



Write Your Life Stories in 30 Days

A workbook for those looking for a step by step approach to writing stories, adding photos, and completing a memoir, autobiography, or other life stories project.

by Val Brennan of MemoirHelper.com

Write Your Life Stories in 30 Days

A Workbook
by Val Brennan

MemorWorkbook.com Version

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Is this workbook right for you?.....	1
 Overview	1
READ THIS Before You Begin.....	2
 Other Versions of <i>Write Your Life Stories in 30 Days</i>	2
 Scheduling Your Time & Place.....	2
 Using this Workbook.....	3
 Join My Invitation-Only Facebook Group	3
 Disclosure	3
Day 1: Modules #1 – 9.....	4
 Module #1 – Define Your Project	4
 Module #2 – Choose Your Approach.....	4
 Module #3 – MemoirWorkbook.com Set-up	6
 Module #4 – Brainstorm Your Table of Contents	7
 Module #5 – Choose People/Groups to Include	7
 Module #6 – Choose Themes to Include	8
 Module #7 – Choose Beliefs to Include	8
 Module #8 – Choose Life Events to Include	9
 Module #9 – Fitting the Pieces Together.....	9
Days 2 – 3: Module #10.....	11
 Module #10 – Expand Your Topics	11
Day 4: Modules #11 - #12.....	12
 Module #11 – Organize and Make Cuts.....	12
 Module #12 – Calculate Your Daily Writing Quota	13
Day 5 – 10: Module #13	14
 Module #13 – Write Your Quota!	14
Day 11: Module #14	15
 Module #14 – Choose Photos.....	15
Day 12 – 16: Module #15	18
 Module #15 – Continue Writing Your Quota!	18

Day 17 – 18: Module #16	19
Module #16 – Digitize Your Photos DIY.....	19
Day 19 – 23: Module #17	23
Module #17 – Continue Writing Your Quota!	23
Day 24: Modules #18 – 20.....	24
Module #18 – Organize Your Topics.....	24
Module #19 – Organize Your Subtopics.....	25
Module #20 – Edit Yourself - Level 1.....	25
Day 25 – 26: Module #21	26
Module #21 – Edit Yourself - Level 2.....	26
Day 27: Module #22	27
Module #22 – Add Your Photos and Images	27
Day 28 – 29: Module #23	29
Module #23 – Edit Yourself – Level 3	29
Day 30: Modules #24 – 25.....	30
Module #24 – Page Layout.....	30
Module #25 – The Finish Line	31
Need Additional Help?.....	32
Wrap-Up.....	32
I would love to hear from you... ..	32
Worksheets.....	33
Worksheet #1 – Define Your Project.....	34
Worksheet #2 –Topics	36
Worksheet #3 – People/Groups Brainstorming.....	37
Worksheet #4 – Themes.....	38
Worksheet #5 – Beliefs.....	39
Worksheet #6 – Life Events.....	40
Worksheet #7 – Chapter Topic Groups.....	41
Worksheet #8 – Photo Brainstorming.....	42

IS THIS WORKBOOK RIGHT FOR YOU?

The *Write Your Life Stories in 30 Days Workbook* may be right for you if any of the following are true:

- You would like to document your personal and family history for yourself or to share with family and friends.
- You realize that your children may not fully understand what influences led you to be who you are, and you want to share that with them.
- You want to keep a living document of your family's journey.
- You are hesitant to get involved in a project like this because it could become too time-consuming or feel like a “never-ending” project.
- You are not sure where to start and could use structure and a clear path from start to finish.
- **If you are wanting to work on your life stories but are not concerned with getting it done quickly, you may still find the structure in this workbook to be useful. You can simply ignore the timelines and work at any pace you choose.**

This workbook is not intended for professional writers or anyone hoping to hit the best seller list.

Overview

This workbook lays out very specific and manageable tasks over the course of 30 days. I don't expect most people to work on it for 30 consecutive days, and it is certainly okay if you wish to break it down even further. During the process, you will be guided through the following:

- Creating a Project Summary that defines your audience and your reason for doing this project.
- Exploring the topics that you wish to include and taking a series of steps to expand each topic, from initial idea to its final form.
- Gathering photos and other documents that you want to include and converting them into a digital format if necessary.
- Setting up and arranging your chapters.
- Editing your work.
- Deciding on your final format. (examples: e-book, bound book, 3-ring binder)
- Formatting and distributing your book.

READ THIS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Other Versions of *Write Your Life Stories in 30 Days*

This workbook has been adapted for working in three different ways as explained below. **The version you are reading is tailored for those who will be using [MemoirWorkbook.com](https://www.memoirhelper.com)**, which requires a low-cost subscription. This is a tool we've created to help make the process of writing life stories easier and it works beautifully with this 30-day plan. You can easily add your topics and expand them and it's super easy to rearrange things to get the best flow. You can upload your photos and in the end, you'll have a beautifully formatted e-book that would need few if any changes to be ready for printing. This is a very low-cost option that I believe could save you time in the process of writing your life stories.

Here's an overview of the other two versions:

- **Word-Processor Version**— This version of the workbook is specifically tailored for use with Microsoft Word, OpenOffice Writer, or LibreOffice Writer. Other word-processing applications may work as well, but this version includes special instructions for those three applications.
- **Worksheet Version** – This version of the workbook is intended for those who prefer pen and paper. Printable worksheets are included with this version. If you decide on the handwritten route, you can [photocopy your stories on 3-hole punch paper and put them in a three-ring binder for distribution](#), or you can still turn them into a digital document when you are finished. You can even turn it into a multimedia presentation by making an audio recording of what you have written and adding a photo slideshow.

To request a different version of this workbook, visit <https://www.memoirhelper.com/choose30/>. Please use the same e-mail address you used to receive this version to avoid receiving duplicate messages.

Scheduling Your Time & Place

Since everyone works at a different pace, it's difficult to say how much time you will need to set aside on any given day. Some parts of this will come easily and others may be more difficult. That said, my estimation is that most people will be able to get the modules for each day done in 2 – 4 hours.

If you are the type of person who likes to set your schedule well in advance, then go ahead right now and schedule all of your time on your calendar. If you prefer to do it each week as you go, that's just fine, but it is important to get it on your calendar and commit to showing up.

Besides scheduling your time, you may also want to have a designated place where you can focus without being interrupted. Set aside a space to keep any notes, photos, and documents together. I suggest creating a “Life Stories Kit” similar to the one I describe in [this post on MemoirHelper.com](#).

Using this Workbook

A few things you should know before you start...

- Occasionally I have a need to abbreviate the title of this workbook for resources outside of it, so I refer to it as “**WYLS in 30 Days**” (**W**rite **Y**our **L**ife **S**ories).
- There are **video tutorials** on specific topics mentioned in this workbook and also on other topics related to MemoirWorkbook.com. There are direct links to many of them, but there is also a complete Playlist of these tutorials on YouTube. The Playlist is called [WYLS in 30 Days Using MemoirWorkbook.com](#). **Bookmark or favorite this Playlist** so you can find it easily in the future. You can also **Subscribe to our Memoir Helper Channel** by clicking the big red Subscribe button while you are on YouTube.
- Here is a link to the [User Manual](#) for MemoirWorkbook.com. You will likely find the answer to any questions you might have about using MemoirWorkbook.com.
- This workbook includes links to online resources. It was designed to be read electronically (on a computer, tablet, or smartphone), however, **if you decide to print it**, I have created a Resource Page on MemoirHelper.com that has links to all of the resources mentioned in this workbook. I suggest that you Bookmark or Favorite it on your computer, tablet, and/or phone, or at least commit this simple web address to memory: [MemoirHelper.com/30daylinks](#)

Join My Invitation-Only Facebook Group

I’m starting a private group on Facebook for people just like you. Follow this link and click “Join”: [Write Your Life Stories Facebook Group](#). You will have to wait a short time for approval into the group, but once you’re in, you can ask questions and share stories with others who are working on their own life stories project.

