

Memoir is the most powerful of nonfiction forms because it goes to the deepest roots of personal experience. Unlike autobiography, which covers an entire life, the memoirist focuses on one event. Memoir is a window into a life.

—William Zinsser, *Writing to Learn* (1988)

Autobiography	An account of a person's life, written by that person
Biography	An account of a person's life, written by someone else
Memoir	A written account of one's memory of a certain event or person
Memoirs	A written collection of one's memories of specific events or people

## Begin a unit on personal narrative writing by asking your students the following questions:

- *“How many of you have people in your life who tell you stories about their lives?”*
- *“What kinds of stories do you remember hearing that were fun?”*
- *“How many of you like to tell stories about important things that you have experienced in your life?”*
- *“To whom do you tell your stories?”*

## Level 2/3 "I" Planner

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

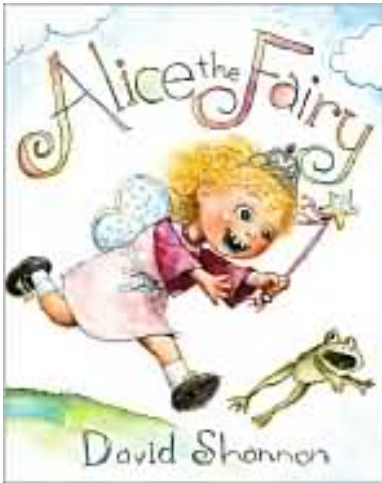
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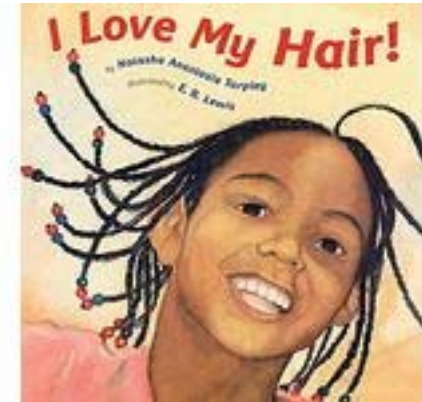
Reflection:

- Memorable

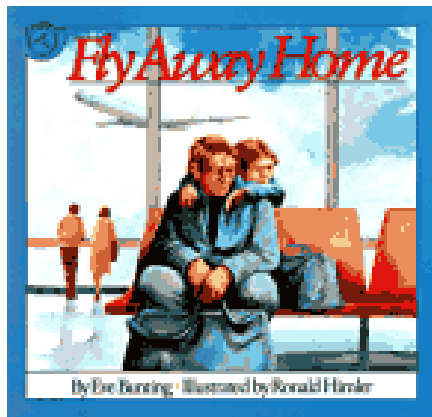
- Specific event/incident



**Level 1:** Alice the Fairy, by David Shannon



**Level 2:** I Love My Hair, by Natasha Harpley



**Level 3:** Fly Away Home, by Eve Bunting

# Characteristics of Personal Narrative

- Uses *I* or *we* (first person)
- Has voice
- Has a reflection
- About an incident that really happened
- Appeals to senses
- Logical sequence
- Shows emotion or feelings
- Has a beginning, middle, and end
- Strong verbs
- Usually in past tense
- Plenty of description
- Often includes conversation
- Shows more than tells
- Might be embellished

# Elements of Fiction

- Characters
- Setting
- Problem
- Solution

# Structure

- Beginning
- Middle
- End



# The Write Tools® Workshops

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November 13 – **Personal Narrative**

November 14 – Persuasive

## Fresno, CA

November 13 – **Personal Narrative**

November 14 – Persuasive

## Sacramento, CA

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## Springdale, AR

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