

Snapshot Autobiography

Materials:

- Copies of Snapshot Worksheet

Plan of Instruction: (2-day lesson)

1. Journal Free-write: What is the story of your birth?

Pair/Share.

2. Discussion:

- How do you know the story of your birth?
- What evidence do you have to back your story?
- How might someone else remember this story?

3. Pass out and explain directions for Snapshot Autobiography.

Students begin to design pamphlets.

HOMEWORK: Students finish pamphlets AND interview someone for second perspective (see second page of Snapshot assignment).

Second Day:

1. Explain that we will first begin by sharing one of our important events. It does not necessarily have to be the one that you asked another person about.
2. Students each share one event. (Given time constraints, you might need to divide class or only ask for volunteers to share an event).
3. Discussion questions:
 - Why did students choose certain events and not others? What made some events more important, or memorable than others?
 - Was it difficult to select events? Why or Why not?
 - What types of evidence would be necessary to “prove” that your selected event actually happened?
 - What happened when you asked someone about the event? Did they agree with your version? Did they remember something different?
4. Closing comments: *This is exactly what history is like. History is what happened in the past, just like the events in your life. Our work this year is to figure out how we can gather enough evidence to get the clearest picture possible of what happened in the past.*

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?
