UNIT STRUCTURE

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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- get an idea about what a memoir is,
- write a memoir.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit makes an attempt to acquaint you with the steps that you could follow in order to write a diary. Writing a diary is fun. It makes you feel better about yourself. It also reminds you of the past. It is a good place to store your memories in. We shall focus on the procedure involved in writing a diary.

13.3 WHAT IS A MEMOIR

In trying to define a memoir, we must understand that it is a different genre from autobiography. A quick solution to understanding the difference between the two lies in the selection of a preposition: autobiography is the story of a life; memoir is a story a life. A memoir is more intimate and focuses on emotion and perspective whereas an autobiography outlines the events and experiences of the author in a factual way. A memoir is therefore a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources by the writer.

13.3.1 Historical Evolution of Memoir

The literary memoir has recently surged in popularity but it has been there for a long time. In 1920, Virginia Woolf was part of "The Memoir Club" a group convened by Molly Mc Carthy with many of the writers and artists we know of as "The Bloomsbury Group" Before that, the groundwork for the memoir was laid by many of the great essayists.

The first recorded instance of memoir. came in 1798 from the German philosopher Friedrich Schlegel. In the 19th Century and early 20th century, memoirs were still sparse. Later, writers such as Frank Conroy, Maya Ajigelou, Maxine Hong Kingston and Joyce Maynard capped their careers with memoirs. Brothers Geoffrey and Tobias Wolff s memoirs attracted a lot of attention with respect to their subject matter- Geoffrey's "The Duke of Deception" revolved around their notorious father. Tobias "This Boy Life" regarding the stepfather carved the way for the next big memoir.

In 1994, the trend had started accelerating but before it slipped into the speed it has now attained, critic William Gass wrote about the negative aspect of the memoir in 'Harper's', where he scorned celebrities whose tabloid lives are presented in memoirs that are not worth reading at all.

LET US KNOW



Mary Gordon in 'The Shadow Man' (1996) speculates about her father who died when she was seven, using conversations and at one point actually writing in his voice. This is presented as, her search for the real man behind the idealized figure she had preserved over the years.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. Define memoir.

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2. What is the difference between an autobiography and a memoir?

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13.4 HOW TO WRITE A MEMOIR

Writing a memoir can look like a formidable task at first. However, with a little help you can create an interesting record of your life's most important events that your friends and family will cherish for years to come. If you have ever thought of writing your own memoirs, you must endeavour to write them well so that they become a treasured family heirloom. There are fascinating stories in even the most ordinary lives and all we have to do is find them and bring them to the page. Using colourful and interesting language and developing lush stories is all we need to do to make our memoirs an interesting history lesson. An example from The Duke of Windsor's A King's Story:

> *So deeply had the power of Queen Victoria's personality pervaded the existence of her family that I can no longer differentiate with certainty between what I actually saw of her with my own eyes and what I afterwards heard of her from my parents, or the courtiers who had served her, or what I learned from books. After the death of the Prince Consort, in 1861, the Queen withdrew into widowed seclusion.*

She went rarely to London, and until her first Jubilee, in 1887, appeared seldom in public. State business she conducted mainly by remote control from Windsor, Balmoral, or Osborne, as she moved from one to the other. Whenever she had to hold a Privy Council, or her Ministers desired an audience, they would be summoned from London. Going to Windsor involved no particular inconvenience; it was only half an hour by train journey; and while the distance to Osborne was not so great, the prospect of crossing from Portsmouth in a small naval dispatch boat was enough to make many a Minister quail. If the sea was rough, the statesmen would arrive at Osborne for their audiences in a woebegone condition. Still dizzy from sea-sickness they would be summoned into my great-grandmother's presence, and as often as not their greeting would be a queenly reprimand for having initiated some legislation displeasing to her. It was an impressive demonstration of the power of the Sovereign, never again exercised in quite the same way, which in later years my father liked to describe. (1957:21)

