

Snapshot Autobiography Project: Directions

What is history? Many people describe history as the study of the past, a huge collection of names, dates, facts that you are expected to memorize. The goal of this assignment is for you to discover other meanings of history and to recognize why it is important to study history.

In this project, you will think about the meaning of history by describing and illustrating several events from your own life, finding a witness to provide another description of one of those events, and thinking about the similarities and differences between the two descriptions.

Part I: Snapshot Autobiography

- 1) Take an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper and fold it “accordion” style (like a letter you’d mail), so that it forms 3 panels, or counting front and back, you should have 6 panels.
- 2) The first panel is the cover for your Snapshot Autobiography.
 - Give your autobiography a title (for example, “Snapshots from the life of Kathy”)
 - You may illustrate if you wish.
- 3) On the back panel write a brief “About the Author” section: include your name, place and date of birth, and anything else you want people to know about you. You may include a self-portrait if you like.
- 4) This leaves four panels. In the first of these panels, write about your birth. In the other three panels, you are going to write about important events that have shaped you as a person. This means that you are selecting a total of three important events (besides your birth) from your life.
 - For each of these three events, write a narrative (story) describing what happened. Make sure you describe it from start to finish: pretend that someone who doesn’t know you will be reading your story and trying to understand it. Be sure to include details!
 - Illustrate each event with a small, hand-written picture.

Part II: Homework: Snapshot Biography – Another Perspective

Now is your chance to talk to somebody else who remembers one of the important events you chose.

- 1) Select ONE of the events you wrote about.
- 2) Find somebody who remembers that event. For example, your parents, siblings, or friends will probably be familiar with some of the events you described.
- 3) Ask the person you chose to tell you their version of the story. In order to make sure that you are getting *their* version, ask them an open question about the event, For example, “Mom, do you remember fifth grade when Jane and I stopped being friends? Can you tell me what you remember about what happened?”
 - Take careful notes of the interview. Note which parts of their story differ from your own.
 - Make sure to thank the interviewee for their participation in this project!

Name of the person being interviewed: _____

Relation to you: _____

Event from Snapshot Autobiography they will be corroborating (Cross-checking):

Interview Notes

What do the two stories have in common?

What is different about the two stories?