Disclosure

This workbook contains affiliate/referral links. In some cases when you use a link and subsequently make a purchase or create an account, I may receive a small commission or referral fee. That’s one way we keep MemoirHelper.com going! There are footnotes attached to each of these links.

DAY 1: MODULES #1 – 9

Module #1 – Define Your Project

□ #1: Use [Worksheet #1](#) to define who you are writing this for and what it is that you are trying to accomplish. There are many reasons people embark on this journey, but here are a few ideas that might help you define your purpose:

- Share your life lessons and/or advice.
- Shed light on how you became the person you are.
- Share family history and stories that you know about your ancestors.
- Share your observations about and impact of various family members on your life.
- Reveal or explain stories or events that you haven't shared fully or at all.
- Discuss your thoughts and/or reactions to notable historical events.
- Preserve your funny stories.
- Share your survival stories – you've been through "stuff", so how did you make it through the toughest times.
- Share your career or business successes and failures.
- Bring clarity to issues and struggles you have experienced, for yourself and/or your family.

Module #2 – Choose Your Approach

□ #1: **IMPORTANT** - This workbook offers two approaches to writing your life stories. Consider both approaches below and **CHOOSE THE APPROACH that feels like the best fit for you.**

Approach 1: Table of Contents or TOC Approach

Suggested for you if any of the following are true:

- You like to tell stories.
- You have a preconceived idea about the path of the narrative you wish to tell.
- You are writing a memoir about a particular slice of your life.

In this approach, you will start by creating a list of your main topics, many of which will ultimately become your Table of Contents (TOC). Chances are that you will be able to see natural or logical sections in your story that will likely become your chapters. There is always some overlap when you do this because not every chapter will wrap up before the next one begins, but don't let that become a stumbling block.

Below are the modules that you will need to complete for the TOC Approach. This is just for reference. You don't need to worry about remembering these details, as there are instructions as you go.

For the TOC Approach:

- You will complete Modules #3 – #4 and #10 – #25
- You will SKIP Modules #5 – #9. If you have printed this workbook, draw a big X through these modules if you decide on this approach.

Approach 2: Self-Discovery Approach

Suggested for you if any of the following are true:

- You are not sure what you are going to write about.
- You are interested in self-discovery.

In this approach, you will brainstorm people, themes, beliefs, and life events. Your finished project will begin by introducing and discussing your most important people, themes, and beliefs. Your life events and stories will follow in either chronological order or in order of importance.

Below are the modules that you will need to complete for the Self-Discovery Approach. This is just for reference. You don't need to worry about remembering these details, as there are instructions as you go.

For the Self-Discovery Approach:

- You will use Modules #3 and #5 - #25.
- You will SKIP Module #4. If you have printed this workbook, draw a big X through Module 4 if you decide on this approach.

*After reading both approaches, if you are not sure which to take, try looking through the modules related to each. You might even want to complete the modules for both approaches (all the modules in Day 1) and then decide. **CHOOSE YOUR APPROACH BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT MODULE.***

Module #3 – MemoirWorkbook.com Set-up

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

- ☐ **#1:** If you already have an account, log in to it and skip to #6 below.
- ☐ **#2:** If you do not have an account, [click here to activate your one-month free trial](#) **OR** go to MemoirHelper.com/promo and use Promo Code: WYLS30
- ☐ **#3:** Enter your account information. Make sure to click the checkbox to agree to the Terms of Service.
- ☐ **#5:** Click Create Your Account
- ☐ **#6:** From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on the green “Topics & Questions” block.
- ☐ **#7:** On this page, you will see all of our pre-installed Topics. Since you will be creating all of your own topics, click the button that says “Hide All Topics”.
- ☐ **TIP:** The tools at Grammarly.com¹ are excellent for catching errors in spelling and grammar. I recommend installing the Grammarly extension on whatever browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge) you are using for your MemoirWorkbook.com project. Here’s a short [video tutorial on installing and using Grammarly](#).

¹ This is an affiliate/referral link. [See Disclosure](#).

Module #4 – Brainstorm Your Table of Contents

Use this module if you chose the TOC Approach in Module #2. Skip to [Module #5](#) if you chose the Self-Discovery Approach.

Whether you are writing about your entire life or just a slice of your life, you will be brainstorming the topics that you want to cover. These topics will become your chapters, but don't get hung up on creating catchy titles. You just want to capture the subject of the topic. Your topics will not be set in stone at this point, so just add anything that seems like it might be a natural or logical section of your book. You will have the opportunity to break topics up into multiple topics and to merge topics later in the process.

- ☐ **#1:** You can use MemoirWorkbook.com to do your brainstorming, but if you think it might be easier to start with pen and paper, print one or more copies of the Topics Worksheet ([Worksheet #2](#)).
- ☐ **#2:** From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on the green Topics & Questions block if you're not already on the Topics page. You can also click on Topics & Questions in the left-hand sidebar.
- ☐ **#3:** Brainstorm all the main topics for your project. You don't need to put them in any order at this point, we just want to create a list of topics.

To Add Topics on MemoirWorkbook.com:

On the Topics page, within the blue Active Topics bar, you will see a white "Add Topic" block. Click "Add Topic". Then click in the input box and type your topic. Click on "Add" or press the Enter key on your keyboard. Continue adding topics until your brainstorming is complete. **Here's a short [video tutorial on how to add topics](#).**

NOTE: If you try to add a topic name that was the same as one used in the pre-populated topics, you will receive a message that the topic already exists. I suggest just making a minor change to your topic name. You will be able to change it later.

- ☐ **#4:** Skip to [Module #10](#).

Module #5 – Choose People/Groups to Include

Use this module if you chose the Self-Discovery Approach in Module #2. If you chose the TOC Approach and have already completed Module #4, skip ahead to [Module #10](#).

In this module, you will list the people who fall within the boundaries of your Project Summary from Worksheet #1. In some cases, there may be a group of people like your spouse and children or your high school volleyball team. There may be people or groups about whom you have enough to say to fill a chapter.

There may be others who were present during a single life event and you may simply want to include them within the context of that life event. There also may be people/groups who influenced your beliefs or had a role in one of your themes. In some cases, they will simply be people/groups who touched your life in a way that is worthy of mention. You will work through these categories of people in slightly different ways.

- ☐ #1: Print [Worksheet #3](#). You may need more than one copy.
- ☐ #2: Brainstorm all of the people or groups who fall within the boundaries of your Project Summary from Worksheet #1. Write down the name of the person or group and for now, leave the space for entering a Topic blank.
- ☐ #3: Keep your worksheets for an upcoming module.

Module #6 – Choose Themes to Include

Continue with this module if you chose the Self-Discovery Approach in Module #2. If you chose the TOC Approach and have already completed Module #4, skip ahead to [Module #10](#).

In this module, you will list themes that are relevant to your Project Summary. A theme might be something like a series of coincidences or being in the right place at the right time. It could be a pattern of pushing through difficult barriers or it could be self-destructive tendencies. You may have themes that have subtly influenced your life and you may have some that have been a part of your most defining life events.

- ☐ #1: Print [Worksheet #4](#).
- ☐ #2: Brainstorm all of the themes which fall within the boundaries of your Project Summary. Write down a brief description of the theme and for now, leave the space for entering a Topic blank.
- ☐ #3: Keep your worksheets for an upcoming module.

Module #7 – Choose Beliefs to Include

Continue with this module if you chose the Self-Discovery Approach in Module #2. If you chose the TOC Approach and have already completed Module #4, skip ahead to [Module #10](#).

