

Writing from personal experience

WHEN SOMEONE WRITES ABOUT THEIR LIFE OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, IT'S CALLED AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING.

Autobiography is a genre in itself, but it can also be used in other types of writing, such as a speech or an advice leaflet, to give a more personal touch.

A life less ordinary

Everyday life may not seem very interesting, but readers find other people's lives fascinating. Earliest memories, embarrassing incidents, or particularly happy, sad, scary, or proud moments all make good topics. Readers also enjoy finding out about experiences that are very different from their own, such as celebrating certain festivals or living in different places.



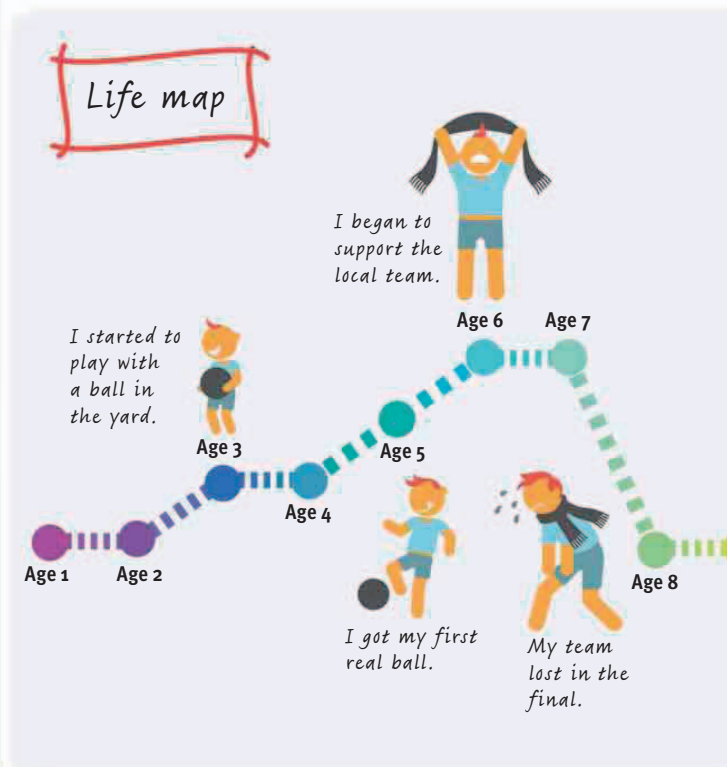
- Don't make up a whole experience, but it is acceptable to **embellish** a story slightly if it is going to make the story more **dramatic** or **entertaining**.

SEE ALSO

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This is my life

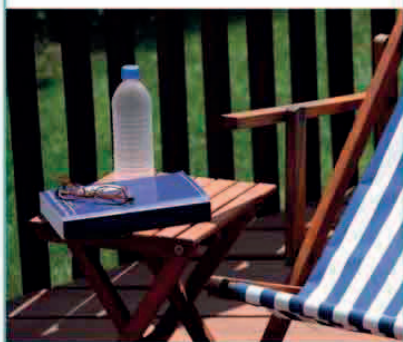
When writing a complete autobiography (from birth to the present day), it's important to work out the right order of events. One way to do this is to create a life map. This is a visual way of plotting events, and can be accompanied by pictures to suggest memories. Rather than listing every single memory, writers often give an autobiography a theme. For example, it might focus on a struggle from rags to riches or a love of sports.



REAL WORLD

Travel writing

Travel writing is very different from the text found in travel guidebooks, which usually lists information. Pieces of travel writing recount the author's own travel experiences, including his or her feelings, opinions, and amusing anecdotes.



Edited highlights

Autobiographical writing is informative but also needs to be entertaining, so it shouldn't list boring details. For example, there's no need to give a minute-by-minute account of a game. It's much more interesting to tell the reader about feelings and reactions, such as fear, pride, or disappointment.

I felt sick and panicky all morning before the big game. We needed to win and I'd finally made the team. I had everything to prove.

Make it real

An autobiography tells stories, and the best stories include plenty of description. Describing sights, sounds, emotions, and tastes will allow the reader to picture the experience as vividly as the writer can remember it.

It was a hot night in the stadium. The noise of the supporters was deafening, and their chants boomed across the field like a roll of thunder in a storm.

Add character

Autobiographical writing needs to showcase the writer's unique personality. Therefore, it often includes his or her personal opinions, likes and dislikes, strange habits, and favorite vocabulary. Funny details add humor and give the piece character.

I was wearing my lucky socks. I had eaten my usual peanut butter sandwich and pet the cat three times. I was ready to play the game of my life!

You and me

An autobiography will naturally include the words *I* and *my*, but it can also be effective to address the reader using *you*. This is called direct address and helps to create a relationship with readers, making them feel more involved in the story.

I'm sure you've been on the losing side before, or watched your team miss that crucial shot. So you know what it feels like to be emotionally crushed by a loss.