Memoirs can be like home movies if you can make them thrilling for both you and your audience. At the same time they can also be humorous, revealing or profound. The one factor that they should possess is that they should be good reads. Again from the same book,

It was my mother's habit to rest in her boudoir before dinner, and this hour she saved for us. At 6.30 we were called in from the schoolroom. She would be in negligee resting on the sofa; and, when we were gathered around her on little chairs, she would read and talk to us. Looking back upon this scene, I am sure that my cultural interests began at my mother's knee. The years that she had lived abroad as a young girl had mellowed her outlook and reading and observation had equipped her with a

prodigious knowledge of Royal history. Her soft vice, her cultivated mind, the cosy room overflowing with, personal treasures were all inseparable ingredients of the happiness associated with this last hour of a child's day. (1957:33)

***DECIDE WHO THE MEMOIR IS FOR:**

Now, let us concentrate on how to write a memoir that will be appreciated by all those who read it.

This is by far one of the most important steps for writing a memoir. You need to decide who your target audience for the book is going to be. You could decide to write it for your family and close friends so that you could use a more informal, intimate writing style. If you plan it for a general audience, then you'll need to develop a more professional writing style and infuse more action in your work. Please remember that the more you write the more fluid your writing style will become.

***PICK THE BEST STORIES TO TELL:**

When learning how to write a memoir you need to remember that it isn't necessary to tell every small detail of your life. Instead you should pick events from your life that are exciting or profound and focus on them. If you've had a major experience that made an impact on your way of life then you could focus your entire memoir around that one experience. An example from *A King's Story:*

When very small, I was taken by my parents to visit Queen Victoria at the three places where she spent the greater part of her long life: Windsor, whose historic castle dates from Norman times, and whence my family and my dukedom take their name; and the two houses which she and the Prince Consort had built for themselves, Balmoral, the granite castle in the Highlands, and Osborne, that utterly un-English house in imitation of an Italian villa, near Cowes. Such was the majesty that surrounded Queen Victoria, that

she was regarded almost as a divinity of whom even her own family stood in awe. However, to us children she was 'Gangan,' a childish interpretation of great grand mama. She wore a white tulle cap, black satin dress, and shiny black boots with elastic sides. What fascinated me most about "Gangan" was her habit of taking breakfast in little revolving huts mounted on turn-tables, so that they could be faced away from the wind. If the weather was fine, a small low-slung carriage, drawn by a pony led by a kilted attendant, would be at the front door. In this, with a relation or a lady-in-waiting walking alongside, she would ride slowly to one or another of the shelters, where her `Kitmutgars' – Indian servants wearing turbans and gold-braided native livery – would be waiting with her wheel-chair. They would serve her breakfast, which always began with a bowl of steaming hot porridge. Later she would call for her Private Secretary and begin the business of the day. (1955: 19)

***RETROSPECTION:**

This is an important ingredient of a memoir. You can reflect or think out loud on your story using the techniques of scene and summary to move through time while also bringing retrospection to bear on the events. Again from '*A King's Story:*

In my gallery of *childhood memories, the portrait of my grandfather seems bathed in perpetual sunlight*. *He was in his sixties, in the twilight of his life, when his personality began to mean something to me. Few men could match his vitality, his sheer joie de vive. The Parisian term, un bon boulevardier, might have been invented for him. And while I can remember him, of course, as the regal figure of solemn ceremonies, I like best to recall him presiding over a well-laden table or making gallant gestures towards beautiful women (1957:52)*

In this respect, a memoir is similar to a personal essay. When you write a memoir you invite the reader into your thinking process, going beyond the telling of a good story to reveal how, looking back now, you understand that story, asking questions like: How did it affect my life later? Or what was the entire significance of these events?