In this module, you will list beliefs that are relevant to your Project Summary. You may call them beliefs, core values, guiding principles or something else altogether, but these are the ideas each of us carry which influence our thoughts and actions. Sometimes our beliefs help guide us to live our best lives and sometimes they cause internal conflict or conflict with others. Sometimes our beliefs are guided by religious or spiritual influences and sometimes they come from cultural influences. Some beliefs are so embedded that we feel like they are simply a part of who we are. A belief may be a thread that weaves through your stories or sometimes the story may be in the acquiring or transformation of the belief itself.

- ☐ #1: Print [Worksheet #5](#).
- ☐ #2: Brainstorm all of the beliefs which fall within the boundaries of your Project Summary. Write down a brief description of the belief and for now, leave the space for entering a Topic blank.
- ☐ #3: Keep your worksheets for an upcoming module.

Module #8 – Choose Life Events to Include

Continue with this module if you chose the Self-Discovery Approach in Module #2. If you chose the TOC Approach and have already completed Module #4, skip ahead to [Module #10](#).

In this module, you will list life events that are relevant to your Project Summary. For this project, let's define a 'life event' very broadly. It could be something that happened on a single day or could be something like the entire course of a marriage or career.

- ☐ #1: Print [Worksheet #6](#).
- ☐ #2: Brainstorm all of the life events which fall within the boundaries of your Project Summary. Write down a brief description of the life event and for now, leave the space for entering a Topic blank.
- ☐ #3: Keep your worksheets for an upcoming module.

Module #9 – Fitting the Pieces Together

Continue with this module if you are using the Self-Discovery Approach. [Skip to Module #10 if you are using the TOC Approach.](#)

- ☐ #1: The first step is to choose which people/groups, themes, beliefs, and life events are going to be the subject of an entire chapter. Look through each Person/Group, Theme, Belief, and Life Event that you listed on Worksheets #3 – #6. Write "Chapter" in the Topic space next to those topics about which you have plenty to write and that you want to highlight in your book.
- ☐ #2: Print [Worksheet #7](#).
- ☐ #3: For the rest of your topics, you will decide how they fit together. Most of the time, you will have people, themes, beliefs, and life events that are closely related to each other. Often, but not always, it will be a "life event" that is the main topic and people, themes, and beliefs are part of the story. What you want to do in this step is identify closely related items that will all be a part of a single chapter in your book.

Look through Worksheets #3 – #6 and identify these groups of related people, themes, beliefs, and life events. **On Worksheet #7, write down a Chapter Topic name for each group that you identify.**

Copy the line number of the Chapter Topic from Worksheet #7 into the Topic space for each of the related items on Worksheets #3 – #6. Some people, themes, and beliefs may be associated with more than one Chapter Topic, so save room for more than one number if necessary.

- ☐ **#4:** If you have any remaining topics that don't really go with any of the other topics on those four worksheets, then consider whether there can be one or more catchall chapters. For instance, you might have a few people who you want to mention, but they don't fit in any other chapters. Maybe you could just have a chapter on "Other People Who Made a Difference". Or maybe you will just have one chapter on "Odds and Ends".

Whatever topic you decide upon, add it to Worksheet #7.

- ☐ **#5:** Go to your MemoirWorkbook.com account and click on Topics & Questions and **add a new topic for each of the line items in which you wrote "Chapter" in the Topic space on Worksheets #3 – #6.**

To Add a Topic on MemoirWorkbook.com: ([Video tutorial on how to add topics.](#))

On the Topics page, within the blue Active Topics bar, you will see a white "Add Topic" block. Click "Add Topic". Then click in the input box and type your topic name. Click on "Add" or press the Enter key on your keyboard.

- ☐ **#6:** Now **add a new topic for each of the line items on Worksheet #7.**


DAYS 2 – 3: MODULE #10

Module #10 – Expand Your Topics

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

In this module, you will be brainstorming subtopics for each of the topics you entered in previous modules. **MemoirWorkbook.com refers to subtopics as “Questions,” but you do not need to enter your subtopics in the form of a question.** You will have two days to expand ALL of the topics you have listed so far.

- ☐ **#1:** From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on the green Topics & Questions block if you’re not already on the Topics page.
- ☐ **#2:** In the Active Topics list, the middle column is “Completed/Total”. Each topic should now show “0/0 Add Questions”, meaning there are no subtopics created for any of the topics. **Click on any topic name for which you wish to add subtopics.**
- ☐ **#3:** You will now be on the Questions page for the topic you chose. Remember, what MemoirWorkbook.com refers to as “Questions”, we are calling “Subtopics” for the purpose of this workbook. Within the blue Active Questions bar, click on the white “Add Question” block.
- ☐ **#4:** Click inside the input box and type a subtopic for this topic. Click “Add Question” or press “Enter” on your keyboard. The box will refresh and briefly show a message confirming that the Question has been added. Repeat this process until you’ve added as many subtopics as you can think of for this topic. Then click “Return to List”.
- ☐ **#5:** Print the [Photo Brainstorming Worksheet \(Worksheet #8\)](#). If you can think of any photos that would fit with this topic and its subtopics, note them on the worksheet. If you are not sure of their locations, leave them blank for now.
- ☐ **#6:** In some cases, as you are expanding your list, you may realize that there is more writing material here than is practical for one chapter. If so, consider if there is another logical break where you can divide the topic into two topics. If there is, return to the Topics page by clicking Topics & Questions in the menu on the left. Add the new topic in the same way you added topics in previous modules.


If you need to move subtopics from a different topic, click on that topic name. In the list of Active Questions, there are four icons to the right of each of your subtopics. Click on the third icon which is blue and has three horizontal lines on it.  (If you put your mouse over it, it reads “CHANGE the Topic”). Then click in the topics drop-down box and choose the desired topic. Click “Update” to make the switch. **Here’s a [video tutorial](#).**

DAY 4: MODULES #11 - #12

Module #11 – Organize and Make Cuts

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

- ❑ **#1:** From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on the green Topics & Questions block if you're not already on the Topics page.
- ❑ **#2:** You will be looking through and rearranging the subtopics for each of your topics. Start at the top of the list of Active Topics. Click on the topic name to get to the list of subtopics.
- ❑ **#3:** Within the blue Active Questions bar, click on “Change Order of Questions” in the white block. Arrange your subtopics in an order that makes the most sense to you. At this time, you may just want to move closely related subtopics near each other without worrying exactly where each subtopic might fall. This probably will not be your final order, but it can help make your writing easier if the most closely related items are near each other.


To rearrange subtopics, click on the “handle”  next to the one you want to move and drag it up or down to its new position and then let go. This [video tutorial](#) is about changing the order of topics, however, it works the same way as changing the order of questions (subtopics).

- ❑ **#4:** You may also wish to rearrange your topics at this point if you think it will be helpful for you to see how your book is unfolding. If not, just skip this step, as it will be addressed in Module #18.

Click on the Topics & Questions link in the left sidebar menu. Within the blue Active Topics bar, click on “Change Order of Topics” in the white block. Arrange your topics in an order that makes the most sense to you.

- ❑ **#5:** Now it's time to step back a little and look at your project as a whole to see if there are any topics or subtopics that do not fit or that you may not want to include. Your story will be best if you keep it focused on the most important and interesting aspects.

Scan through all of your topics and subtopics and just mentally and emotionally confirm that you want to include each one in your project. If there are any that you are certain you do not want to include, hide them now.

