

Memoir Unit Resources

Student Resource	Location
Section 1: Lessons 1-3	
Text: "How to Write a Memoir" by William Zinsser from <i>The American Scholar</i>	Memoir Unit Reader
Lesson handouts	Pages 2 – 4
Section 2: Lessons 4-8	
Text: <i>A Summer Life</i> by Gary Soto	Purchased text
Text: <i>Bad Boy: A Memoir</i> by Walter Dean Myers	Purchased text
Text: <i>The Circuit</i> by Francisco Jimenez	Purchased text
Text: <i>Guts</i> by Gary Paulsen	Purchased text
Text: <i>Soul Surfer</i> by Bethany Hamilton and Rick Bundschuh	Purchased text
Text: <i>Zlata's Diary</i> by Zlata Filipovic	Purchased text
Text: <i>Boy: Tales of Childhood</i> by Roald Dahl	Purchased text
Lesson handouts	Pages 5 – 12
Section 3: Lessons 9-12	
Text: "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros	Memoir Unit Reader
Lesson handouts	Pages 13 – 14
Section 4: Lessons 13-15	
Text: "Thank You M'am" by Langston Hughes	Memoir Unit Reader
Lesson handouts	Pages 15 – 17
Section 5: Lessons 16-18	
Text: See Section 2 Texts	Purchased text
Lesson handouts	Pages: 18 – 23
Section 6: Lessons 19-21	
Text: "Oranges" by Gary Soto	Memoir Unit Reader
Text: "Short Memoirs: Six Little Words Can be Revealing" by Doug Mason	Digital Access
Lesson handouts	Pages: 24 – 26
Section 7: Lessons 22-24	
Text: "How to Write a Memoir" by William Zinsser from <i>The American Scholar</i>	Memoir Unit Reader
Lesson handouts	Pages: 22-24
Section 8: Lessons 25-26	
Text: See Section 2 Texts	Purchased text
Lesson handouts	Pages: 27 – 29
Section 9: Culminating Writing Task	
Text: "How to Write a Memoir" by William Zinsser from <i>The American Scholar</i>	Memoir Unit Reader
Lesson handouts	Pages: 36 – 37
Section 10: Extension Task	
Text: "Advice for Writers" by Rick Riordan (RickRiordan.com)	Memoir Unit Reader
Text: "Chapter V: An Approach to Style" by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White	Purchased text
Lesson handouts	Pages: 38 – 42
Section 11: Cold Read Task	

Cornell Notes: Lesson 1

Key Points/Questions	Notes
	Summary

Types of Sentences Handout

Identify the type of each sentence in the first two paragraphs of “How to Write a Memoir” by labeling each one simple (S), compound (CD), complex (C), or compound-complex (CX).

Type	Sentence
	• One of the saddest sentences I know is “I wish I had asked my mother about that.”
	• Or my father.
	• Or my grandmother.
	• Or my grandfather.
	• As every parent knows, our children are not as fascinated by our fascinating lives as we are.
	• Only when they have children of their own—and feel the first twinges of their own advancing age—do they suddenly want to know more about their family heritage and all its accretions of anecdote and lore.
	• “What exactly were those stories my dad used to tell about coming to America?”
	• “Where exactly was that farm in the Midwest where my mother grew up?”
	• Writers are the custodians of memory, and that’s what you must become if you want to leave some kind of record of your life and of the family you were born into.
	• That record can take many shapes.
	• It can be a formal memoir—a careful act of literary construction.
	• Or it can be an informal family history, written to tell your children and your grandchildren about the family they were born into.
	• It can be the oral history that you extract by tape recorder from a parent or a grandparent too old or too sick to do any writing.
	• Or it can be anything else you want it to be: some hybrid mixture of history and reminiscence.
	• Whatever it is, it’s an important kind of writing.
	• Too often memories die with their owner, and too often time surprises us by running out.

