LIFETALES ACADEMY

Memoir Starter Workbook

Gather memories, write one scene, and revise it in your own voice.

Lifetales Media

Start with a moment you can picture.

Jot down a few memories, then choose one you feel ready to explore. Use the timeline when you need context, the planner when you're ready to draft, and the checklist after you've written a scene. Print extra copies of the pages you reuse.

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This workbook belongs to _____

WORKSHEET

Memory inventory chart

Collect moments you might write about. Give each one a short title, add a few details, and put a star beside any memory you'd like to return to.

SAMPLE ENTRY

The day the porch flooded / About age 12, at home / Dad and me / Water slapping the steps / I saw Dad laugh when I expected him to worry.

Moment or title	Age / year and place	Who was there	Detail I remember	Why I might write about it

Memory I'll work with first _____

WORKSHEET

Blank life timeline

Start at the top with your earliest event and work toward the present. Use approximate dates or life stages when that's what you remember. Leave space for events you may add later.

Year, age, or life stage	Event, place, or turning point

Circle a turning point you'd like to explore.

WORKSHEET

Sensory detail worksheet

Choose one brief moment. Picture where you were and what you were doing. Record the details you recall, adding a question mark beside anything you're unsure about.

Moment and setting

Sight

What was in front of you? Notice color, light, movement, or one small object.

Sound

What could you hear nearby or in the distance? Did a familiar sound stop?

Smell

What scent places you back there? Where was it coming from?

Taste

What taste do you associate with the moment, if any?

Touch and physical sensation

What did your hands feel? What did you notice about temperature or tension?

Put one detail into motion

Write a sentence in which someone notices, handles, or reacts to a detail you listed.

WORKSHEET

Story planner

Plan one scene with a clear beginning and ending. Use short notes here, then turn them into a draft on page 10 or in your notebook.

Pick the moment

What specific event will this story cover? Where and when does it happen?

Name what you wanted

What were you trying to get, keep, change, or understand at the time?

Open with an action

What could the reader see or hear in the first few seconds of the scene?

Find the turning point

What action, discovery, or decision changes what happens next?

Decide where to end

What action, image, or line of dialogue could close the scene?

Reflect from the present

What do you understand now that you could only partly see at the time?

WORKSHEET

Revision checklist

Read the draft once all the way through. On your second read, mark what's working and use unchecked items to choose your next edits.

Structure

- [ ] The opening gives readers enough context to enter the scene.
- [ ] The reader can follow what I wanted and what changed.
- [ ] The ending shows what changed or makes room for reflection.

Detail and clarity

- [ ] I use one or two specific details to anchor the scene.
- [ ] Readers can tell who is present and who is speaking.
- [ ] I've trimmed repetition and background that interrupts the action.

Voice and care

- [ ] The sentences sound like me when I read them aloud.
- [ ] I distinguish what I remember from what I learned later or inferred.
- [ ] I've considered which private details about others the story needs.

My first revision

Name one change and mark where in the draft you'll make it.

People and places

Choose a prompt and write for ten minutes. Begin with an action you can picture.

01 Return to a doorway you once knew by feel. What told you who was home?

02 Describe a route you could walk without thinking. Where did you always slow down?

03 Write about a nickname that stuck. Who first used it, and how did you answer?

04 Recall a person who taught you something while doing an ordinary chore.

05 Revisit a meal when the seating arrangement mattered. Who sat where?

06 Write about being a newcomer somewhere. Who or what helped you learn how things worked?

07 Describe a place that disappeared or changed. What would you look for first if you went back?

08 Recall an unexpected kindness from someone you barely knew. What were you doing just before it happened?

09 Write about a household rule you once took for granted. Show a moment when someone tested it.

10 Picture a family gathering from the kitchen, the porch, or another spot at its edge. What did you notice there?

Choices and turning points

Try starting just before the choice, interruption, or discovery.

11 Recall a time you said yes before you knew what you were agreeing to. What happened next?

12 Write about changing your mind in the middle of a conversation. Which words stayed with you?

13 Describe packing for a departure. What did you keep out of the box or suitcase until the last minute?

14 Write about waiting for news. What did you do with your hands while you waited?

15 Recall a moment when a plan fell apart and you had to invent a new one on the spot.

16 Write about the first money you earned yourself. What did you decide to do with it?

17 Describe a time you stood up for someone. Begin just before you spoke or acted.

18 Recall a skill you almost gave up on. Describe the moment you noticed you were improving.

19 Write about a small decision that had a consequence you only recognized years later.

20 Recall a farewell you thought was temporary. Which detail looks different in hindsight?

Objects, rituals, and hindsight

Choose a prompt that brings a specific object, sound, or action to mind.

21 Choose a photograph and write about what happened immediately before or after it was taken.

22 Describe a borrowed object you returned or still have. What do you remember about asking for it?

23 Write about a familiar recipe the first time you made it without the person who taught you.

24 Recall a song you heard in a particular car, room, or shop. Begin with what you were doing when it came on.

25 Write about a repair you watched someone make. What did they insist on doing a certain way?

26 Recall finding a letter, note, or inscription. Where were you when you read it, and what changed afterward?

27 Write about an ordinary ritual that quietly changed over the years. Show one version of it in action.

28 Recall something you misunderstood as a child. Re-create the scene as you understood it then.

29 Choose a piece of clothing you wore on an important day. What did it let you show or hide?

30 Write about a story you've often told. Begin with one detail you usually leave out.

Drafting page

Use your story planner or pick a prompt from pages 7–9. Begin in a particular place with someone doing something. Keep writing through the moment when something changes.

Working title or prompt number