

A Song of Yourself

Directions How would you describe yourself? Below is a passage from Walt Whitman’s famous poem, “Song of Myself.” Read how Whitman describes himself and then follow the steps below to create your own song.

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
 Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
 Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
 Stuff’d with the stuff that is coarse and stuff’d with the stuff that is fine,
 One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and the largest the same...
 At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and tacking,
 At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texan ranch...
 Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands and welcome to drink and meat,
 A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest...
 Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,
 A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
 Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

1 Think of things that are important about you. What makes you who you are? List your ideas. Here are some suggestions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Things you have done | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Things that have happened to you | <input type="checkbox"/> Abilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People you care about | <input type="checkbox"/> Personality traits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal beliefs | <input type="checkbox"/> Likes and dislikes |

2 Choose items from your list to include in a poem. Then decide how to organize them. You might decide to simply list them, as Whitman did. Another idea is to tell a story in your poem, telling what you and your character are like.

3 Choose a form for your poem. Whitman’s poem is in free verse, which means that it does not rhyme and the lines are uneven in length. You may write yours the same way, or you can give it rhyme and meter. You may find yourself changing your mind about the form of your poem as you write. Do not be afraid to experiment. The most important thing is that your poem should be an expression of who you are.

Your Family History

Directions Nearly everyone enjoys browsing through a family photo album. You can create something even more interesting: a family scrapbook. Follow the steps below to construct a scrapbook that illustrates how you and your family have changed over the years. Your creation just might become a family heirloom.

- 1 Make a list of family members.** Who makes up your family? Your list might include parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. You might include those who are directly related to you as well as those who are related by marriage, such as stepparents and stepsiblings or the spouses of your own siblings. Your list may also include adopted family members.
- 2 Gather “scraps.”** Try to find photos and pieces of memorabilia for each person on your list. At this stage, do not worry about fitting items onto scrapbook pages. Once you have gathered all the material you need, you will choose a format that makes the best use of it all. Look for material that covers various ages and stages in each person’s life. For example, photos of your parents as children, a video of their wedding, and souvenirs they picked up on vacation last year would be interesting additions. Make your own memories part of the collection by writing down interesting stories or things you recall about family members.
- 3 Do some research.** Do you know all the relatives on your list? Some may live far away. Others may have died while you were very young. To learn more about these family members, sit down with some close relatives and ask them to share memories of these people. Ask to see old photos of these relatives. Can family members identify when and where each picture was taken? Write down interesting stories or recollections of long-lost family members and make them part of your family scrapbook.
- 4 Decide on a format.** The material you have collected can be presented in different ways. Here are a few possible options:
 - An album is the most traditional scrapbook format. Photos and other materials can be arranged on the large, heavy pages. Secure the items in place with glue, tape, or little stick-on tabs that can be removed if you decide to rearrange things. This type of scrapbook only holds things that are flat, so if you have three-dimensional items, photograph them for the pages.

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CHAPTER 1 Learning About Yourself (Continued)**Focus on *Crafts***

- ❑ To store three-dimensional items, you could make a memento box instead of a scrapbook. Organize the box by storing items in large envelopes—one for each member of the family. The disadvantage of this format, of course, is that you can not view the memories at a glance.
- ❑ A newer way to organize material is an electronic scrapbook. With the help of a scanner or a digital camera, you can store pictures and documents on a computer. Perhaps you could include other types of media, such as sound or video files. Your electronic scrapbook could also be turned into a Web page. Sections for different relatives can include links to their personal pages.

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Gather supplies. Once a format is chosen, gather the materials you need to construct it. Some people spend lots of money on scrapbooking supplies, but yours do not have to be fancy. For instance, an ordinary three-ring binder with pages of heavy construction paper cut to the right size can work. To avoid damaging old photographs and documents, make photocopies to cut and paste into your scrapbook. Photocopies can be color or black and white. Remember to ask permission before adding any family photographs or documents to your scrapbook.

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Choose an organization method. How should your scrapbook be organized? You could use a single page for each family member. In time, the collection might spill over onto multiple pages for some family members. Another method is chronological, in time sequence. Put items about different family members on the same page. The early pages might focus on your grandparents, while later pages cover your parents and their siblings as children. Eventually you would come forward in time to feature yourself as an adolescent.

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Assemble the pages. Arrange photos, documents, and other items on the pages to create a pleasing effect. Photos can be “cropped,” or trimmed, to include only the most interesting parts or to make pleasing shapes. They can also be matted, or placed on a colored paper background to make them stand out. Remember that once you stick an item to the page, it might not be removable. Make sure you like the arrangement before gluing anything down. Once each page is complete, enclose it in a plastic cover to protect it from damage before inserting it into the album.

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Share your treasure. Now that your scrapbook is done, share the results with friends and family. With new entries added in the years ahead, the book will have lasting impact and value.

Stress Journal

Directions When people are stressed, they may feel tense, jittery, worried, nervous, or unable to think clearly. Stress can cause sick feelings, such as a headache or an upset stomach. Since ongoing stress is harmful to health, you need to learn ways to manage it. First, however, you need to identify any stress that you might have and note when and how it occurs. Follow these steps to keep a stress journal and learn from it.

- 1 Make a chart.** Use the sample below as a guide for columns and headers.

Day and Time Range	Situation	Location	Reaction	People Present	Stress Level
9/28 1 to 1:15 p.m.	Gave speech in Social Studies	Classroom	Anxious, nervous, scared	Students, teacher	2
9/28 4 to 4:30 p.m.	Made mistakes at soccer practice; coach yelled	School gym	Embarrassed, tense	Team, coach	3

- 2 Keep track of stress.** For one week, record situations that cause you stress throughout the day and night. Supply the information shown in the chart above. Carry the journal with you in order to write entries as soon as possible after the stress occurs. Be brief but specific enough to enable you to remember the event later. Rate your stress level in the last column, using these ratings:

4 = extremely stressful

2 = somewhat stressful

3 = very stressful

1 = mildly stressful

- 3 Evaluate results.** After the week, analyze your journal. Write a summary of what you conclude. How often do you feel stress? What triggers stress for you? How do you react to those triggers? Do you see any patterns?

- 4 Make some changes.** How can you manage stress more effectively? Do you need to avoid certain situations, look for distractions, or breathe deeply? Research more ideas. Then put your ideas into action in the weeks ahead.

- 5 Repeat the journaling process.** After one month, examine whether your stress triggers have changed. Are you managing stress more effectively? If not, keep working on it.