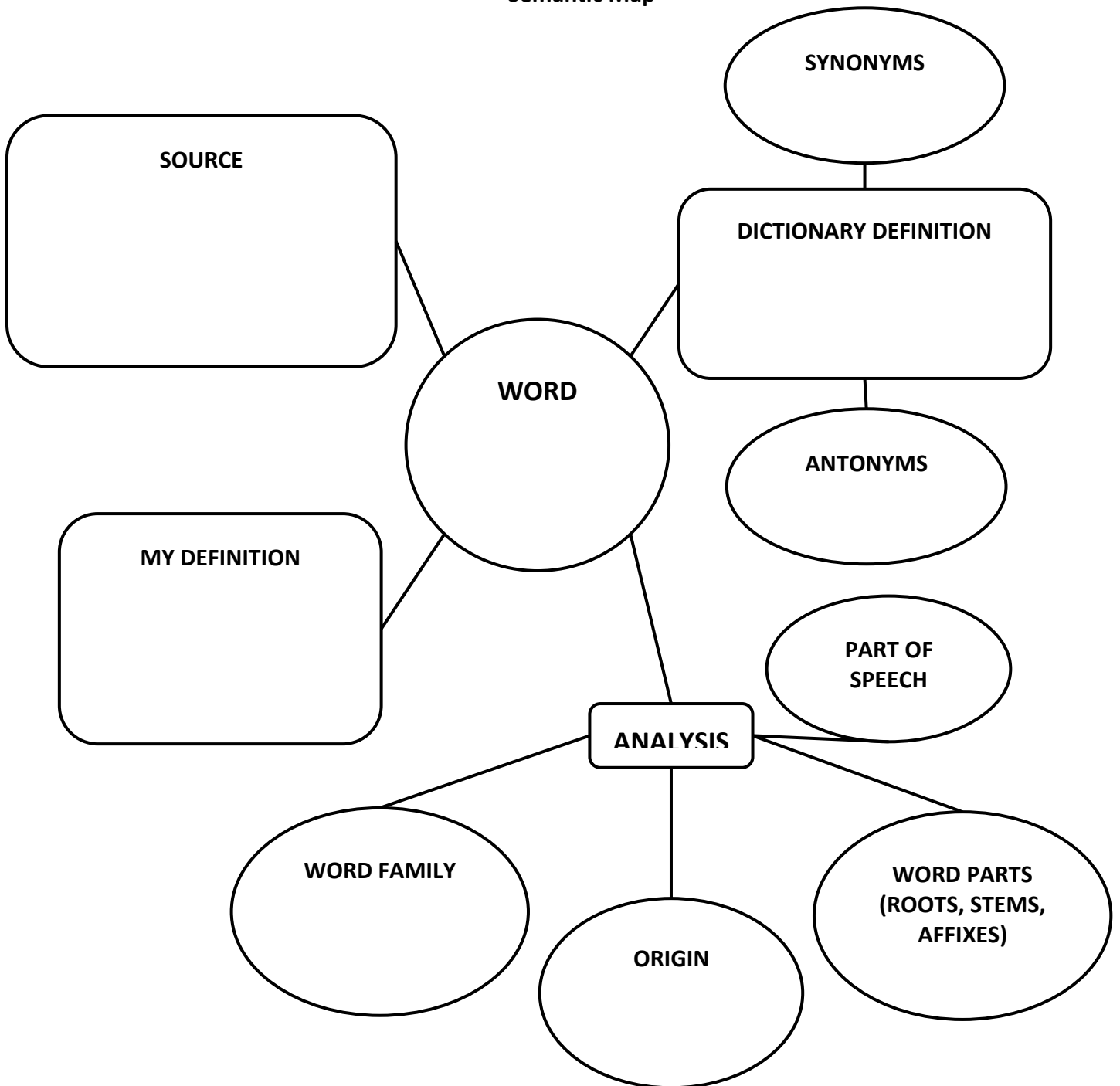
Quality Criteria for Memoir Writing Checklist

Recommendations / Advice	Source Text	Example

Reading Log

Reading Goal		
Date of next reading check-in	Goal Book title though page _____	Did I meet my goal? Why or why not?

Semantic Map



Literature Circle Preparation Guide
Discussion Leader

Title: _____

Pages: _____

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Question #1: _____

Answer: _____

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Answer: _____

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Headline Reporter

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Setting	Plot	Characters

Summary: _____

Literature Circle Preparation Guide
Diction Decoder

Title: _____

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You are in charge of analyzing the words and phrases the author uses in this section of the text. Choose words or phrases that stand out to you because of their significance, imagery, deep meaning or complexity. Consider why you selected each word or phrase and also what the author's purpose is for including it.

Word or phrase	Page #	Reason Selected	Author's purpose

Literature Circle Preparation Guide
Story Mapper

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You are in charge of creating artwork to support the group's study of this section of the text. Draw a picture or use a graphic organizer to show something important about the story. Allow group members to react to your work without describing it. Once each member has replied, be ready to explain your work.