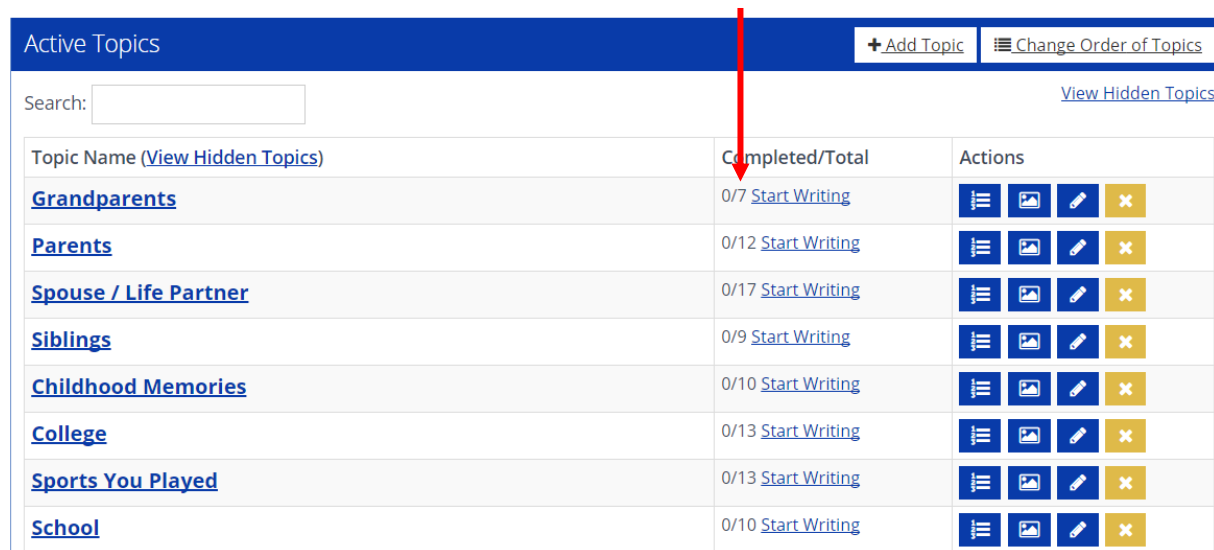
You may remember hiding the pre-populated topics in Module #3. Hiding your subtopics works the same way. Whether on the Topics or Questions page, you will see a gold icon  next to each line item. Click on it to hide the item. Here is the [video tutorial from Module #3](#) if you need a refresher.

Module #12 – Calculate Your Daily Writing Quota

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

- **#1:** In this 30-day program, I have designated 16 days for expanding your subtopics into paragraphs. In order to determine how many subtopics you will need to expand on each of the designated writing days, we need to do a little calculation.

Add up all of your subtopics. Click on Topics & Questions. From the Completed/Total column, add all of the numbers on the right side of the /.



Active Topics		+ Add Topic	Change Order of Topics
Search: <input type="text"/>		View Hidden Topics	
Topic Name (View Hidden Topics)	Completed/Total	Actions	
Grandparents	0/7 Start Writing		
Parents	0/12 Start Writing		
Spouse / Life Partner	0/17 Start Writing		
Siblings	0/9 Start Writing		
Childhood Memories	0/10 Start Writing		
College	0/13 Start Writing		
Sports You Played	0/13 Start Writing		
School	0/10 Start Writing		

- **#3:** Use our [Daily Writing Quota Calculator](http://memoirhelper.com/2252) (memoirhelper.com/2252) and print the result or write it down.

Your Daily Writing Quota	
Complete _____ Subtopics On _____ of 16 Days	Complete _____ Subtopics On _____ of 16 Days

This is just a guide. Some days you may do more writing than others, but over the course of 16 different days in your project, you will complete your writing for each subtopic. I interject a couple of modules about photos to provide breaks in your writing, but those can also be done at any time in the process.

DAY 5 – 10: MODULE #13

Module #13 – Write Your Quota!

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

Today, you're going to start writing about all the things that you have essentially outlined in the steps so far. You've gone through a process of brainstorming your story and breaking it down into bite-size pieces. All you have to do now is explain and describe each little piece.

- ☐ **#1:** For this module, complete your Daily Writing Quota of subtopics. You don't have to go in any particular order, just do what feels right.

From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on the green Topics & Questions block if you're not already on the Topics page. Click on a topic name. Then click on any of your subtopics.

On this screen, you'll find a large box for typing. Click inside it and write as many paragraphs as it takes to explain or describe this subtopic. Write in a voice that feels natural to you. Don't get hung up on spelling, grammar, or trying to make it perfect. Just let it flow.

Be sure to click the red "SAVE YOUR WORK" button frequently. It will save quickly and briefly show a confirmation message. Click back into the box where you wish to begin typing. Also, make sure to "SAVE YOUR WORK" when you are ready to move to another subtopic. If you happen to try to navigate to another subtopic or leave the page without saving, you will receive a pop-up notification. You MUST click "Cancel" to stay on the page and then save your work. Otherwise, anything you have typed after your last save will be lost. Here is a [video tutorial](#).

Complete the writing for your daily quote of subtopics.

- ☐ **#2:** Click on the Download Your Book link in the left sidebar menu. Make sure that there is a check in the box next to "Include Questions". Click on at least one of the two links to download your book as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF document. This step is just so that you will have a backup copy of your writing to this point. Although MemoirWorkbook.com is backed up daily, I just think it's a good idea to keep a current backup on your own computer.
- ☐ **#3:** When you're done writing your daily quota, give yourself a smile, a pat on the back, or even a small reward!
- ☐ **#4:** Repeat this module four more times on Day 6-10.

DAY 11: MODULE #14

Module #14 – Choose Photos

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

If you are ready for a little break from the writing portion of your project, take some time to work on your photos today. However, if you feel like you are rolling along on the writing, you can postpone this module until you are ready for a break.

The number of photos you include in your project is completely up to you. If you are going to have it printed by a professional printing or self-publishing company, you may want to consider a few factors. First, the cost of printing a book in color can be significantly more expensive than printing with black ink. That said, [Kindle Direct Publishing \(KDP\)](#) does offer very reasonable prices for full-color paperback books. The second factor to consider is that the more pages you have, the more expensive it is to print. A few pages won't make much difference, but it is worth considering if you are thinking about including a large number of photos. The third factor is the time and effort required to find photos and get them converted into a digital format, which I will cover in a future module.

Hopefully, as you completed some of the modules, you were able to think of a few photos that might enhance your project. Additionally, you may have photos in frames, albums, boxes, and/or on your computer. If you are of a certain generation, you may even have slides! I'll cover slides at the end of this module.

For some people, this module will be a breeze and for others, it will be an excavation! If it feels overwhelming, limit the number of photos you include.

- ☐ **#1: Frames** – Look around your home at any photos in frames and see if there are any you want to include in this project. Use the Photo Brainstorming Worksheet ([Worksheet #8](#)) to note where the photo is located, as well as the associated topic.
- ☐ **#2: Albums and Boxes** – Next, go through any photo albums that you think might have images that you would want to include. You can either note the location of the photo on Worksheet #8, or you can remove it from the album or box.
 - You may wish to remove photos from albums and storage boxes at this time, but it's not necessarily required. You will need to remove them at some point IF you plan to scan them or have them scanned. However, there is another way to get these photos into your project without scanning them. With digital cameras, smartphones, and tablets, you can simply take a photo of a print photo even if it's in an album. We will cover this in more detail later, but if removing photos from albums or boxes seems like a big project, just note the photo's location on your worksheet instead.

- If you do remove photos from albums, boxes, or other places where they are stored, I recommend putting them in acid-free envelopes or binder sleeves. Use one envelope or sleeve for each album or box and label them so you know where to return them when you are finished. If it will help, write on the back of the photo, the specific location within the album or box. Make sure you use an acid-free permanent marker and let it dry fully before putting it on top of another photo. If you go this route, you won't need to use the Photo Brainstorming Worksheet. [Shop for Supplies](#).

