

Torn-Paper Autobiography

Understanding the story of one's own life is an important part of adolescent identity and development. Students make a self-portrait from torn bits of colored paper and write their own life story.

Objectives

- Use a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex) and types (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative).
- Select effective formats for publication of the final product.
- Use available technology (laptop publishing, electronic dictionary, and printing).

Extra Dimension: To expand students' writing skills, have them interview someone in their family, such as a grandparent, and write a biography about that person.

Directions

1. Photocopy student directions and gather needed materials (see page 21).
2. Distribute directions and materials to students. Go over project expectations and remind students that the art they create will act as a prompt for an autobiography.
3. Show students some examples of torn-paper art, if possible, and review the elements of an autobiography as necessary, such as speaking candidly about oneself, mentioning important events that define one's life, and presenting ideas in a logical (often chronological) way.
4. Next, have students create their own self-portrait by gluing torn bits of construction paper onto one larger sheet of paper (on which they've already drawn their face, using a pen or pencil).
5. Then, students should write a five-paragraph autobiography. Remind students that they will share their autobiographies with the class so they should choose only those areas of their life they are comfortable revealing to others.
6. Encourage students to end with positive predictions for their future.



When I look in the mirror, I see myself. I have long hair and glasses. I'm about 5' 3" tall, and I'm almost 12 years old. I like my sparkling brown eyes.

Right now I am in Girl Scouts and it's so fun. We make crafts and play games. The other girls in the troop are so cool. They are fun and crazy in a good way (we all are). We go on trips like downtown to the Hyatt for the Christmas Light Parade.

*Excerpt from "An Autobiography All About Me!"
by Taylor O., sixth grade*