An instance from *A King's Story:*

> *Then as was our habit in the spring, we moved to Windsor. I have long supposed this was a period of sadness for me. My Vermouth term maters had sailed off in the cruiser Cornwall, and fragments of their voyage to North America came back to me in their letters. Yet for all the remembered disappointment, I find to-day that my diary during that period at Windsor was actually full of sunny and intimate details: '…The trees are just coming out & the place looks lovely..... Rode before breakfast with Major Wigram, Bertie & Harry.... I helped Mary fly a patent kite …' . I was happy when my father said that he would soon give me the cherished insignia of a midshipman. But I sensed that, henceforth, my life was going to be different; within those ancient, grey, castle walls, quite without realizing how, I arrived at the end of my boyhood (1957: 81).*

So you have to assume three roles simultaneously while writing a memoir- that of a narrator who tells the story, that of the interpreter who tries to make sense, of the story, and that of the protagonist or hero of the story.

Often, the retrospection or musing is finely intertwined with the narration and the reader merely gets the sense that the memoirist has done a great deal of thinking about his or her experience. Again from *A King's Story:*

> *Hardly was he on his feet before the hostility smote him like a great wave. The memorable scene of Mr. Churchill being howled down has often been described.*

I have always regretted that incident, and would give much for the power to erase it from the records of that ancient assembly that owes him so match. Yet I am proud, also, that of all Englishmen, it was Mr. Churchill who spoke up to the last for the King, his friends. (1957:375)

But at times the retrospection may stand out separately as an interpretation of the narrative. An example of retrospection or musing from Judith Barrington's *Lifesaving : A memoir* (2000) begins like this.

I must have been twelve when my father, my mother and I participated in the Shoreham to Littlehampton yacht race. Actually I did that race more than once. I'm taking about the only time my mother came along, the time that turned into a full blown family story.

The way I see in the story is about my mother's lifelong terror of the sea and my father's pigheadedness. Or perhaps it is about the absurd pretenses of the British middle class particularly the male of the species, whose dignity must be preserved at all costs ... (Barrington 2000: 13).

This speculation about the underlying meaning of the story continues for a few more sentences. The third paragraph picks up the narrative again with the words, *"It should have been an easy day's sail: straight down the river from the yacht club."*

If you infuse this type of speculation into the narrative, it is important how you move in and out of it. In the above example, the way I see it, it is clear at that point that the storyteller is about to become the interpreter, using his wisdom in retrospect, to shed more clues on the meaning of the story. When moving back into the narrative, the reference to sailing is enough to cue the reader back to the reader back to the yacht race that was mentioned in the beginning. Another example from *A King's Story:*

In Richmond Park, there stands a fine, commodious

Georgian house called White Lodge. Towards the end of the century this house was the home of my maternal grandparents, the Duke and Duchess of Teck. One summer's evening in 1894, a future King of England, the then Duke of York, was in the library reading, or attempting to read, Pilgrim's Progress', while waiting for his first child to be born. It is doubtful whether this ponderous classic could have provided my father with a satisfactory distraction from his anxiety. Nevertheless, he persevered, and all in the proper time the news for which he longed came. In the diary in which were confided the hopes and trials of a lifetime he wrote: 'White Lodge, 23rd June, At. 10 .0 a sweet little boy was born and weighed 8 lb... Mr. Asquith [Home Secretary] came to see him.'

Somehow I imagine this was the last time my father was ever inspired to apply to me that precise appellation. But in any case, since the star of Mr. Herbert Henry Asquith's political fortunes was in the ascendant, circumstances favoured that my first visitor should be a future Prime Minister of England. It was Ascot Week, and on the night I was born my grandfather, Albert Edward, then Prince of Wales, was host at a ball in the Fishing Temple at Virginia Water, in Windsor Great Park. The news of my advent into the world appears to have caused a slight stir in that gay concourse. Stopping the orchestra, my grandfather announced: "It is with pleasure that I am able to inform you of the birth of a son to the Duke and Duchess of York. I propose a toast to the young Prince". The dance I like to think went on (1957:11).

