“Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be, I learned in kindergarten.”

Robert Fulghum

What was life like for you as a child? To help you start remembering, look at school pictures, family snapshots, an old diary (if you kept one) and/or old scrapbooks. Write about your early years, after age 5.

Getting started

Choose from the questions below to help you write:

1. What do you remember with real pleasure from your childhood? Tell about a good time growing up.

2. What was upsetting during your childhood years? For example, did you experience a fire, a flood, a car accident, a death in the family? Did you have to change schools, move away from a close friend or go through the divorce of your parents? Tell about a bad time growing up.

3. Tell about a mischievous thing you did when you were younger.

4. What did you want to be when you grew up?

5. Were you ever really sick? Did you have any broken bones or operations? Tell about what happened and how you felt.

6. Did you have a favorite hiding place or secret place? How about an imaginary friend? Describe your “secrets” and how you felt about them.

7. What scared you when you were younger? Did you believe in ghosts or boogiemen or monsters under the bed? Explain.

8. What were your favorites — favorite comics, clothes, television shows, books, movies, toys, etc.? Describe them.

9. Is there anything you could swear happened — but your parents swear didn’t happen?

10. What sorts of things did you believe when you were younger that you don’t believe now? For example, did you believe that little people lived inside your television, or that wind was caused by trees flapping their branches?
What was life like when you were a preschoo ler — from about ages 2 to 5? Write about the years before you started grade school.

Getting started

Choose from the questions below to help you write:

1. What is your earliest memory? Describe it. Why do you think you remember it?
2. Describe yourself as a preschooler. What did you look like? What did you enjoy doing? What was your favorite thing to eat? What was your general nature — sunny, shy, serious, quiet, ornery, etc.?
3. How did you feel about baby sitters when you were small? Did you have a favorite baby sitter? Who was it?
4. Before you started school, did you stay at home most days, go to a relative’s house or attend day care? How did you feel about whatever arrangement you had?
5. Ask your parents (or others who remember you) to tell you about any one or all of the following:
   - something cute you did as a toddler
   - a time when you embarrassed someone
   - a time when someone was frightened for you
   - a time when someone was proud of you
   - a time when someone was irritated or annoyed with you
   - a time when you surprised someone
   - an incident that sums up your personality