- **#3: Slides** – If you have a way to view your slides, select the ones you want to include and put them into a small box or an acid-free envelope or sleeve. I use the boxes from my bank checks. If you no longer have a working projector or viewer, you can purchase a [slide sorter or slide viewer](#) or you may be able to just hold the slides up to a light to find your favorites. Depending on how many slides you have and your budget, you may want to have all of your slides converted to digital images first.
- **#4: Digitizing Print Photos and Slides** – The [Digitize Your Photos Module \(Module #16\)](#) goes into detail on several do-it-yourself (DIY) methods for converting photos and slides into a digital format. If you haven't ever done this, then you may want to look ahead now to decide if you will do it yourself, or if you would rather pay to have it done for you. With paid scanning services it may take a few weeks to get your digital images. If you decide on this option, you will want to start that process now. If you are doing it yourself, you can wait until you get to the module on digitizing photos, or until you want to take a break from writing.

Below are several options for paid scanning services:

- **Ship your photos to a scanning service:** You can find very reasonably priced scanning services all over the Internet. ScanDigital is a company that I have used and was quite happy with the results. [Use Coupon Code “MemoirHelper” for a 10% discount on ScanDigital.com services²](#). There are many others if you do a Google search for “photo scanning services” or “slide scanning services”. Make sure you choose a service that gives detailed instructions on how to prepare and ship your photos and/or slides.
- **Big Box and Drug Stores:** Walmart, Sam's Club, Target, CVS, Walgreens and other big chains often have photo services. Usually, they send photos and slides “out” to be scanned, which means it's not really being scanned locally. The prices are quite reasonable.
- **Local Scanning Services:** These are getting harder to find, but you can try a search for “photo scanning” on [yellowpages.com](#). Make sure when you call to inquire about their services, that you ask if they do the scanning at their store, rather than sending it out. One of the reasons for having it done locally is to avoid the risk of your photos or slides being “lost” in transit. It's highly unlikely, but something to consider when thinking of your most valuable images.

² This is an affiliate/referral link. [See Disclosure](#).

- **#5: Digital Photos (on your computer, smartphone, or tablet):** Your more recent photos may well be stored on your computer. For this project, you will may want to create a new folder on your computer and name it something like “Life Stories Project Photos.” When you find a photo that you may want to include in your project, note its location on your computer on Worksheet #8 OR you may prefer to copy the file into the same life stories project folder you created to save your document.

Follow the links below if you want to learn how to Copy & Paste.

- **Windows 7**
<https://youtu.be/B3RGcv-Go88>
- **Windows 8**
<http://www.dummies.com/computers/operating-systems/windows-8/copy-or-move-files-and-folders-in-windows-8/>
- **Windows 10**
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-cut-copy-and-paste-in-windows-10.html>
- **Mac OS X Lion**
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-copy-files-and-folders-in-mac-os-x-lion.html>
- **Mac OS X Mountain Lion**
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-copy-files-and-folders-in-mountain-lion.html>
- **Mac OS X El Capitan**
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-copy-files-and-folders-in-os-x-el-capitan.html>

DAY 12 – 16: MODULE #15

Module #15 – Continue Writing Your Quota!

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

It's time to get back to writing! The instructions below are the same as those in Module 13.

- ☐ **#1:** For this module, complete your Daily Writing Quota of subtopics. You don't have to go in any particular order, just do what feels right.

From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on Topics & Questions. Click on a topic name. Then click on any of your subtopics.

On this screen, you'll find a large box for typing. Click inside it and write as many paragraphs as it takes to explain or describe this subtopic. Write in a voice that feels natural to you. Don't get hung up on spelling, grammar, or trying to make it perfect. Just let it flow.

Be sure to click the red "SAVE YOUR WORK" button frequently. It will save quickly and briefly show a confirmation message. Click back into the box where you wish to begin typing. Definitely be sure to "SAVE YOUR WORK" when you are ready to move to another subtopic. If you happen to try to navigate to another subtopic or leave the page without saving, you will receive a pop-up notification. You MUST click "Cancel" to stay on the page and then save your work. Otherwise, anything you have typed after your last save will be lost. Here is a [video tutorial](#).

Complete the writing for your daily quote of subtopics.

- ☐ **#2:** Click on the Download Your Book link in the left sidebar menu. Make sure that there is a check in the box next to "Include Questions". Click on at least one of the two links to download your book as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF document. This step is just so that you will have a backup copy of your writing to this point. Although MemoirWorkbook.com is backed up daily, I just think it's a good idea to keep a current backup on your own computer.
- ☐ **#3:** When you're done with your daily quota, give yourself a smile, a pat on the back, or even a small reward!
- ☐ **#4:** Repeat this module four more times on Day 13-16.

DAY 17 – 18: MODULE #16

Module #16 – Digitize Your Photos DIY

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module. If you are on a roll with your writing, feel free to skip this module and come back to it later.

You have two days for this module.

In the Choose Your Photos module, if you decided to have all of your photos and/or slides scanned professionally, you get to skip this module! For the rest of you, you might be surprised that this step won't take as long or be as difficult as it sounds.

First, I'll discuss the methods and then talk about when each method might serve you best.

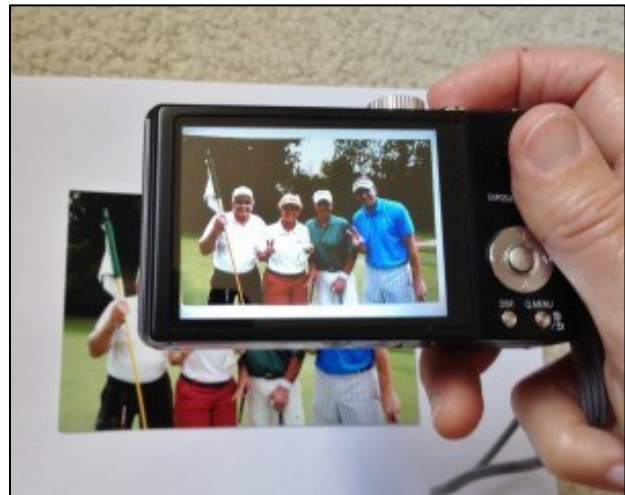
- ❑ **#1: Digitize Your Photos and Slides** – Regardless of the method(s) you use, consider using the Life Stories project folder you created on your computer to store all of the digital photos you may want to use in this project.

Method 1 – High-Speed Photo Scanning

- This is my favorite method for scanning larger quantities of print photos mainly because it's fast and very inexpensive. Depending on where you live, this tool may or may not be available. For this method, I use a Kodak Picture Kiosk with Rapid Print Scanner. Although these units can be found in many big box stores and drug stores, like Sam's Club, Target, Walgreens, Walmart, and CVS, most of them do not include the required Rapid Print Scanner that will allow you to drop photos into a feeder and scan very quickly. To find a kiosk near you, go to this link and enter your zip code: <http://www.kodakmoments.com/kiosk-locator/>. You will either have to click on locations close to you and see if Rapid Print Scanner is listed or just give them a call and ask.
- Although this locator tool is nice, I have found that it doesn't include two of the Sam's Club locations I have used, so it might be a good idea to call around to stores in your area with photo development services.
- If you are lucky enough to find one of these Rapid Print Scanners, you will likely also find someone in the photo department to show you how it works. For around \$5 you can scan a large number of print photos and go home with a CD or DVD that will work on your computer.
- The only downside to this method is that you will need to remove those print photos from the albums to do it.