***PRESENCE OF A THEME:**

A memoir makes no pretense of capturing the whole span from birth to the time of writing; in fact one of the important skills of memoir writing is the selection of the theme that will hold the work together

and set boundaries around it. So you will realize if you read Vivian Gomick *Fierce Attachments* (1987) that her chosen theme is her relationship with her mother described with reference to their walks together in New York City. The writer does not elaborate on stories that have no bearing on the subject, or various other aspects of her life that she feels deserve no mention. By setting limits such as these, it matters little whether a memoir is book length or just a few pages so long as the writer keeps the focus on one aspect of a life and offers the reader an indepth view.

Memoirs can be about any kind of life experience. Some are light hearted and humorous like Gerald Durrell's *My Family and other Animals* (1956). *Survival in Auschwitz* by Primo Levi (1996) is a personal account of an important historical record. J. R. Ackerley's *My Dog Tulip* (1956) is a small gem rooted in domestic life while Ernest Shackleton's *South*: *A Memoir of the Endurance Voyage* (1998) embraces huge frozen tracts of an unknown world.

***START AT THE BEGINNING:**

Memories should start from the beginning but you must take care not to go into elaborate details about your birth. Make facts short and elucidate when you have an interesting story. May be there was a terrible storm the day you were born or your mother gave birth to you in the family home; focus on the most interesting facts to present before your reader. Unless the doctor that delivered you had a witty comment or a notable personality do not go into details of his name, where he went to medical school or how many children he had. Likewise do not go through every age in chronological order. Include exciting vacations, people you met and particular situations you confronted. Did you find Mathematics very difficult? You could write about it. Family members love to hear about things like this that can cause them to say, oh may be it runs in the family.

***WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE:**

You should not include the full names of any person who wouldn't appreciate publicity in your book. Although it is your memoir, you should

not make public the private lives of others whom you no longer associate with.

There are sticky questions that may come up when you set out to write a personal story. It might involve unflattering portrayals of family members, friends, associates or simply those who crossed your path and left you with an unpleasant impression of them. An instance from *A King's Story:*

> *Yet, in justice to Mr. Hansell, it must be said that no one was more conscious than he of the shortcomings of his tutoring. Possibly at the risk of losing his job, he had repeatedly warned my father that if I were ever to hold my own with my contemporaries at the Naval College and in whatever other educational institution 1 might thereafter attend, I should be sent to a good preparatory school. Knowing what my future would be, Mr. Hansell was not worried over whether or not I should ever attain a sure grasp of book knowledge; that achievement was not indispensable in a Prince. What I suspect he most feared for me was that, in consequence of my being deprived of the communal habits of thought and code of behaviour that are absorbed at an early age in a private school, I was bound at first to feel lonely and insecure when brought into close association with my contemporaries (1957: 63).*
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> *I do not wish to be critical to Mr. Hansell; but, on looking back over those five curiously ineffectual years under him, I am appalled to discover how little I really learned. He could scarcely be said to have possessed a positive personality. If he harboured strong views about anything, he was careful to conceal them. Although I was in his care on and off for more than twelve years, I am to-day unable to recall anything brilliant or original that he ever said.*
>
> *No doubt, in view of the restraints laid upon the*

Monarchy, this was all for the best. To have put a Prince in the direct line of succession under the tutelage of a bold and opinionated teacher might well have led to the one conflict with which the constitutional system cannot cope. (1957:63).

