

Inspired by the novel Milkweed, Ms. Maniscalco's seventh graders worked on the traits of word choice and idea development while creating final drafts of these "Moment Like This" Memoirs. Read these four final drafts. Talk with a partner and decide where each writer's strongest idea development and word choice occurs in these memoirs.



The Furry Surprise

by Lyndsey, seventh grade writer

My heart was pounding with anxiousness. I was running down the stairs, and there underneath the Christmas tree, I saw a puppy. I didn't realize until afterwards, but I had been screaming the moment I saw the dog. My excitement had taken over my eight-year-old little body, and before I knew it, I was downstairs trying to pick up the furry surprise. He was black, furry, chubby, and to top it off, there was a red bow tied around his neck. As I was complimenting all of his greatest features, I felt a sudden pain in my arm and looked down to see the puppy's teeth sinking into my skin. I yelled "Aaaah!"

The next thing on my mind was what am I going to name this rambunctious pup. It didn't matter what my mom, my dad, or my brother wanted to name him; I felt that I was in charge. My friend had always named her pets after presidents—like Lincoln, Hayes, and Madison—so I thought that was a wonderful idea and in my head started to come up with president names. As if it just struck me, I came up with the perfect name.

"Franklin," I shouted. Franklin Roosevelt Anderson sounded grand to me!

After that, I went outside in the powdery snow and played with Franklin. I stuck my tongue out and on it plopped a snowflake. At that moment, I was the happiest eight-year-old girl alive. Franklin and I romped around; I didn't even care that inside my other Christmas presents awaited me.

That moment, was the starting of a friendship that has lasted me ever since. My puppy is no longer a puppy, but he is a dog. Although his maturity and size may have changed, the bond we have together is unbreakable.

A Bad Day to Go Tubing

by Maria, seventh grade writer

Splash! From that moment on, I knew that this ride was going to be a bumpy ride. My family and I had to drive four hours to get to this lake called Flathead. This lake is located in Montana. When we arrived, we stayed at an old cabin. It was covered in spider webs, which made me get chills down my spine. After we explored the house, we wanted to do something fun and exciting, so we decided to go tubing on the lake.

"Please, Uncle Bob, can we go out on the boat and go tubing?" my cousins and I begged. After minutes of begging, my uncle finally caved.

"Yes, we can go, but it might not be for a while," murmured Uncle Bob.

It only took us about five minutes to get to the lake. When we were there, Uncle Bob assured us that we might not be able to tube because there were white caps on the waves. It took us forever to put the boat in the water because the waves were pushing the boat away from the docks.

"We're going to need everybody to help with the boat!" yelled Uncle Bob.

We finally had the boat in place and everybody climbed in the boat as fast as they could. By the time everybody got in, I could hear everybody huffing and puffing so hard. We hadn't even started the boat, and the boat was already tipping from left to right.

We were now speeding across the lake, with my hair swaying everywhere, trying to find a steady place to go tubing. It took us at least 10 minutes to find a place, which was the most boring 10 minutes of my life.

We found a spot and my cousin, Jessica, and I were the first to actually see what it was like to tube on the lumpy and bumpy water. The first time out, it wasn't as bumpy and painful as I thought it would be. What was very surprising to me was that nobody fell off that first time around. When it was my turn to go on the tube again, I was thinking to myself that this could be a real opportunity for me to become better friends with my cousin Mariah. So I asked her if it would be a problem, if she would like to have a turn with me.



"Yeah sure, why not," said Mariah excitedly. When we got on the tube, we almost fell off because we were rocking so hard.

"Ready to go!" we both yelled to Uncle Bob at the same time.

When we went over one of the humps of water, we went two times as high as we usually would. I was a little worried that one of us would go flying off the tube. We were also going so fast that I could hardly keep my eyes open; then, we had to make a turn, so we went flying off to the side. My feet were dangling off the edge of the tube while Mariah was barely holding on too. It felt like there were spikes hitting my feet. I was thinking that I was never going to get back on the tube without getting wet. *Thump!* My hands had given up and I fell into the bitter cold water. It felt like I was playing in the snow with my bathing suit on.

It was now starting to become dark and late, so we needed to start heading back to the docks and back to the cabin. I still didn't have feeling in my body at all, and the wind was blowing across my face.

Making that decision to ride with my cousin, Mariah, has really changed my life. Now I have a life-long friend whom I know I can trust and count on to have my back. Mariah and I are now as close to each other than ever before. Nothing could have ruined that day.



The Big Game

by Yessica, seventh grade writer

I was tired, hot, and wanted to take a water break. It was the big game of a lifetime in my point of view. It all started on March 18, 2006, when my basketball team was getting ready to play the championship game.

We were playing The Crushers. They were tall, fast, and strong while my whole team of six was small, short and slow. The team had beat us for the last three years, and this was the year we were going to beat them. The Crushers were also very mean. They had bad sportsmanship, and they made our team upset when they would say mean things, even when they had won the game.

My whole team was much pumped about the game, and we practiced everyday until tat championship game. On the day of the game, we came an hour early to get warmed up. At 5:30 p.m., we started playing. The first quarter passed, and we scored eight points, while they

scored two points.

In the second quarter, one of my teammates got tripped and had to sit out for one quarter. It was only the five of us, and we had to run up and down the basketball court. At the end of the second quarter, we scored three more points, and they scored two more points.

Then in the third quarter, we had are whole team once again. We scored four points, and they scored ten points!

Finally the fourth quarter came along. The final score was twelve to nineteen. We had won! At last, we had won a game to The Crushers! The whole team was so happy we were jumping with joy. The people in the stands were screaming our team's name very loud: Lightning Bolts!

Christmas Eve

by Kristin, seventh grade writer

Ding, dong. They were here. Every year my family gets together for Christmas Eve. When family arrived, we would all greet each other. Sometimes it was really nice because I hadn't seen my cousins in a long time. Before we ate, we would all sit and hang out. I remember that once you stood up, your seat was automatically taken because there weren't enough seats for all of us. It was like musical chairs.

After a while we all got some yummy Christmas treats. Every year, the food was warm and delicious, and I could never get enough. There would be steaming bread, juicy meat, and my favorite--fresh baked Christmas cookies.

As soon as we finished eating, it was time to open presents! All the kids would play elves and pass everyone's presents out. My family was thrilled with all their gifts. Sometimes the younger kids would open their toys and play with them right away.

Later we would say our goodbyes. The next time we would see each other would probably be a birthday or another holiday, but it was okay because we all had so much fun that night.



These student samples accompany one of the on-line assignments at the WritingFix website.

Direct link to this lesson: http://writingfix.com/Chapter_Book_Prompts/Milkweed1.htm