Have you ever found yourself thinking about a special time or event in your life? Could you picture your surroundings in detail, remember the people who were there with you, and relive the feelings you had?

If you wrote this memory down, it could be the beginning of an autobiographical sketch. When a person writes the story of his or her life, it's called an autobiography. A sketch is a short scene that describes only the key details. So if you write an autobiographical sketch you describe one “scene,” or event, in your life.

In this Writing Workshop you’ll write an autobiographical sketch about a meaningful event in your life that involved reading. You’ll explore how reading changed your outlook and share that experience with others.

Get Ready to Write

What do the following things have in common: stories, cereal boxes, street signs, schoolbooks, notes from friends? They’re all things you’ve read, of course. Think about the different reading experiences you’ve had.

Gather Ideas and Choose a Topic

In your Learner’s Notebook, write about the kinds of reading experiences you’ve had in your life. Here are some examples to get you started:

- being read to before going to bed at night
- reading your favorite magazine at the newsstand
- reading short stories or books assigned in school
- reading a postcard from traveling friends or family
- reading instructions on how to play a new video game

After you’ve thought of as many examples as possible, choose an experience from your list. Pick one that you think is interesting and important—one that helped shape how you feel about reading. (Don’t worry about choosing the “perfect” experience. If your choice doesn’t work out, you can change it later.)