Literature Circle Preparation Guide
Connector

Title: _____

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You are in charge of making connections between your group's text and the unit focus and the other texts in the unit. Use the graphic organizers to record instances where your group text supports the study of other unit texts or helps to support the focus of the unit.

Our book	Connects to...	Because....

Literature Circles Record Sheet

Title: _____

Pages: _____

Insightful Ideas	Support for the idea	My reaction

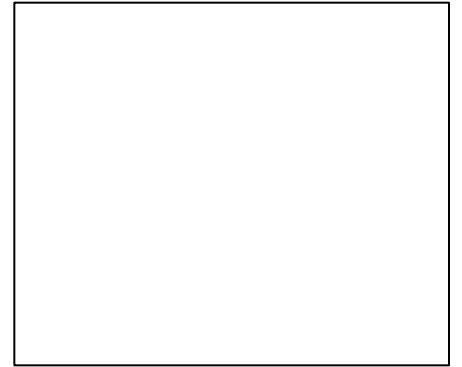
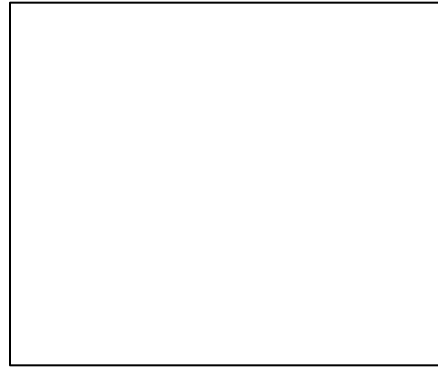
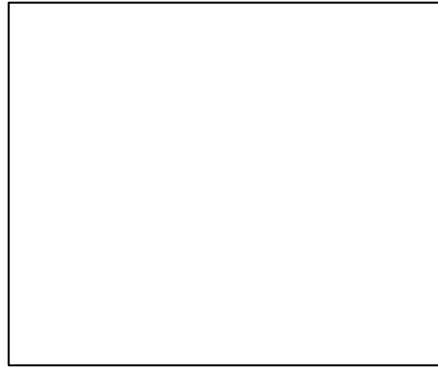
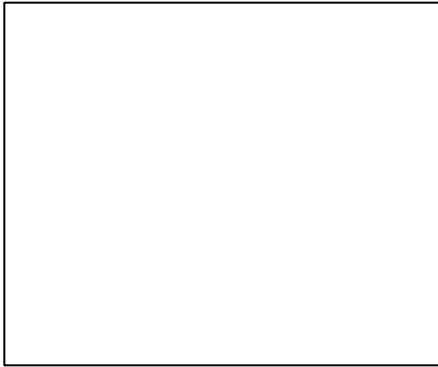
Plot T-chart for "Eleven"

As you read "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros, list the outside events that happen in the classroom in the left-hand column and the events that occur within the narrator's mind in the right-hand column.

Plot of the outside action	Plot in Rachel's mind
How do the external conflicts of the story influence the internal conflicts of the narrator?	
How do the internal conflicts of the narrator influence the external conflicts of the story?	

Continuum Line for “Eleven”

Create a continuum line of age maturity based on Rachel’s reactions about the red sweater. Cite evidence from the text below the line and write the justification that explains how this illustrates that specific maturity level below the line.



Birth



Adult



Post-Reading Questions

1. Reread paragraph 1. What was the woman's initial reaction when the boy tried to snatch her purse?
2. Reread paragraphs 12-14. Mrs. Jones says, 'Um-hum! And your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?' In this sentence from paragraph 12, what clues does the author give us about *why* Mrs. Jones decided to bring Roger home with her?
3. Reread paragraph 24. The woman finally turns Roger loose, "Roger looked at the door-looked at the woman-looked at the door-*and went to the sink.*" Why did the author choose to italicize this part of the text?
4. Mrs. Jones says, "Maybe you haven't been to your supper either late as it be. Have you?" What can we infer about Mrs. Jones's character based on what she does next?
5. Mrs. Jones begins to tell Roger about when she was young. Mrs. Jones shares, "I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son." What effect does this admission have on Roger? How did it influence his actions?

6. The narrator states, "The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him." What did she do instead? Why?
7. Mrs. Jones states, "Shoes got by devilish ways will burn your feet." State in your own words what Mrs. Jones meant.
8. Mrs. Jones gives Roger money. What motivates Mrs. Jones? What does she expect from him in the future?

Perspectives T-chart for “Thank You, Ma’am”

As you reread “Thank You, Ma’am” by Langston Hughes, chart the events of the story from Mrs. Jones’ perspective in left-hand column and the events from Roger’s perspective in the right-hand column.

