



Our Own Stories: What's Your Story?

An Authorized Warm Up Exercise for finding a great place-based story You might want to try to tell using Google mapping tools.

We All Have Place-Based Stories to Tell

www.GoogleLitTrips.org

Like many of the characters we read about, we also have our own stories where we learn some of life teaches us lessons we had never even thought about before. Whether we succeed beyond our wildest imaginations or fall short of our hopes and dreams, we can sure learn a lot about life from our experiences.

The Two Most Important Rules!

1. This is a completely private exercise **you will not turn it in**. The only people who will see it are the people you choose to share it with and you do not have to share it with anyone if you do not want to.
2. You do not have to answer all of the following questions. Feel free to spend your time just thinking about the question(s) that you find interesting.

Let's Get Started

In this warm up exercise, we'll begin by remembering places and events where you might have discovered something new about ourselves and about life that you never really knew about before.

How would you finish the following sentence starter if you were getting together with one of your friends you hadn't seen for a long time?

"Hey do you remember the time we _____

What if it were hanging out sharing old stories with a new friend?

"I remember the time when I a friend of mine and I... _____

Remember when you still sat at the kid's table at Thanksgiving and the "grownups" started telling the same old stories they tell every year at Thanksgiving? What are some of the stories you've told over and over again about things you did when you were younger.

A Few More Questions to Get You Thinking...

Answer only the questions you feel compelled to. Don't worry. I won't be collecting this information. Try to work very fast. What are the very first answers that jump into your mind?

For the questions you find interesting, identify up to four stories that come to mind.

Topic only needs to be a short note that will remind you of a story you could tell.

Location(s) could be a single location or a series of locations for example the three locations you remember from a family vacation. **Important Restriction:** Try to think of stories that happened in public places; for example at school, in a national park, at a playground, an amusement park, or zoo. Just stay away from people's home.

Time Frame could be a specific date like a birthday; a major event like the time you broke an arm, a time of day like while you were sitting around a campfire telling scary stories, or a time of year. like the middle of winter, during baseball tryouts, etc.

The Most Outstanding Day(s) of Your Life	Location(s)	Time Frame

The Most Difficult Day(s) of Your Life	Location(s)	Time Frame

It was funny then, but it's not so funny now	Location(s)	Time Frame

It wasn't funny then, but it's pretty funny now	Location(s)	Time Frame

The most influential encounter(s) of my life	Location(s)	Time Frame

The best lesson I ever learned the hard way	Location(s)	Time Frame

So, what story will you tell?

The Next Step is to choose the story you want to tell, look for the story that:

- is most meaningful to you
- takes place in one or more identifiable public places
- happened over a pretty short time span (no more than a few days if possible)
- you can make your story “sound” like you’re telling the story to someone you want to share the story with; **not like you’re writing a report for a teacher.** For example: Rather than say “It started on April 10, 2012.” Write like you’re talking, like this, “I was 10 and I thought this was going to be the best spring vacation of my life!”
- could be read aloud in 5 minutes or so. This might be impossible, but try to get as close to 5 minutes as you can.

After you decide which story you want to tell, use the chart below or one like it somewhere else to make notes regarding which life events will become part of your Personal “Our Own Stories.”

	Experience	Location(s)
How did the story start? (When, Where, Who, Initial expectations)		
So what happened? (Basic plot line)		
What was the most important part of the story? (Real reason the story is worth telling)		
How did the story end? (unexpectedly? happily? regrets? proud? apology?)		
Reflection How are you different because of the experience?		

Finally it’s time to write your story!