You must balance your need to write about your true experience with the damage it might cause to others. You may write about your first love, a failed relationship, perhaps your memoir involves your closeted gay brother or of a close friend's mental breakdown. You must be selective about the detail you wish to include. You can also show the person what you have written and find out how he or she feels about it. You could change names, disguise places etc. Aim for absolute honesty though as this is the best policy. On the other hand, we must not underestimate the consequences our words could have in some situations. Publishing true stories about people who might have been forced to break the law because of different compulsions could bring trouble to those we depict. As writers it is our responsibility to think about and understand fully what can happen to people when we reveal what we know about them. If you want to write about someone who severely hurt you, it is particularly difficult to tread a path to good writing. You may find yourself not caring or even being happy in the consequences to family members, medical professionals, teachers or others who abused their power over you in the past. Please be careful of revenge as a motive for the writing. Your readers will be disturbed if they sense that you are retaliating. It may be anger that inspires you but your writing will not be a success until you give your full allegiance to the story relinquishing any desire to gain sympathy from readers or to punish the person who wronged you. According to Barrington in her essay "Writing the Memoir" published in *The Handbook of Creative* Writing, two memoirs that handle this aspect successfully are Lorna sage's *Bad Blood* (2000) and Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Lets go to the Dog's Tonight : An African Childhood* (2001).

***PITFALLS:**

In writing a memoir it is important to come across as self revealing without seeming self obsessed. Make a great effort not to begin paragraphs with 'I'. Vary your sentence structure to exclude phrases like 'I thought, I saw, I listened'. You could give the though sight or sound without inserting yourself between it and the reader. An example from *A King's Story:*

> *But I shall never forget a certain day two years later- at Hall Barn, near Beaconsfield, the home of Lord Burnham, one of the Fleet Street Barons, and then owner of the Daily Telegraph. On December 18, 1913, my father and I were invited to shoot there with Lord Charles Fitzmaurice, Mr. Henry Stoner, Lord Alcester, Lord Dalhousie, and Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest. Lord Burnham had set himself out to show that he could provide the King with the biggest shoot in history. I always suspected that in addition to the birds raised on the place, a good many hundred pheasants were brought in and released for the King's benefit.*
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> *We were six hours in the field, and the show of birds was fantastic. My father was deadly that day and used three guns, He had an individual, stylized way of shooting – left arm extended straight along the barrel, both eyes open. An onlooker reported that at one stand he saw my father bring down thirty-nine pheasants before missing one. Young and unused to firing as I was, my left arm ached from lifting my gun, my shoulder from the recoil; and I was deaf and stunned from the banging. Then, about one o'clock, we were conducted to a large tent where waited twenty distinguished guests whom our host had invited from London to meet the King and partake of a baronial repast of the choicest of victuals and the rarest of wines. A story was later told that one of the guests with simpler tastes*

floored the harassed major-domo by calling for a glass of iced water, which was the only item the unfortunate man had not provided.

When in the late afternoon the carnage stopped, almost 4000 pheasants had been killed. The bright, limp carcasses were laid out in rows of 100, the whole place was littered with feathers and spent cartridges. My father had shot over 1000 birds, I have even passed 300 mark. He was proud of the way he had shot that day, but I think that the scale of the bag troubled even his conscience; for, as we drove back to London, he remarked, 'Perhaps we went a little too far to-day, David." (1957:90-91)

Another important aspect is to avoid making the memoir a story which is based solely on your psyche. Readers would like to understand how you were affected by your storytelling without including long passages about your personal growth, your dreams for your journal writings.

An interesting memoir is set in reality. It conveys a sense of periods by including details from the culture, public events or from the history within which your personal story took place. Another instance from *A King's Story*:

Queen Victoria reigned on for nearly seven years after my birth, long enough to welcome into this world my brother Bertie, later King George VI; my sister Mary, the Princess Royal and my brother Henry, the Duke of Gloucester. In January 1901, we four children were at York Cottage quarantined in the nursery for German measles. My parents had gone to London for a great reception given for Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in South Africa, in recognition of his victory over the Boers. While there, they were informed by my grandfather that the Queen had a slight stroke at Osborne, but as her condition was not then considered dangerous, my parents returned to Sandringham for the

last days of the shooting season. But because of our quarantine, we were not allowed to see them. A day or two later we were told that they had left hurriedly for Osborne and that 'Gangan' was dying.