Mrs. Jones	Roger
What is the effect of the combination of perspectives in “Thank You, Ma’am”?	

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TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

Use this graphic organizer to analyze the poem, “Oranges” by Gary Soto.

T	Title: Before reading the poem, make a prediction about what the poem is about based on the title.
P	Paraphrase: Translate the poem line by line into your own words. Look for complete thoughts and look up unfamiliar words.
C	Connotation: What words or phrases stick out to you? Look for patterns and figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.
A	Attitude/Tone: Notice the speaker’s attitude toward the subject of the poem. This is the author’s tone.
S	Shifts: As you look for patterns, also look for contrasts or shifts/changes in poem. Look for changes in language, attitude, setting/imagery, mood, punctuation, other literary devices.
T	Title: Examine the title again. What does it mean now that you’ve read the poem? Did the meaning of the title change?
T	Theme: State what the poem is about (subject) and what the poet is trying to say about subject (theme).

Six-word Memoirs: Connections and Purpose

Select and write 3 of the six-word memoir examples in the first column. Then summarize the connections the article makes between the memoir and its author in the second column, and finally determine the memoir author's purpose in the last column.

Six-word memoir	Summary of connections	Author's purpose

Six-word Memoir Checklist

Review your partner's six-word memoir using the checklist below.

The memoir is six words in length.

The memoir depicts a single event or memory.

The memoir uses precise language and sensory details.

The memoir conveys the experience or event to the reader in a meaningful way.

The memoir establishes the author's purpose for writing.

Comments: _____

SOAPStone

As you read, look for these details...			How do you know? Cite specific evidence from the text.
S	Who is the Speaker ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What can you tell or what do you know about the speaker that helps you understand the point of view expressed? 	
O	What is the Occasion ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the time and place of the text? What caused this text to be written? Identify the context of the text. 	
A	Who is the Audience ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To whom is this text addressed? Does the speaker specify an audience? What does the author assume about the intended audience? 	
P	What is the Purpose ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did the author want the audience to think or do as a result of reading this text? Why did the author write it? What is the message? How does the speaker convey this message? 	
S	What is the Subject ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What topic, content, and ideas are included in the text? How does the author present the subject? Does he introduce it immediately or do you, the reader, have to make an inference? 	
TONE	What is the Tone ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the author's attitude about the subject? Is the author emotional? Objective? Angry? How would you read the passage aloud if you were the author? What details "tell" the author's feelings about the topic? What words, phrases, imagery, examples, etc. reveal the tone? 	

Answer Frame

Introduction

Thesis

1

2

1

Transition

2

Conclusion

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Culminating Writing Task Directions

Does the memoir you read support and/or contradict Zinsser’s advice for writing a memoir in “How to Write a Memoir”?

Write an essay that compares and contrasts the memoir you read with Zinsser’s advice. Be sure to use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of textual evidence, including direct quotations and parenthetical citations.

Evaluation Handout

Zinsser's Advice	Does the memoir I read follow his advice?		Reasons	Text Evidence
	Yes	No		

Jigsaw Directions

Each group will read a part of “Advice for Writers” by Rick Riordan and then share their information with the class. See the group assignments below.

Group One

Read “Any advice for young people who might want to be writers?” As you read, answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about improving your writing? List 3 tips.
2. According to Riordan, why is reading and writing so important for writers?
3. How can a young writer avoid writer’s block and discouragement?

Group Two

Read “How can I improve my writing?” As you read, answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about improving your writing? List 3 tips.
2. What is “sentence level competence” and why is it important?
3. What does Riordan mean by “deft descriptions” and how can you use these in your writing?

Group Three

Read “How do you develop characters?” As you read, answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about improving your writing? List 3 tips.

2. Why is important to define a character through action?

3. How does the word *impressionist* illustrate how to describe characters?

Group Four

Read “How do you write good dialog?” As you read, answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about improving your writing? List 3 tips.

2. What is “authorial intrusion” and why should you avoid it?

3. How does Riordan explain compressing dialog?

Extension Task Directions

“Writers are the custodians of memory.” What does William Zinsser mean by this statement? How does this apply to the “coming-of-age” literature read in this unit? Considering all of the advice on writing from the professional writers in this unit, what lessons have you learned about your voice and style in writing?

