

Prewriting Ideas

Use these prewriting ideas to help you find topics to write about. These ideas can also help you focus, explore, or narrow your topic.

▶ **Brainstorming experiences** Work alone or with a small group. Quickly list exciting, happy, funny, or scary events in your life. What personal story ideas do you get?

▶ **Brainstorming places** Quickly list places you have visited that you liked or disliked. Then add why you went to each place and what happened to make you feel as you do.

▶ **Brainstorming people** Quickly list people you like very much. Then choose one of these people and list memorable experiences you've had with him or her.

▶ **Free-associating** Think of a word, any word, and write it down. Then write a word that you associate with it. Continue this word chain until a story idea comes to mind.

▶ **Drawing** Sketch a picture that reflects your mood. Let it remind you of a personal experience. Make notes about the experience and your feelings about it.

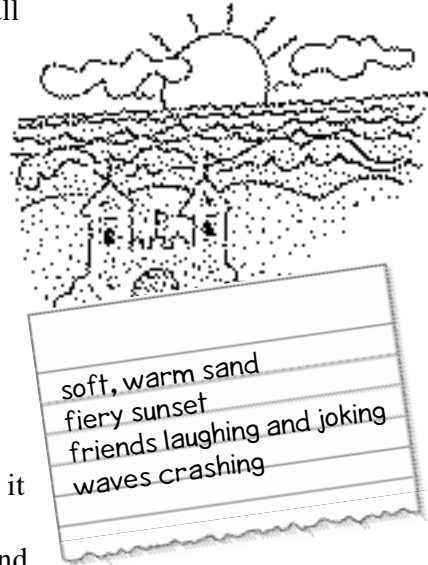
▶ **Talking and listening in pairs** Tell a partner about your funniest experience. As you recount the story, make mental notes of the details you include. Then listen to your partner's humorous experience.

▶ **Being interviewed** Suppose that a television reporter asks you, on the air, about the highlights of your life so far. What experiences will you talk about?

▶ **Looking at art** Look at paintings, photographs, or other forms of art. Think about how each piece makes you feel. Then select the most interesting piece and tell what experience in your life it reminds you of.

▶ **Making entries in a diary** Search your diary for interesting experiences you have recorded. If you do not keep a diary, think about what you would include in one.

▶ **Making a time line** Make a quick time line showing each grade you have been in at school. Jot down interesting experiences you remember about each school year. Use one of your entries as a starting point for a personal narrative.



Highlights of My Life
girl scouts
swim team
learning to read
family trips
fixing the deck with my brothers