

Using a Writing Prompt - Memories

Support Lesson 4

Title: Do you remember events from years ago?

Summary: This lesson demonstrates using memory to document events and record personal histories. It can be used to introduce the Omoide book.

Age/grade level: 4th – 7th grade

Related EALR: Check the OSPI website for EALRS and CBA's applicable to your grade level.

Suggested materials: Omoide book, copies of stories to be shared and read, personal photos of your childhood, any books about the area you grew up in.

Time needed: One class session

Lesson Objective: Students use their own memories to recall events from their past and share them. They will discover connections between their memories which create their own personal histories.



Presenting the Lesson

Preparation:

1. Make copies of stories that you'll share with the group.
2. Collect photos of yourself and the area in which you spent your childhood for sharing. Gather stories or books about the times you were a child.
3. Jot down any notes that you'll need to tell students as much detail as you can remember about your first memory.

Set/Introduction:

Tell students your earliest memory. Give ideas about the general timeframe in which you remember. For example, available technology, family setting, geography, political tone, price of things, etc. Share photos and/or books.

Main activity:

Define the word memory. Tell students that memories create history and can explain why people do what they do and behave as they might. Introduce terms: oral history, memoirs, biography, and personal accounts as examples.

1. Post or ask, “**What is your earliest memory?**” Give students time to record their responses to the question. Include the following guidelines for their responses.
 - Exactly, how old were you?
 - Do you remember or what do you think was happening at that time in the world?
 - Why do you think you remember the specific events you do?
 - How do you think that memory affects you now?* Students may also choose to sketch a picture of the memory or draw a map to help them share their experiences.
2. Have students share their memories with classmates. (As time allows, have them share to the entire group, small groups, or pairs.)
3. Introduce the Omoide book to the class. Tell them what “omoide” means. (If necessary, see the vocabulary lesson provided in this guide.) Share any of the Omoide stories you have selected. Make connections to the memory objective with the guided questions below or ones you and your students have created.

Secondary activities:

Have students ask someone older to share their earliest memory. Tell them to compare the event and the timeframe to their own earliest memory. What is different? What is the same?

Guided questions/Potential answers:

- Why do you think the book is titled Omoide IV: Childhood Memories? (*It’s a collection of early memories from the Japanese American community. Omoide means memories in Japanese.*)
- Do you think the writers of these stories realized how these events would eventually become memories? (*Answers will vary*)
- How do you think the Omoide stories relate to the history of Japanese Americans? (*Answers may include things such as: they remember their experiences in camp, they were collected together as a single ethnic group, they were Americans going through a unique experience with each other*)
- Are the memories in the Omoide stories good or bad? (*both*) Are your memories good or bad? (*both*)
- What might be an appropriate title for a collection of our class memories? (*Answers will vary.*)

Summary:

Each person regardless of age has a personal history based on their past experiences. Make sure students understand the connection between their early and present experiences as events that will one day be their own personal histories.

Assessment options:

With the memory writings and the oral responses to the guided questions during discussions, you can use the [response rubric](#) included in this guide to assess understanding.

Extensions/Follow up:

Have students expand on their memory writings with different topics and art or photographs. If the group is older, have them write a brief description of what they remember happening to them or others after 9/11. With younger groups, have them write memories of events that they feel changed their lives or affected them greatly. Collect these writings in a class journal.

Additional Bibliography:

Other resources can be found in the Instructional guide [bibliography](#).

Notes: