Activity

Creating a Life Map

Grades: 6–8

Overview
Students organize and chronicle important events in their lives using a map format which they share with one another. They then write out the story of one of their 10 "main events."

Objective
Students will:
- Classify and organize information in sequential order.
- Generate drafts to develop a topic for a specific audience and/or purpose.
- Chronicle the main events from their life thus far.

Materials
1. Manila drawing paper or white printer paper
2. Crayons, markers, or other decorative instruments
3. Notebook paper
4. Pencil
Directions

This activity is used to allow students a chance to express themselves, introduce themselves, and provide a baseline for writing assessment for the teacher.

PART I

Step 1: Begin by telling the students a short anecdote from your own childhood. Pick one you can describe with vivid imagery and details to model voice and word choice.

Step 2: Direct students to brainstorm important events from their own life. Have students use notebook paper and a pencil to write, "I remember" and finish the sentence. Give the class 3 minutes to write as many "I remember" statements. Challenge them to keep writing until you say, "Stop."

Step 3: Tell the students to pick 10 main events from the list and put each in chronological order.

Step 4: Distribute drawing paper. Have the students write the 10 main events in a map format. Remind the students that this is not a timeline but a map, meaning the events can be organized in any way on the paper as long as the line of time connects each in order. This gives them more freedom to put things down than they would have if they started with a timeline format. Students should do this in pencil first as a rough draft. They may assign a symbol or icon to each event.

PART II

Step 7: Instruct students to choose one event from the map upon which to elaborate.

Step 8: Have students list the details they remember from this one event then put that list in chronological order. This will act as the prewriting for the personal narrative.

Step 9: Instruct students to now write a rough draft of the personal narrative describing the details of this main event. Remind them to include feelings and sensory details to the story to make it interesting.

Step 10: Have each student find a partner and share rough drafts of the personal narrative. In this peer conference, each student will read his/her partner's narrative and form 3 questions about the piece. For example, "What do you mean by ?" "How old were you when this happened?" "How did you feel when that happened?" Students should formulate questions that can direct the writer to include details that the audience may want to know. (You may want to repeat this step a few times depending on how well your students are able to revise their own writing.)
Home Connection

- Parents may assist with students putting events in order.
- Parents may remind students of the dates for certain events that students are not able to remember.

  Subjects:
  Charts and Graphs, Diagrams, Timelines, Narrative Writing