

Week 3 – Life History Paper

Now that you have outlined your major life events in the Chronological Record, you can probably see some themes emerging that characterize your life journey. For example, some people always put others' needs before their own, some have moved a great deal throughout their lives, others may have had to deal with a great amount of adversity, etc.

In this section of your portfolio you will be reflecting on the events you laid out in the Chronological Record to write your Life History Paper. Prewriting by brainstorming, free writing, clustering, or outlining are good ways to start the writing process. You can find more information about each of these techniques at this link, <http://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/prewriting.htm>.

The prewriting activity you choose is up to you; however, you may consider using the Chronological Record as your base and filling in with reflections on each event. Look for themes and patterns to help organize your writing. You will be reflecting on those events in your paper. Keep in mind that unlike the Chronological Record, your Life History Paper can begin from birth and will include much more depth and descriptions to tell your life's story. This is your opportunity to evaluate and connect the experiences that have brought you to where you are today.

After completing the Chronological Record and prewriting, you should have plenty of information to develop a thesis statement for your paper. The thesis statement consists of one to two sentences that focus your paper, provides the reader with an idea of what's to come, and acts as the overall theme. One way to think of it is as the main idea you want the reader to remember once he/she has finished reading your paper. You may complete the sentence, "I want the reader to remember that..." The part that comes after "that" will be your thesis statement. For example, I want the reader to remember that...although it hasn't been an easy road, I am finally fulfilling my dream of earning a college degree.

Your thesis statement would be, *"Although it hasn't been an easy road, I am finally fulfilling my dream of earning a college degree."* This will be the theme that guides your paper. As you write your paper, it is helpful to come back to your thesis statement to ensure you are keeping it focused.

Other thesis statement examples:

Throughout my life there have always been three driving factors: my desire to be a firefighter, the need to support and care for my family, and the goal of one day earning a college degree.

The turning point in my life came 10 years ago when my father passed away, leaving my mother with nothing. I realized that if I continued the destructive path I was on, it would result in the same outcome for my wife and kids.

You may be wondering, “How much work information and how much personal information do I include?” This is up to you. You want to include both, and if you are leaning too heavily to one side or the other, I will let you know.

Your Life History Paper should include the following:

- Introduction and conclusion
- Clear thesis statement that guides the overall theme of your paper
- Reflection on the different events of your life
- Expand on your Chronological Record. Use this as an outline.
- 2500-3500 words
- Written in first person (I)

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