Method #2 - Taking Photos of Photos

- This technique is not about perfection, but it is about getting it done! At the size you will be including in your project, most people won't be able to tell the difference if you learn to do this well.
- All you need is a digital camera, an iPhone or any smartphone that has a decent camera and of course the right lighting conditions and setup. A tripod can also be quite helpful. For glossy photos, it's especially important to find an angle that doesn't put any glare in the photo.
- You'll need to be in a room with good natural light, but you'll want to be far enough away from the window or door, that the light isn't producing glare on the photo.
- Use a piece of black or white paper as the background. You can lay it on a table or tape it to a wall depending on the lighting.
- If I'm working on a bunch of similarly sized photos, I like to put removable two-sided poster tape on the background paper, so that I can stick the photos down if the edges are curled at all.
- Turn the flash on your camera OFF, as the flash will produce a white spot on your photo.
- Point the camera straight at the photo and do your best to make sure it is level or parallel to the photo so it doesn't get distorted. Again, a tripod can really help with this step.
- Take several shots from different distances away from the photo. Having the camera a little further away can help reduce glare or reflection. You can use the zoom feature to bring the shot in closer or you simply crop the image on your computer. If you are using a smartphone or tablet, there are cropping tools built into the Photos app. ([Learn more about cropping](#))
- If you have trouble with glare, try sitting the photo perpendicular to the light source, so that the light comes from the side, rather than from in front or behind.
- Using the self-timer feature on your camera can help avoid the shake that comes from pushing the button.



Method #2b - Taking Photos of Slides

- Amazingly, you can use a [slide sorter or viewer or a lightbox](#) so you can view your slides and take a photo of any you want to use in your project. If you want to create your own slide viewer, search the web for “create your own slide viewer” to find a variety of instructions.
- Once you have a light source behind your slide so you can see the image, take a digital photo of the slide. You will need to experiment a little to get this right.
- Take shots with and without zoom and from different distances from the slide to see what works best.
- Point the camera straight at the slide and do your best to make sure it is level or parallel to the slide so it doesn’t get distorted.
- Use a tripod or the self-timer if you have trouble keeping the camera steady.
- [Use the Crop tool](#) on your camera or computer to fine tune the edges or zoom in on the best part of the image.

Method 3 – Manual Photo Scanning

- You may have a scanner or an all-in-one printer/scanner in your home. For photographs and documents, these usually do a pretty good job of making a printed photo or document into a digital image. Every scanner or printer model has its own software for scanning, so you’ll need to figure out a system for scanning your photos at a high resolution (600 dpi if possible) and saving them into your “Life Stories Project Photos” folder on your computer.
- If you don’t have a scanner at home and can’t find a Kodak Rapid Print Scanner, you should be able to find a local drug store or big box store that has a flatbed scanner where you can scan photos and have them put onto a CD or DVD. Don’t hesitate to ask for assistance.



Method 4 – Photomyne App

- The [Photomyne App](#) is available for iPhones, iPads, and Android phones and tablets. This app allows you to take pictures of photo album pages or any small group of photos. You take a picture of a page or group of photos, and the app sorts out how many individual pictures are in it. The Photomyne app also makes it super easy to crop and fine tune your photos. It’s faster than doing one at a time and the cropping tool is easy to use and helps with images that are

slightly distorted due to the camera angle. I recommend the Pro version so that you can save the images to your device's camera roll. It costs around \$5 and is available in the [Itunes App Store](#)³ or [Google Play Store](#).

Method 5 – For framed photos and albums that you don't want to dismantle.

- Besides being time-consuming and tedious, sometimes taking an old photo out of frame or album can damage the photo. For those reasons, I recommend that you try using the “Take Photos of Your Photos” method above. Although scanning will almost always produce a higher quality image, for the purposes of this project, it may not be necessary. Try the “Take Photos of Your Photos” method first and if you're not satisfied, then consider if it's worth the effort and time to scan it.

Method 6 – For photo albums and loose photos

- Any of the above methods will work, so it's just about choosing the one that fits your preferences or hardware options. Since getting photos out and back into an album can be tedious and damaging to photos, you may want to use the “Take Photos of Your Photos” method. However, if you have chosen a large number of photos and have access to a Kodak Rapid Print Scanner, you may want to remove the photos from the album and scan them. Manual scanning is a good option if you don't have any luck with the first two options or if you don't have many photos to scan.

³ This is an affiliate/referral link. [See Disclosure](#).

DAY 19 – 23: MODULE #17

Module #17 – Continue Writing Your Quota!

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

This is your final writing stretch! The instructions below are the same as those in Module 13.

- ☐ **#1:** For this module, complete your Daily Writing Quota of subtopics. You don't have to go in any particular order, just do what feels right.

From the Home page of your account on MemoirWorkbook.com, click on the green Topics & Questions block if you're not already on the Topics page. Click on a topic name. Then click on any of your subtopics.

On this screen, you'll find a large box for typing. Click inside it and write as many paragraphs as it takes to explain or describe this subtopic. Write in a voice that feels natural to you. Don't get hung up on spelling, grammar, or trying to make it perfect. Just let it flow.

Be sure to click the red "SAVE YOUR WORK" button frequently. It will save quickly and briefly show a confirmation message. Click back into the box where you wish to begin typing. Also, make sure to "SAVE YOUR WORK" when you are ready to move to another subtopic. If you happen to try to navigate to another subtopic or leave the page without saving, you will receive a pop-up notification. You **MUST** click "Cancel" to stay on the page and then save your work. Otherwise, anything you have typed after your last save will be lost. Here is a [video tutorial](#).

Complete the writing for your daily quota of subtopics.

- ☐ **#2:** Click on the Download Your Book link in the left sidebar menu. Make sure that there is a check in the box next to "Include Questions". Click on at least one of the two links to download your book as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF document. This step is just so that you will have a backup copy of your writing to this point. Although MemoirWorkbook.com is backed up daily, I just think it's a good idea to keep a current backup on your own computer.
- ☐ **#3:** When you're done writing your daily quota, give yourself a smile, a pat on the back, or even a small reward!
- ☐ **#4:** Repeat this module four more times on Day 20-23.

Module #18 – Organize Your Topics

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

Congratulations on writing your way through all those topics and subtopics! Now it's time to put your stories in their final order. **In this module, do not worry about organizing your subtopics, just your topics.**


□ **#1:**

FOR TOC APPROACH ONLY: Decide whether you want to put your topics in chronological order or if you just want to choose an order that makes sense to you.

FOR SELF-DISCOVERY APPROACH ONLY: My suggestion is that you put your chapters on people, themes, and beliefs at the beginning of your book. Put them in order of importance or in an order that gives the best flow to your overall book. Then put the remaining chapters in chronological order or in an order that makes the most sense to you.

Note: *Sometimes people struggle when they try to order their stories chronologically because some events span a period of years and overlap with other topics. My suggestion is to use the date when the topic first appeared in your life to determine the order it will appear in the book. You may occasionally be making references to an upcoming topic, but it's not likely to cause any major confusion.*

□ **#2 FOR BOTH APPROACHES:** Click on the Topics & Questions link in the left sidebar menu. Within the blue Active Topics bar, click on “Change Order of Topics” in the white block.

Rearrange your topics to your desired order. **To move a topic**, click on the “handle”  and drag it up or down to its new position and then let go. Here is a [video tutorial](#) about moving topics.

□ **#3 FOR BOTH APPROACHES:** Now look through each topic for any that may be too long or too short to be in a single chapter. If you have any chapters that are very long, consider if there might be breaking points that would be well suited for creating multiple chapters. If you have any short topics, consider whether they could be grouped together with any other topics. It's okay to have long and short chapters, so don't worry about forcing something if it doesn't feel natural. Here's a [video tutorial](#) on moving subtopics from one topic to another.

Module #19 – Organize Your Subtopics

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

Now you are ready to put the subtopics of your chapters in order.

- ☐ **#1:** Go through one Topic at a time and make any desired changes to the order of your subtopics. If it is not clear to you what the order should be, try arranging them chronologically or consider starting the story by introducing the theme, belief, or person that is at the heart of the topic. The best way to tell the story is probably the same way you would tell it at a party or family gathering... even if you never have!

