

"A Day in the Life"

A Minute Memoirs Activity

In his 1837 speech *The American Scholar*, Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it." This quote means that if we try to understand and appreciate the times in history or our lives, we can find the actions we need to do move forward and make the best of the circumstances. This activity using Minute Memoirs is a chance to document your ordinary, everyday moments, and reflect on them.

For the next week or two, choose a time of day to "push the pause button" and write about that specific moment. Write 7-10 entries, and be sure to include specific details!

After writing about different times during your day, you can look back and see how the "little moments" add up to make your days. Remember, Minute Memoirs have:

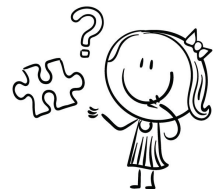
Summary: Focus on one moment and write a one-sentence summary. Don't try to tell a story. Just focus on one moment.



Sensory Details: Write about the sights, sounds, tastes, smell, and touch you observe. The little details make Minute Memoirs interesting.



Reflection: Write briefly about your feelings, or your insights into this one moment.



Example (younger children):

1) Focus on a moment and write a one-sentence summary.

Example:

It's breakfast and I'm eating oatmeal.

2) Write the sights, sounds, smells, touch, and taste of the moment.

Example:

I see the blue bowl. I see the light brown oatmeal. I see steam in the bowl. I hear my sister's spoon clanking on the bowl. I don't think oatmeal really smells like any thing. My bowl is hot. I taste brown sugar.

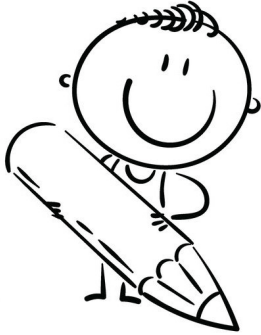
3) Write a sentence of your reflection of the moment: your feelings, your insights, what you've learned, or what you think (or what you think you should think).

Example:

I wish we were having Coco Puffs. I am excited to fly kites today.

"A Day in the Life"

A Minute Memoirs Activity



Example (older students and adults):

1) Focus on a moment and write a one-sentence summary.

Example:

It's breakfast and I'm sitting in front of my bowl of oatmeal.

2) Write the sights, sounds, smells, touch, and taste of the moment.

Example:

We've discovered steel-cut oats, and they are a chewy breakfast game-changer. My husband puts a pat of butter in his oatmeal and I do the same. It always amazes me that he doesn't put sugar in his bowl. I watch the steam rise in dainty curls from the lump before me and then disrupt their rise by sprinkling grains of brown sugar over them. The sugar is grainy and sticky on my fingers; I should have used a spoon, but I like to see the sugar evenly spread and then melt into the pale gob of cereal. I thank my husband for making breakfast, rest my elbows on the kitchen table, and then rest my head on my folded hands. I look down at the bare table with its worn finish and wish my favorite table cloth-the light brown cotton one with deep yellow and brown flowers-wasn't in the laundry.

3) Write a sentence of your reflection of the moment: your feelings, your insights, what you've learned, or what you think (or what you think you should think).

Example:

We bless the food, and I am grateful for this quiet Saturday morning.



Waking up. Date: _____

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____

Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Breakfast. Date: _____

Summary (just a moment): _____



Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____

Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Midmorning. Date: _____

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____



Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Date: _____ **Before lunch.**

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____

Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Date: _____ **Lunch.**

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____



Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Date: _____ **Afternoon.**

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____



Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Late Afternoon. Date: _____

Summary (just a moment): _____



Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____

Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____



Before Dinner. Date: _____

Summary (just a moment): _____



Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____

Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Dinner. Date: _____

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____



Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Date: _____ **Evening.**

Summary (just a moment): _____

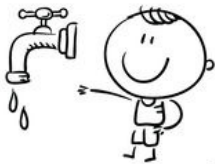
Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____

Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Date: _____ **Getting Ready for Bed.**

Summary (just a moment): _____

Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____



Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

Date: _____ **Bedtime.**

Summary (just a moment): _____

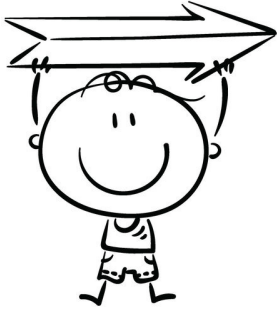
Sensory Details (sights, sounds, tastes, smell, touch, and all the little interesting details): _____



Reflection (What are you feeling in this moment? What are you learning?) _____

"A Day in the Life"

Minute Memoirs Supplemental Activities



- 1) As you read any fictional book, point out places where the writer uses summary and sensory details to tell the story. Where do the characters use reflection? How does that reflection move the story forward?
- 2) Do the "Day in the Life" Minute Memoirs again, but write about a past time: a week ago, a month ago, or a year ago.
- 3) Document a day in your life using multiple genres (types of communication). You might show your day through a picture, a video clip, a social media post, a receipt, a text, a passage from a book you are reading, a recipe, or any writing you've done. Be creative and think of a way to share your multigenre day. Ideas might include a poster, slideshow, or speech you share with your family.
- 4) List as many feelings or emotions as you can think of. Draw pictures of faces to go with each emotion or use emojis. Why is it important to be able to identify the different emotions?
- 5) Talk to a parent, grandparent, or older relative. What are some of the little details they have from when they were younger? Make up a list of questions to ask them. You might ask things like what was their favorite shirt or dress, color, song, activity, or book.
- 6) Re-read the Minute Memoirs you've written about the moments of your day. Write another entry that is only reflection. Answer the following questions: What moments did you write about and why? Did anything surprise you? Explain. What do you wish you had done or wish you had noticed? What do you hope to be doing in 6 months from now? What do you hope to be doing in a year from now?

