

Resources: The Memoir Group

Books about Memoir Writing:

Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life, by Anne Lamott

On Writing, a Memoir of the Craft, by Stephen King.

Notable Memoirs:

Gay Heartbreak and Triumph, by Steven Skelly – a collection of memoirs, including a writing by Patrick Hamilton

Life in the Jungle, by Leonard Woolf – the husband of Virginia Woolf, this novel focuses on his time in Ceylon

The Tender Bar: A Memoir, by J.R. Moehringer – recommended by Louise Farmer Smith -- https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/144977.The_Tender_Bar

What She Ate: Six Remarkable Women and the Food that Tells their Stories, by Laura Shapiro – more of a collection of short bios than memoirs – but the writer uses her passion about food to anchor the stories about the six women, including Eleanor Roosevelt, Eva Braun, and Dorothy Wordsworth -
- https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32969710-what-she-ate?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=z8kNXU61a2&rank=1

Washington Post Magazine article re: capturing stories of life during the pandemic -- https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/how-people-are-writing-the-history-of-the-pandemic-through-everyday-journals/2021/03/04/6dd0524c-67fb-11eb-886d-5264d4ceb46d_story.html

Publishing Resources:

Emily Barosse, founder and CEO of Bold Story Press -- www.boldstory.com

Research Tools & Resources:

www.wunderground.com/history -- allows writers to research the weather conditions for a particular place at a particular time in history

<https://welcome.storyworth.com/> - allows stories from your life to be captured for loved ones.

The Narrative Arc includes:

Beginning

Intriguing and engaging opening sentence/paragraph.

Exposition

Set the scene

Provide Background

Introduce Characters

Show crises, conflict, and desire.

*Inciting Incident—The internal or external challenge/conflict/ obstacle(s) that instigate further actions, change, and transformations.

Middle Rising Action

Building Tension

Turning Point/Climax/Crescendo

Written in scenes and narrative.

Should use forms of dialogue

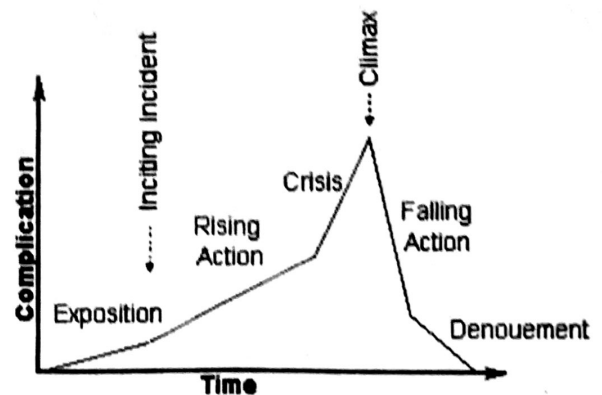
End

Falling Action—Time to slow things down

Written in scenes and narrative.

Should Use forms of dialogue.

Wrap Up: Conclusion, denouement (payoff at the end), lessons learned, and reflection.



Marilyn W. Smith, PhD
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Sixteen Smart Guidelines for Writing Memoir

Avoid little annoying words...so, as, just, only, very, really, like, but, had, got, it.

Try not to begin sentences with *there was, there are, there were*.

Avoid beginning sentences with “I” or “it.”

Use strong adjectives and specific vocabulary.

Avoid repetitions of words or phrases, especially within the same sentence or paragraph. Vary your word choices.

Develop strong, interesting, catchy opening sentences and paragraphs that immediately engage the reader. Avoid beginning with data (dates, etc.), the word “I” or the word “It” if possible.

Show don’t tell; do not summarize for the reader.

Avoid the verb “to be” and forms of the verb “to be” such as *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been, will have been, will be, should have been*, etc. Avoid verbs such as *put, give, get, have, had, went, and work*. Use precise, descriptive verbs.

Maintain consistent verb tense. Check for subject-verb agreement.

Include all 5 + 1 senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, plus feeling/emotion).

Use direct, indirect, and internal dialogue; follow the proper dialogue conventions.

Zoom in on unique details.

Use Active voice; avoid Passive voice.

Avoid using who, what, when, where, why, and how as nouns. Find the noun you need.

For stories (fiction or memoir) follow the path of the Narrative Arc.

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