Module #20 – Edit Yourself - Level 1

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

#1: If you haven't already installed and utilized Grammarly throughout your project, I recommend doing so now. Here's the [video on installing and using Grammarly](#).

If you are not using Grammarly, then use your browser's built-in spell check and/or the Spell Check tool in MemoirWorkbook.com. Most browsers show a squiggly colored line under a word or phrase to indicate a potential issue. Right-clicking it will offer suggestions for improvement.

MemoirWorkbook.com also has a Spell Check button on each writing page. Just remember to click the "Exit Spell Check" button when you are finished using it.

- ☐ **#2:** Look for common mistakes like the ones below. Grammarly will likely catch most of these types of errors but keep your eyes out for them.

Common Mistakes:

your vs. you're -- their vs. they're vs there -- its vs. it's

- ☐ **#3:** Check any dates and locations and make sure they are correct. Also, verify the spelling of any names and locations.
- ☐ **#4:** You may want to put a check in the checkbox next to "Mark answer as COMPLETE" just before you click SAVE YOUR WORK. This will put a green checkmark in the listing of your subtopics so that you will know that you have finished this step. You can still return to a subtopic and make changes, but this just provides a way of keeping track of where you have been.


DAY 25 – 26: MODULE #21

Module #21 – Edit Yourself - Level 2

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

Now that you have done the basic editing, it's time to read your book carefully and take the time to do more serious editing. I've set aside two days for this module.

- ☐ **#1:** From the left sidebar menu, click on Preview Your Book. This should open a printable PDF version of your book. Print it (Ctrl-P or Command-P if you don't see the printer icon.)
- ☐ **#2:** The first time you read through your book, imagine that you've never met the person about whom you are reading. You will want to get a sense of your story and its flow without too many interruptions. Have a colored pen or highlighter in hand so you can quickly mark anything that jumps out at you. Don't make any corrections, just mark the spot so you can return to it when you are finished reading. You may notice that you need more context in some places and in others you may realize that you went off on a tangent that wasn't necessary. Mark any phrases that seem awkward and any spelling and grammar errors you happen to notice, but for the most part, you want to keep reading it all the way through without actually making any changes.
- ☐ **#3:** After you are finished reading, go back to MemoirWorkbook.com and make your changes.
- ☐ **#4:** After you have made your changes, take time to look at and edit your topic names, as these will become your chapter titles. You may want to get creative, or you may just want to keep it simple, however, you should try to be consistent with the types of titles you choose.

To change the title of a topic, from the Topics page under Active Topics, click on this  icon in the Actions column of the topic you wish to edit.

- ☐ **#5:** Backup up your writing. Click on the Download Your Book link in the left sidebar menu. Make sure that there is a check in the box next to "Include Questions". Click on at least one of the two links to download your book as a Microsoft Word document or a PDF document.


DAY 27: MODULE #22

Module #22 – Add Your Photos and Images

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

Before doing any more editing, it's a good idea to step away from it for a bit and let your mind reset. You can use this time to add your photos to your project. MemoirWorkbook.com allows you to put photos with each topic. Since your topics become chapters, the photos are inserted in your document at the end of each chapter.

Although I have included step by step instructions below, **I strongly suggest you watch the video [tutorial on Working with Photos](#).**

- ❑ **#1:** There are several ways to add photos to your MemoirWorkbook.com project, but I recommend starting with your list of Active Topics. Click on Topics & Questions from the home page or the left sidebar menu.
- ❑ **#2:** For any topic that you wish to add photos, click on this icon  in the Actions column for that topic.

Near the top of the photo page, you will see a large box for uploading your photos. You can upload more than one image at a time, but we do not recommend doing more than five at once. Individual images must be less than 10MB in file size.

There are two ways to upload photos:

- Click anywhere inside the upload box. This will bring up a dialog box for your computer or device. Navigate to the location where your images are stored and select the image or images for uploading.
- Another option is to open the folder containing the files you wish to upload and simply drag and drop the file into the upload box.

After the upload begins:

- Depending on the file size of your upload, it could take up to a few minutes.
- While the file is uploading, a thumbnail of it will show in the upload box with a progress bar on it.
- When it has uploaded successfully, there will be a success message in green above the upload box.

- If the upload fails, it is likely either because one of the images is larger than the 10MB limit or if multiple photos were uploading, the total file size was too large. A failure message will appear in dark pink above the upload box.

Once a photo successfully uploads, a thumbnail of it will show under the “Topic Name” below the upload box along with any other photos that have been uploaded to this topic. Some images will appear distorted in the thumbnails, but they will display correctly everywhere else in the project.

- **#3:** You can also use the Photos & Images link on the homepage or in the left sidebar menu, however, you **MUST** choose your topic from the list of topics **BEFORE** you upload a photo. I personally prefer doing one topic at a time, however, you can see the thumbnails of **ALL** of the photos in your project on this Photos & Images page.
- **#4:** You can rotate any photos that are sideways or upside down after they are uploaded. Click on “Rotate” below the thumbnail of the photo you want to rotate.

Below the enlarged photo, click on the arrows to rotate the image until it is upright. The image may appear to get cut off when you do this but go ahead and click “Save” and the photo will rotate correctly.

Click the “Back to Photos” link below the image.

- **#5:** You can also crop any photo to focus on the main part of the image. Click on “Crop” below the thumbnail of the photo you want to crop.

On the enlarged photo, click and drag the green handles to select the area you wish to keep. You can see a preview of the image as you do this. When you are happy with your selection, click “Save”. After the image is cropped, click the “Back to Photos” link beside the image. Do not worry if the thumbnail image is distorted. It will appear correctly elsewhere.

- **#6:** Add a caption to your photo by clicking the “Caption” link below the thumbnail.

When the enlarged photo appears, type your caption in the space above the image. Click “Update” and then close the caption window.

Your caption will be placed immediately below the photo in your book, but to see it on the Photos page, put your mouse over the thumbnail and the caption will appear above it.

- **#7:** You can also move photos from one topic to another or delete them from your project completely. Simply click on the thumbnail. Here you can click on the list of topics to change the topic or you can click “Delete” to remove it completely.

DAY 28 – 29: MODULE #23

Module #23 – Edit Yourself – Level 3

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

I've set aside two days for this module.

- ☐ **#1:** From the left sidebar menu, click on Preview Your Book. This should open a printable PDF version of your book. Print it (Ctrl-P or Command-P if you don't see the printer icon.)
- ☐ **#2:** Read your entire book through. You may even want to read it aloud to avoid scanning.

Focus on long sentences and noticing where you might have gotten a little too wordy. Try re-writing those sections. Also, if you have any long paragraphs, consider breaking them into shorter ones. Rework anything that still seems awkward or unclear. Remove anything that seems like it drifted off topic. Make your changes on MemoirWorkbook.com

- ☐ **#3:** Consider whether you want to remove your Subtopic headings. When you download your project, you can choose whether or not to include the Questions (which are your subtopics) Sometimes they will make it easier to transition from one subtopic to the next, but sometimes they may be unnecessary or even get in the way. If you want to keep some and remove others, you will need to download the Microsoft Word version of your document and edit it in a word-processor.
- ☐ **#4:** If you're feeling good about it and are planning to have someone else read it, proof it, or edit it, this is the time to do that. If you are not feeling great about it, you may still want to have someone give you some feedback, or you may just want to read through it again and continue to smooth out your writing. You can also hire a professional editor at a reasonable price on sites like [Fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com), [UpWork.com](https://www.upwork.com), or contact my team for an estimate at support@memoirhelper.com.
- ☐ **#5:** This is the point where some of you will say, "It's good enough!" and some of you may want to go through the editing process more thoroughly. I'll leave that decision up to you, but since you ordered a 30-day program, you should probably remind yourself not to let this become a burden.
- ☐ **#6:** Backup up your writing. Click on the Download Your Book link in the left sidebar menu. Make sure that there is a check in the box next to "Include Questions". Download and save both the Microsoft Word document AND the PDF version. PDF is great for sharing with others, but if you want to make edits after your MemoirWorkbook.com subscription has ended, you will want the Microsoft Word version.

