

Autobiography as a Literary Form

Autobiography is also a wonderful genre of literature which becomes an art of expressing personal thoughts, ideas, feelings. Experiences, and observations. Much of literary non-fiction can be described as autobiographical, which is writing from the writer's perspective. This type of writing is usually in first person point of view, which means the narrator is a character in the story. Since the author is the narrator, this means author is the main character in the story. Most autobiographical are novel-length since they cover the subject's entire life. However, there are many shorter works that are still considered autobiographical.

- **Personal Journal:** the first such work is a personal Journal, which is a daily written record of personal experiences and observations, this usually consists of short pieces of writing each day. For example, if you were assigned to design an experiment for a science project, you might keep a journal to describe what you did for that experiment everyday until the project was due. A journal could be kept for a few weeks or

several years but has always a factual account of the experience of the author.

- **Diary:** another related autobiographical work is the diary. Similar to journals, diaries contain a daily account of experiences. The difference is diary include personal thoughts and feelings. While a journal more based on facts, a diary can have a person's deepest secrets and desires; such as it is usually not meant to be shared with anyone.

A great example is the book *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Anne frank was a real Jewish girl who kept a diary while hiding from the Germans during World War 2. She wrote about her personal thoughts and feelings about what was happening to her family. Years later, her diary was found and published by Anne's descendants to showcase the terrors of Nazi Germany.

- **Memoir:** a third type of autobiographical work is the memoir. Memoirs are extremely similar to the journals and diaries in these memoirs relate the author's personal experiences. Like diaries, memoirs can also reveal the narrator's personal feelings.

Memoirs are different because they are not written daily, are meant to be published and share, and usually focused on one specific event or theme. All well known memoir is *Tuesdays*

with Morrie. In this book, the author, Mitch Albom, recounts his time spent with his aging sociology professor who is dying from ALS. This memoir is limited to that period of Albom's life.

- **Letter:** a fine example of an autobiographical work of literary non-fiction is letter. A letter is a written message addressed to a person or organisation. Letters often contain personal thoughts and opinions, but they are directed at just one person. Letters are really never meant to be published and are usually discarded once the message is received, emails can be considered a more advanced type of letter.

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