



Six-Word Memoir Narrative

It is said that Earnest Hemingway – notorious for his wordy sentences and lengthy elaboration – was challenged to write an entire story in just six words. The result:

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

Whether this event actually occurred or is part of urban legend, in those six words, Hemingway proves that concision is not contradictory to emotion and clarity and that diction should not be capricious or accidental. When the editors of Smith, an online storytelling magazine, asked readers to compose six-word memoirs, they proved that a whole life can be summarized in a half-dozen well-chosen words.

For this assignment, you will be composing your own six-word memoir. Your narrative should be composed of six, and only six, words and should encapsulate that which is most essential about you and your life. Think carefully about what is most important and relevant about you; consider what you most want your reader to understand about you. This assignment is all about diction and syntax. Take your time. Play with words, but be serious in your intent. This is your life story you're telling!

A selection of six-word memoirs from the collection, Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six Word Memoirs from Writers Famous and Obscure:

"One tooth, one cavity, life's cruel." – John Bettencourt

"Revenge is living well, without you." – Joyce Carol Oates

"Glass half full; pockets half empty." – Marina Guthrie

"Because I thought it was funny." – Stephen Colbert

"People always pronounce my name incorrectly." – Linnea Jimison

"Dorothy Gale had the right idea." – Pamela Vissing

"I still make coffee for two." – Zak Nelson

"Near death experiences are my forte." – Anna Mauser-Martinez

Also check out their site, with new six-word memoirs posted every day!

<http://www.smithmag.net/sixwords/>



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Name:

Date:

Not Yet (1 – 6)	Proficient (7 – 8)	Advanced (9 – 10)
	The memoir reflects an understanding of diction through word choice that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear• Purposeful• Interesting	
	The memoir avoids cliché.	
	The memoir conveys a complete idea.	
	The memoir has visual appeal through purposeful use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Font• Layout• Design	
	The memoir includes no spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.	

Score: /50