Writing Historical Fiction from an Interview

**Using abstraction to tell the story of a major moment in history  
through the eyes of a family member or neighbor**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Interview (homework)

For homework tonight or this weekend, you are going to interview a family member or a neighbor about a significant historical tragedy, chosen from the list below. You will write down their answers to the questions given, as well as two questions that you will come up with yourself. Make sure to get specific details!

Have your interviewee choose from the following tragedies. If possible, have them choose one that happened when they were close to your current age. Circle the tragedy they choose!

* Assassination of John F Kennedy (1963)
* Assassination of Malcolm X (1965)
* Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr (1968)
* Munich Olympics massacre (1972)
* Jonestown suicides (1978)
* Assassination of John Lennon (1980)
* Challenger Space Shuttle explosion (1986)
* Deadly Los Angeles riots (1992)
* World Trade Center truck bombing (1993)
* Oklahoma City bombing (1995)
* Columbine school shootings (1999)
* September 11 terrorist attacks (2001)

Ask if you have an idea for a different historically significant event!

Answers to the following questions should be written by you (the student) in complete sentences.

1. How old were you when this tragedy occurred? Who did you live with?

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1. How did you find out about this tragedy?

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1. What were your first thoughts and feelings about this tragedy? What did or didn’t you understand?

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1. How did other members of your family, or other adults around you, respond?

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Now it’s your turn to write two questions. Don’t ask simple factual things – ask about feelings, reactions, perspectives, changes in your interviewee’s life, etc.

1. Question:

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Answer:

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1. Question:

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Answer:

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This is the end of your homework

# Research on your tragedy (classwork)

Today you are going to do some research about the tragedy your interviewee chose. Use the sources provided and take notes below. You will incorporate some of these details into your historical fiction narrative.

Notes:

# First draft feedback (homework)

Tonight you are going to read the first draft of your narrative to your interviewee. You should write down any feedback that your interviewee gives and any changes he or she suggests. Then, think about which of these changes you want to incorporate into your final draft, and list them below.

## Feedback from your interviewee

## Changes you will make in your final draft

# Rubric

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Doesn’t Meet Expectations [0] | Approaching Expectations [1-2] | Meets Expectations  [3-4] | Exceeds Expectations [5] | Score |
| Interview | Interview not completed | Interview shows little effort  Few details included  Answers not written in complete sentences | Interview shows some effort  Some details included  Answers written in complete sentences | Interview shows excellent effort  Many details included  Answers written in complete sentences |  |
| Research | Research not completed | Very few notes taken  Notes aren’t important relevant to tragedy | Some notes taken  Notes are somewhat important and relevant to tragedy | Many notes taken  Notes are all important and relevant to tragedy |  |
| Narrative: Style | Narrative is not written from the perspective of the interviewee  Many spelling and grammar errors | Narrative is written from the perspective of the interviewee, but that character is not well developed  Some spelling and grammar errors | Narrative is written from the perspective of the interviewee, and that character is somewhat developed  Few spelling and grammar errors | Narrative is written from the perspective of the interviewee, and that character is very well developed  No spelling or grammar errors |  |
| Narrative: Details | Narrative includes no meaningful details | Narrative includes few details about the historic event  Details are presented as facts that do not flow well with the narrative | Narrative includes details about both the event and the interviewee  Details are integrated into the narrative | Narrative includes rich details about the event, the interviewee and how the interviewee responded to the event  Details are well integrated into the narrative and from the perspective of the interviewee |  |
| Response to Feedback | Feedback not collected | Some unimportant feedback collected  Feedback did not lead to changes | Some meaningful feedback collected  Feedback led to some changes | Lots of detailed, meaningful feedback collected  Feedback led to big, meaningful changes |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Total:  / 25 |