

Memoir Writing for Future Generations

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One of the absolute best ways to get authentic “snapshots” of history is through reading first-person accounts of a particular time. This largely eliminates financial motives (textbook authors and publishers), poor research, societal and/or author prejudices, and lots of misinformation that all contribute to inaccuracies and limited vision when learning about history.

This is *your* chance to provide an authentic window into this alternately confusing, heart-breaking, boring, dramatic, possibly generation-defining, historical chapter in our country’s history, for future generations!

- You will need a diary, journal, notebook, or just paper stapled together.
- Write a brief introduction about what and/or why you are writing.
- Jump in! Start writing about your experiences during this pandemic: the good, the bad, the frightening, the life and family affirming...whatever *you* are feeling and experiencing!
- There is no right or wrong as long as you are exploring what you have experienced, heard, been told, or witnessed.
- You may go day by day, like a diary, or you may write when you have a day or experience that you believe to be notable (whether in its ordinariness or uniqueness!)
- When the pandemic no longer exists in our country or state, write a brief conclusion to your account.
- Save! Save! Save your writing, in order to share with your own children some day, or anyone not alive during this pandemic.
- Congratulations! You have now witnessed and detailed an extraordinary time in our country’s (and the world’s!) history, providing an accurate and genuine “snapshot” that can illuminate this small piece of history for future generations!

Whether your interest in this activity is simply due to a love of history or a love of reading and writing, I have included a list of books that I believe you will enjoy. All present first-person accounts and memories of specific times in history that are genuine, authentic, and eye-opening. Some are written by children, some by adults looking back on their childhoods. You may choose to read first, or jump right into writing, or do both simultaneously!

Excellent First-Person Accounts of Historical Times and Events

- *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. (Ages 11+)
The quintessential diary of a girl and her family doomed by the Holocaust
- *Night* by Elie Wiesel (Ages 13+)
The experiences of renowned writer and lecturer Wiesel, a young boy during the Holocaust who survived
- *My Dearest Diary: Five Years In the Life of Cathy Cornellia* by Cathy Cornellia (Ages 11+)
Taking place in the 50’s, this engaging novel takes you to a very different place and time, exploring cultural, familial, and social experiences

- *Reaching For the Moon* by Katherine Johnson (Ages 10+)
The memoir of a trailblazing NASA mathematician
- *Chasing Space* by Leland Melvin (Ages 8+)
The memoir of an athlete and astronaut who broke stereotypes
- *Between Two Rivers* by Aruna Kenyi (Ages 11+)
A first-person account of escaping the war and violence of the Sudan
- *I Am Malala* by Christina Lamb and Malala Yousafzai (Ages 10+)
The story of a brave young girl who risked her life to bring educational opportunities to other girls in Pakistan
- *I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives* by Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda (Ages 10+)
A cross cultural friendship derived from exchanging letters across cultures and continents
- *El Deafo* by Cece Bell (Ages 9+)
A humorous graphic novel of one girl's experiences growing up deaf