On January 22 she passed away. The next thing we heard was that my father was ill at Osborne, having broken out with German measles, which he had caught from us. He was therefore unable to accompany the great funeral cortege when it left Osborne for London and Windsor; my mother who had remained behind to nurse him, asked my grandmother to arrange for us three elder children to see the funeral service in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, and her final interment beside the Prince Consort in the private mausoleum at Frogmore nearby. (1957:22)

*** DRAFT:**

Note down all the experiences from your life that you feel would be relevant in an order that comes to your mind. Elucidate on each one of them once you feel all your ideas have been exhausted. Order the events you have written down chronologically.

*** EXPAND YOUR MEMOIR:**

Starting with your first experience, begin to write your memoir. Make sure that your writing style interests the audience. Every event needs to have a beginning, middle, and end, and there needs to be an overall beginning, middle and conclusion for the entire memoir.

If there are any goals you worked towards during your lifetime, career dreams or things you wanted to accomplish, include these in your memoirs and describe the steps you took to achieve them. After you have accomplished your goal describe how it made you feel to realize what you'd been working towards and give an account of the advice from others that helped you get there.

Try to get the dates right. If you include fairly accurate timelines, it will be easier for people to ascertain what else was going on at the same time and give them a frame of reference to relate to. It also adds to the credibility of the memoir. Even if you do not publish your memoirs they will serve as a valuable family history which will be valued by the future generations. It is important to remember that whether your memoir is told in a straightforward language, a secret letter or just even a list of incidents, your work should be an honest, evocative and unique experience.

***SOME OTHER ASPECTS OF WRITING A MEMOIR:**

Memoirs demand narrative skills. You should be able to handle the passage of time deftly in order to cover a long period in a few pages or sentences by dividing into scenes that retard the action and focus on the characters.

Scene and summary can be better understood in the following manner. First, we see the whole house, then the street, then the neighborhood and then like an aerial view, we see the whole city. The sight can include many details, all seen from the same distance. A scene on the other hand, is the close up, as the camera through the kitchen focuses on two figures talking at the table, going up, close, to the, face of the first speaker and then the other. Other details are then lost with this shot: maybe a blurry green vase on a sideboard can be, vaguely seen; perhaps a vague image of white walls and a closed door. But in this scene, it is the speakers, mannerism and then what they say that really matter.

For instance, a summary uses verbs that don't refer to what happens on any particular day. Emeralda Santiago, in her memoir, *When 1 was Puerto Rican* (1993), begins a section with the words, *I started school in the middle of hurricane season. Not focusing on a particular day or week, she captures an entire passage of time with her verbs : I loved the neat rows of desks lined up, I walked home from school full of importance; I learned that there were children whose fathers were drunks'* (Santiago-1993 - 30).

This is very different from a scene. Here is the opening of a scene taken from the same memoir.

> *Sunday morning before breakfast Abuela handed me my pique dress, washed and ironed. We're going to Mass' she said, pulling out a small white mantilla, which I was to wear during the service.*
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> *'Can we have breakfast first, Abuela. I'm hungry.*
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> *No. we have to fast before church. Don't ask why. It's too complicated to explain.*' (Santiago 1993 : 96).

As you can see, this pinpoints the exact time ('Sunday morning before breakfast'). When you read a verb in the past tense such as 'handed', or 'said', you know that it happened on a particular occasion, just that one time. It's not ongoing like the summary.

In preparing a memoir, one must be able to present the scenes which contain dialogue effectively. For this effecting you must listen carefully to how people speak, but you must be highly selective about choosing from all the things they say. A transport of real life containing exactly the things that were actually said does not always make for an interesting story. Your business is to shape, select and add focus.

It is incorrect to shore up the dialogue with descriptive verbs such as 'he snapped' or 'he mused' or to qualify the verbs with phrases like 'in an endearing tone' or 'with an ironic trust in her tone'. If you pick the right words within the dialogue, you will not require this sort of clarification.

