

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

***Becoming Myself***  
***Follow-up writing for***  
***“Hair”-Malcom X***

**Writing an Autobiographical Incident**

An incident is something interesting or memorable that happened once in your life. Sometimes during our lives we are faced with changes, happiness, hardships, and maybe even danger. We change homes, have major accomplishments, win awards, and sometimes even lose loved ones. In developing an autobiographical incident, one question a writer must ask is this: **What have been the defining moments in my life?** Your goal is to re-create a specific time and place so that it comes alive for your readers.

**Directions:** Write a focused autobiographical incident in which you **focus on a single, vivid incident** from your past that would help the reader know you better. The incident should have lasted only a short amount of time, **from a few minutes to one day**. It could have been a happy or sad experience and it can be told seriously or playfully; however, it should have changed you in some way or taught you something. **Make sure the lesson you learned (a.k.a. the theme) is clear to the reader and stated somewhere in your essay. Just as Malcom X’s father shared with him the line from Shakespeare “This above all :To thine own self be true..”, choose a saying that would be fitting to the experience/incident that you chose.**

Your paper must:

- Creatively share an incident from your past, that is told in logical order and which clearly demonstrates throughout your paper what you learned and/or how you changed as a result of this experience.
- Catch the reader’s attention and draw them into your paper by incorporating many descriptive details (figurative language, brushstrokes, etc.) to help the reader “relive” your incident.
- The incident should be approximately 500-700 words.
- We will be typing the essays after revising drafts. Final drafts WILL BE TYPED.
- The paper should demonstrate a strong command in spelling, grammar, usage, and/or mechanics.

BY MONDAY you are **required** to have an incident and a maxim or motto chosen. (prewriting)

It is preferable that you have a rough draft of your essay by Monday. Not having the ‘prewriting’ done by Monday will result in a 0.

**Possible maxims/aphroism** (a short statement expressing a general truth or rule of conduct.)

- o “An attitude of gratitude creates blessings.”
- o “You are only as good as your word.”
- o “To have a friend, be one.”
- o “Honesty is the best policy.”
- o “When it is dark enough, you can see the stars.”
- o “Smile and the world smiles with you.”
- o Work produces virtue, and virtue honor
- o Do good if you expect to receive it.
- o Friendship is the perfection of love.
- o To thine own self be true”
- o A jack of all trades is master of none.
- o A job worth doing is worth doing well.
- o A little learning is a dangerous thing.
- o A man is known by the company he keeps.

Can you think of one on your own?

	<b>4-Exemplary</b>	<b>3-Commendable</b>	<b>2-Adequate</b>	<b>1-Needs Improvement</b>
Introduction	Provides a dynamic introduction that draws in the reader's attention. Mood and tone is clearly established..	Provides an introduction that draws in the reader's attention. Mood and tone is clearly established.	Provides an introduction that is somewhat interesting. Mood and tone are established.	Provides a dull introduction. Mood and/or tone are not clear.
Exposition	Characters and setting are described with many descriptive details.	Characters and setting are described with descriptive details.	Characters and setting are described with a few descriptive details.	Characters and setting are not described with descriptive details.
Plot	Series of events build the reader's interest and are told in chronological order.	Series of events are told in chronological order.	Series of events are told in chronological order.	Series of events are very out of order or confusing.
Denouement/ Resolution	The resolution successfully and creatively brings the story to a close, providing a profound theme.	The resolution successfully brings the story to a close, providing a theme.	The resolution brings the story to a close, providing a theme.	The resolution leaves the reader hanging with questions. Theme is not clear or included.
Show not tell	Action and events are clearly and creatively <b>shown</b> , not told, throughout the entire story in order to create a movie in the reader's mind. Author has creatively and properly incorporated (5) brush-strokes into their paper.	Action and events are creatively shown, throughout most of the story. Author has incorporated (4) brushstrokes into their paper.	Action and events are sometimes shown throughout parts of the story. Author has attempted to incorporate (3) brush- strokes into their paper.	Action and events are consistently told, lacking descriptive details throughout entire story. Brushstrokes are missing in paper.
Writing conventions	Has a strong command of writing conventions: spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar errors.	There are a few spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar errors.	There are several spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar errors.	There are many spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar errors.
Presentation	Paper is neatly written in	Paper is written in	Paper is written in blue/black	Paper is poorly written in

	blue/black ink or typed.	blue/black ink or typed.	ink.	pencil or some other color!
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