DAY 30: MODULES #24 – 25

Module #24 – Page Layout

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

If you have the desktop version of Microsoft Word, there are a few finishing touches you can make after you've downloaded the Microsoft Word version of your document. Detailed instructions for some of these suggestions are beyond the scope of this workbook, but if you need additional help, contact me or my team at support@memoirhelper.com

- ☐ **#1:** Open your downloaded document in Microsoft Word.
- ☐ **#2:** Set your page margins. Unless you are planning to have your project turned into a physical book, the margins will not need to be changed. If you are planning to have your book professionally printed and bound, you will want to set your margins according to the publisher's recommendations. The margins will be set differently for printed books as they are printed on both sides of the page and need extra margin space in the "gutter" or the inside part of the page.
- ☐ **#3:** Look through your chapters and see if there are any "bad" page breaks and make any necessary adjustments. You can insert page breaks or reduce the size of photos if desired.
- ☐ **#4:** Add page numbers if desired.
 - Put your cursor immediately following the last entry on the Table of Contents.
 - Click on the Layout menu item. Click on Breaks and then click on "Next Page" under Section Breaks.
 - Now you should be on the first page of the first chapter. If not, press the "Delete" key on your keyboard until "Chapter One" is at the top of the page.
 - Click on the Insert menu. Click on Page Number and choose a style. I recommend using the one that is centered at the bottom of the page. You should now see page number 1 on the page you are on.
- ☐ **#5:** Update the page numbers in your Table of Contents. You can do this as often as necessary, but make sure it's the last thing you do before your final save or export.
 - Go to the Table of Contents page and right-click on any chapter.
 - Left-click "Update Field"
 - If you have the option to select "Update Entire Table", do so and click OK. This will update the page numbers. You can do this again if you make further changes.

Module #25 – The Finish Line

For both the TOC and Self-Discovery Approach, continue with this module.

Now it's time to put your book in its final format. Here are a few options.

3-Ring Binder

- ❑ **#1:** Print or photocopy as many copies of your document as you want. Use paper that is pre-punched so that you don't have to punch it manually. Choose notebooks that have a clear sleeve on the front where you can insert a cover page. [Order 3-hole punch paper and binders.](#)
- ❑ **#2:** For the cover page, you may want to print an extra copy of the first page of your document. You can also use a free site like [Canva.com](#) to create an image by uploading a photo and adding text. Another very low cost option is to use a site like [Fiverr.com](#) to find someone to create a cover for you for around \$6.

Create an E-Book

- ❑ **#1:** Most word-processing applications now have a way to save documents as a PDF file. In Microsoft Office, you can simply Save As and choose PDF as the File Type.

PDF documents can be read on almost any computer or device, including e-readers like Kindle and Nook. (Note: PDFs will not have the full functionality of an e-book format specifically created for an e-reader. See #2 below options for formatting for an e-reader.)

PDF documents can also be printed from any computer, tablet, or smartphone with print capabilities. They can also be sent by e-mail assuming your document file size isn't larger than your email provider allows. If it is too large, consider using Google Drive or Dropbox to store your document and then email the link to those you wish to give access.

- ❑ **#2:** If a Kindle, Nook, or other e-reader is your main target, you may prefer to have your document converted into a format that works as a fully functional e-book within one of those e-readers. In other words, you would be able to change the font size and highlight text. You may want to search the web for a "how to" on this topic, however, your best bet may be hiring someone on [Fiverr.com](#). Search for "convert any document to Kindle" or whatever e-reader you wish to use.

Creating a Printed Book with On-Demand Publishing

- ❑ **#1:** With on-demand publishing services, you can have as many or as few copies of your book printed as you want at a price that is similar to buying a book on a bookstore shelf.

[Kindle Direct Publishing \(KDP\)](#), [Lulu.com](#), and [Blurb.com](#)⁴ are all well-known for their on-demand publishing services. I have used all three with excellent results. I have found KDP to be the least expensive, especially for color printing, however, they don't have a hardcover option. All three of these companies have very thorough instructions on how to format and upload your document. They also have easy to use "cover creators" if you want to create your own cover. You can upload a photo and add text if you want to keep it simple.

Need Additional Help?

At MemoirHelper.com, we are always looking for ways to help people preserve their life stories. We offer tips, techniques, and services to help get you over any hurdles that may arise during your project. You can visit us there or email us at support@memoirhelper.com. We will be happy to make recommendations specific to your needs.

Wrap-Up

Congratulations! You just completed writing your life stories!!! Take a minute and soak it in...

Seriously, just take a deep breath, step outside the process, and at least give yourself a smile. Some of you may want to go a little bigger! The 'happy dance' is just fine!



I would love to hear from you...

Have you enjoyed your writing journey? What would have made it easier? Were you surprised at how it made you feel? Will you be sharing it with others? I would love to hear about your experience and find out what your hurdles were and how you overcame them.

You can catch up with me in the private [Write Your Life Stories Facebook Group](#), on the [Memoir Helper Facebook page](#) or at our [contact page on MemoirHelper.com](#).

⁴ This is an affiliate/referral link. [See Disclosure](#).

***On the following pages, you will
find the worksheets referenced
in this workbook.***

Worksheet #1 – Define Your Project

This worksheet is used in [Module #1](#).

What story or stories are you going to tell? _____

Who is your intended audience? _____

What is/are the main reason(s) you are doing this project? _____

What do you hope your audience's takeaway will be? _____

Continue on next page...

Worksheet #1 Continued

How will you feel when you are finished? _____

What would be the cost of not doing this project? _____

Project Summary

Using your answers above, write a summary of your project.

This worksheet is used in [Module #1](#).

Worksheet #2 –Topics

This worksheet is first used in [Module #4](#).

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Topic: _____

Worksheet #3 – People/Groups Brainstorming

This worksheet is first used in [Module #5](#).

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Person/Group: _____ Topic: _____

Worksheet #4 – Themes

This worksheet is first used in [Module #6](#).

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Theme: _____ Topic: _____

Worksheet #5 – Beliefs

This worksheet is first used in [Module #7](#).

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Belief: _____ Topic: _____

Worksheet #6 – Life Events

This worksheet is first used in [Module #8](#).

Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____
Life Event: _____	Topic: _____

Worksheet #7 – Chapter Topic Groups

This worksheet is first used in [Module #9](#).

1. Chapter Topic: _____
2. Chapter Topic: _____
3. Chapter Topic: _____
4. Chapter Topic: _____
5. Chapter Topic: _____
6. Chapter Topic: _____
7. Chapter Topic: _____
8. Chapter Topic: _____
9. Chapter Topic: _____
10. Chapter Topic: _____
11. Chapter Topic: _____
12. Chapter Topic: _____
13. Chapter Topic: _____
14. Chapter Topic: _____
15. Chapter Topic: _____
16. Chapter Topic: _____
17. Chapter Topic: _____
18. Chapter Topic: _____
19. Chapter Topic: _____
20. Chapter Topic: _____
21. Chapter Topic: _____

Worksheet #8 – Photo Brainstorming

This worksheet is first used in [Module #10](#).

As you are brainstorming topics and subtopics, note any photos that you think might enhance your project. Describe the photo briefly and note where you believe it is located (ex. green photo album). The page will be the page number within the album if applicable. Print as many copies of this page as you need.

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

Photo Description: _____

Topic: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____