You can use scene and summary to narrate through different time periods but you must bear in mind one important factor of a memoir. There is one time that is ever omnipresent and that time is 'now'. The reader must feel that the writer is rooted in a particular moment from which he or she may cast his/her mind back, may speak in present tense or may even look towards the future. It is from this 'now' that the memoirist muses on the story being told. Because there is always an

implied now, difficulties arise if you choose to narrate the events in the present tense. Here is an example of narration in the past tense which later moves back in time using past perfect tense: 'When I turned fourteen, I decided to sell my pony. Several years earlier, I had sworn I would keep him for his whole life'. Here is that narrative in the present tense: 'when I turn fourteen, I decide to sell my pony'. 'All right so far, but what comes next?' 'Several years earlier, I swore….?' None of these sounds correct, yet we manage to write in a tense that conveys the meaning. You have to juggle your words in such a way so as to present the desired meaning.

***A DEALINE FOR COMPLETION:**

You should set a realistic deadline for completing the memoir, writing a small amount from time to time could take you months and even years to complete the entire story and your writing style will not be uniform and easy to follow. An ideal deadline for completion would be a much awaited family event coming up. Everyone would appreciate the effort involved in writing your memoir



LET US KNOW

In 1956, V.S. Pritchett correctly ascribed the 'tremendous expansion in autobiographical writing' in part to the 'dominant influence of psychological theory.' The number of books increased and the focus changed from the outer life to the inner life in the '50s and 60s'.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

1. What is one of the foremost or main ingredients of a memoir?

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2. What should the memoirist bear in mind while writing about people in the memoir?

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TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD MEMOIR

1. Show, don't tell: you should show what happened more than tell the story of what happened. Nobody can remember each and every detail so carefully. It's your story and you should tell it to the best of your ability. That is why it is often called 'Creative Non-fiction.' You reproduce every detail of the scenes to the best of your memory. The point is not to get all details exactly right but to share your story in an engaging way with your reader - as if they are reading a novel.
2. You should try to learn the skills that make a good novel writer: dialogue, character, introduction and development, pacing and story structure.
3. Memoirs should not become too preachy or offer too much advice to the reader.
4. You should delve deep into your emotional experience while writing the memoir This makes your work more compelling.

LET US KNOW



Imagination plays a role in both fiction and memoir. The application of it in memoir is circumscribed by the facts of your life experience, while in fiction, it is circumscribed by what the reader will believe.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3



1. What are the skills required of a good novel writer?

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2. What makes the memoir compelling for the reader?

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13.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt what a memoir is and how to write a memoir. We have made you aware of the general outline that should be observed while writing a memoir. We have shown you how to organize or expand work with a few examples. You should now be able to write a memoir.

13.6 SOME EXAMPLES OF MEMOIRS

- Ackerley, J.R. *My Dog Tulip* London: Secker and Warburg, 1956.
- Barrington, Judith. *Writing the Memoir. From Truth to Art*. Portland Or: The Eighth Mountain Press, 1997.
- Gornick, Vivian. *Fierce Attachments* New York :. Farrar Straus Guroux,1987
- Mountain press,2000.
- Sage, Lorna, Bad Blood, London: Fourth Estate, 2000.



13.7 FURTHER READINGS

Website Resources:

http: II www.writeandpublishyourbook.com

1. Barrington, Judith. *Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art*. Portland Or: The Eighth Mountain Press, 1997.
2. The Duke of Windsor. *A King's Story. The Memoirs of H.R.H.* London: Pan Books Ltd, 1957
3. Gordon, Mary. *The Shadow Man*. New York: Random House, 1996
4. Barrington, Judith. *Lifesaving: A Memoir*. Portland Or: The Eight Mountain Press, 2000
5. Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I was Puerto Rican*. New York: Addison Wesley 1993 .



13.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how the memoir evolved as a genre.
2. What makes a memoir interesting for readers?
3. How is selection of a theme important while writing a memoir?
4. While is memoir called 'creative non- fiction'?

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