

For Struggling students have them Read this
and let it prompt them.

lesson

3

Writing about your life

The story of your life is the story you know best of all. Unlike most writing assignments, this one requires no investigation of secondary sources. As the writer of your **autobiography**, you may find that you have far too much information to handle well. Where should you begin? What are the important events? Who were the important influences? How can you begin to put it all on paper?

You could of course, simply begin with your earliest memories and write everything that you can recall in the sequence that the events actually happened. But an autobiography is more than simply the retelling of events in your life.

Your task in this lesson will be to select an important phase from your past, describe it in detail, and answer the question: What did it mean?

What is a phase? In this case, a **phase** is simply a portion of your life with a beginning and an end. A summer might be a phase in your life. Your adaptation to a school or the birth of one of your brothers or sisters could also be a phase.

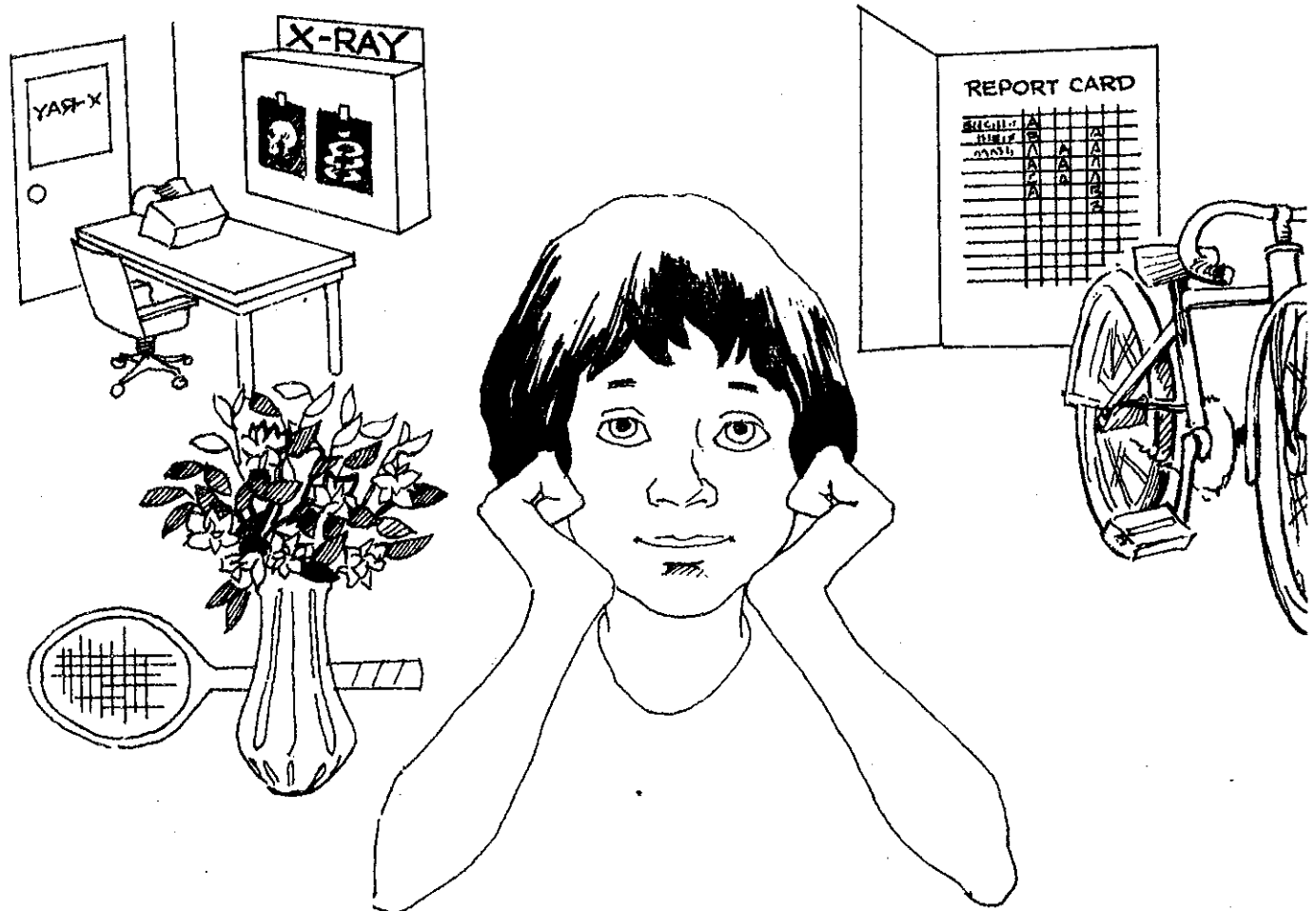
A. Jot down a few events or feelings in your life that you particularly remember.

B. Choose one of the events from part A to become the phase you will write about. In the space below, briefly describe the phase. Note the events and the approximate dates on which the phase started and ended.

- C. What was the nature of this phase? Did you learn something about yourself? Did you grow up, or learn a new skill?

- D. Now that you have begun to define the change you experienced during this phase of your life, you should write a statement of the theme of this autobiographical phase. The theme could be friendship, learning, or loss. It should capture the meaning of the phase for you.

In order for your readers to know how you changed during this phase, they should have some idea of what you were like before the phase.



E. Describe briefly your feelings before this phase. In your description make it clear why this phase was important to you.

F. The changes you underwent during this phase were largely produced by important people and events at that time in your life. List the persons that influenced you during this period. Describe each person and the particular events that person is linked to. Then describe the influence that person had on you.

Person:

Person:

Person:

G. List in chronological order the important events that took place during this phase of your life. After each event, describe your reaction to it.

Event:

Event:

Event:

Event:

Event: _____

- H. You learned how it is possible to describe the same event from different points of view. Other people may have different viewpoints about your phase than you do. In fact, your own point of view may have changed. You may have been unhappy about this period of your life while you were living it and discovered later how valuable it was to you. Your autobiography should be written from your present point of view. What is your viewpoint about this phase of your life now?

- I. What makes you remember this phase today? Do people remind you? Are you reminded by sights and sounds that recall that period of your life? Do you compare present experiences to that time in your life?



Using the ideas and information you have written above, you should be able to write several paragraphs about your autobiographical phase. As you write, try to combine the telling of the events with your interpretation of their significance.

An autobiography is the story of one's life: it tells both the events and the significance of those events in a person's life.