use of paragraphs and transitions; flow and coherence

Codes and Conventions of Language

- Literary techniques:** simile, metaphor, motif, pathos, foreshadowing, repetition, personification, imagery, symbolism, irony, etc.
- Diction (for effect):** word choice
- Punctuation and other print cues (for effect)**
- Syntax (sentence variety for effect):** active or passive voice; simple, compound, and/or complex sentences, fragments
- Grammar (correctness):** spelling, punctuation, sentence structure (parallel structure, agreement) etc.

PROCESS

- Do all workshops and complete all class exercises, in class and continued at home.
- After each class **for homework**, type and **weave together** a continuous rough draft of your memoir.
- Complete all revision exercises shown in class.
- Peer- and self- review of FULL typed RD – labelling techniques used and making notes to self about revisions.

SUBMIT

- Present as follows: GC memoir, typed RD with labelled techniques, peer review comments and notes to self, all rough work including ALL class workshop exercises handwritten, this checklist **AND** reflection and its checklist