

## Memoir Writing Tips

- Read other memoirs, especially ones similar to what yours will be like
- Write as to strangers who know nothing about your family or the era
- Write bits and pieces, fill stories in later, figure out how to order them, revise
- Find a theme in your stories, or at least some thread to connect them
- If a story doesn't fit into the theme, maybe it doesn't belong in the memoir
- Include plenty of details in a natural way, not stuffing or using lots of adjectives
- Everyday details are interesting, too — house, food, chores, school, toys, games
- Research to add historical, cultural, sociological detail for context
- You are the main character, so include your feelings, thoughts, reflections
- “Each memoir lives or dies based 100% by voice” – Mary Karr (write like you speak)
- If you aren't sure, say so (I think, I believe)
- Don't assume what another's motive for behavior is, although you can ponder
- Be respectful, even of those who have done you wrong
- Show a person's character through his actions, not by using judgmental adjectives
- Avoid self-pity, and add light remarks for relief to deep, dark writing
- Dialogue makes your story come alive (what was likely said, no need for exact)
- Add a disclaimer up front if necessary