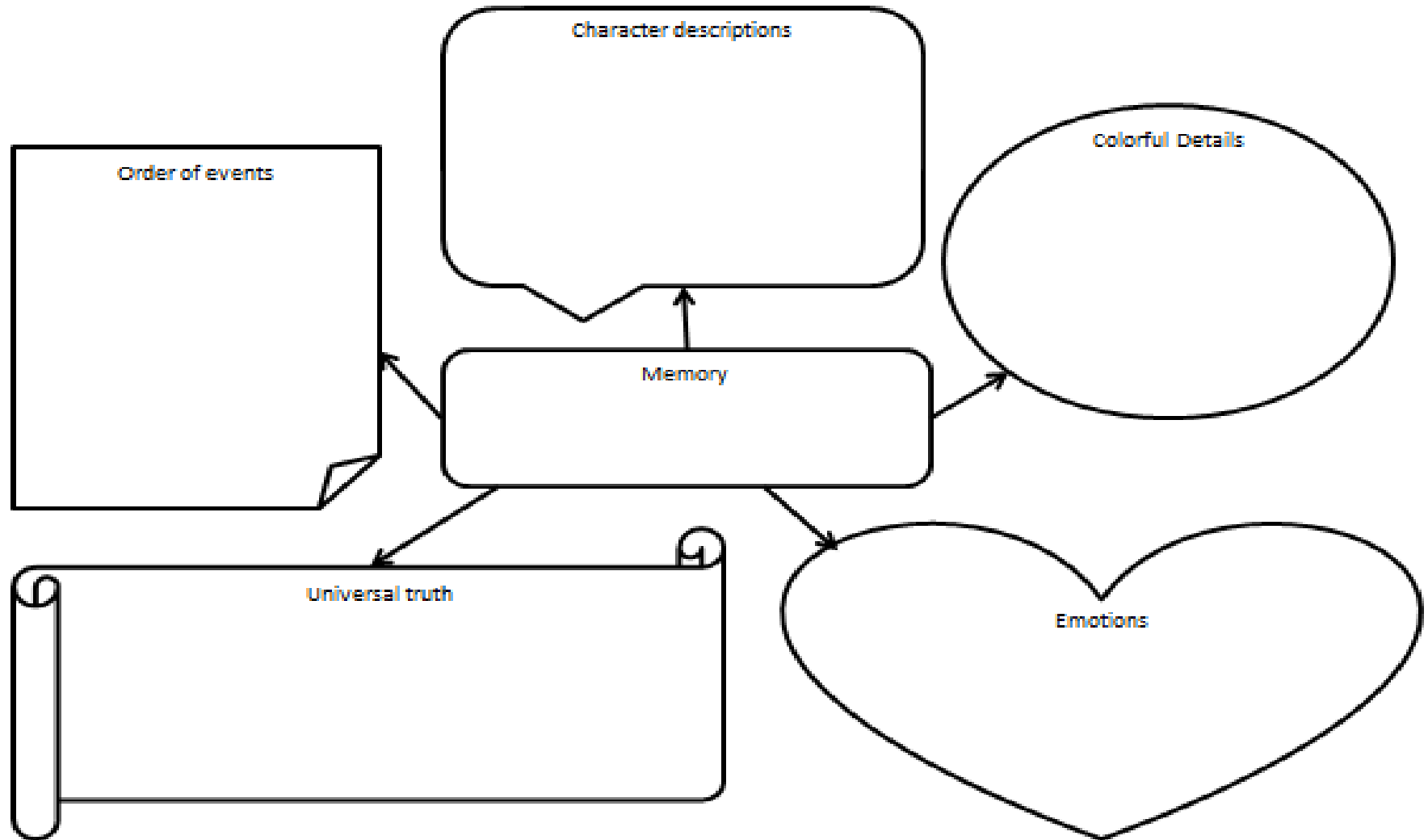
Source	Lessons learned
Rick Riordan	
Strunk and White	

After reading several pieces about “growing up,” write a memoir based on a real and appropriate personal experience using the techniques outlined by Zinsser, Riordan, and Strunk and White, and captured on the Quality Criteria for Memoir Writing Checklist.

- Be sure to engage and orient your reader by establishing a point of view, introducing characters, and organizing a logical sequence.

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, a variety of transition words, phrases and clauses, relative details and sensory language, and a conclusion that reflects “a universal truth.”

Brainstorming Handout



Rules for Adding Dialogue

- Use a new paragraph with each new speaker.
- Check your quotation marks.
- Break up dialogue into two parts.
- Avoid distracting tags.
- Use action to show who is speaking.