

**Learning to Write Your Own Story to Excite and Engage**  
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Each one of us is the best person to tell our own personal family history. This presentation will offer multiple ideas on how to present your family stories so that your children, grandchildren, and friends will want to hear more. Pictures, Stories and Video options will be discussed, as well as activities that can be done to interest others in your family history. You will go home with samples of questions you should be answering and resources so that you can begin your own storytelling. Don't leave your story for your ancestors to write!

Why do You Need to Write your Own Story?

Different methods of writing your Personal Story

- Use of Pictures
- Books that are based on specific questions
- Grandma “Remembers” books
- Writing – a blog; Facebook post; letters; full story
- Audio Files

Picture based Personal Story

- Biographical sketch or memoir
- “Our Family” Photos
- Family Reunion PPT
- Scrapbooks
- Pros: pictures = words; what suits your audience
- Cons: You have to organize the pictures – find them; scan them

Photobook Makers

- Blurb: <https://www.blurb.com>
- Midbooks: <https://www.mixbook.com>
- MyCanvas: <https://www.mycanvas.com/ancestry-book>
- Shutterfly: <https://www.shutterfly.com>
- Snappish: <https://www.snapfish.com>
- Forever.com: <https://www.forever.com>

Family History Book – Narrative

- Personal Story – written as a story or posted as a blog
- Grandma “Remembers” Book
- Annotated Journal, Diary, Letters
- Recipe Book with family information
- Pros: Writing your own words adds emotion and context; you’ve told your own story
- Cons: Time it takes to write and produce; Will anyone read it?; more stories, more pictures more cost.

## Book Publishers

- Blurb: <https://www.blurb.com>
- Boo Kemon: <https://www.bookemon.com>
- Lulu: <https://www.lulu.com>
- Stories to Tell: <https://www.storiestotellbooks.com>
- Storyworth: <https://www.storyworth.com>
- My Life in a Book: <https://www.mylifeinabook.com>

## Audio Files

- Tales: <https://tales.com>
  - Professional interviewer speaks with a loved one via Zoom or a phone call
- Audio is a Growing Business
  - Saga Voice Journal – App on your iPhone
  - FamilySearch (my favorite because it is FREE): <https://familysearch.org/memories>
  - Origin Story: <https://www.originstory.life>
  - MemoryGram: <https://www.memorygram.com>

## How Do I Get Started?

- Question Sources
  - Help for writing with ideas: <https://www.familyhistoryproducts.com>
  - Great Questions: <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions>
  - Family Historian Resources: <https://www.creativefamilyhistorian.com/writingportal>
  - FamilySearch Blog: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/52-questions-in-52-weeks-writing-about-your-life-has-never-been-easier>
  - The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/04/learning/550-prompts-for-narrative-and-personal-writing.htm>
- Potential Categories
  - Your Name
  - Your Parents
  - Your Siblings
  - Your grandparents
  - Growing Up: Early Years, Childhood, Young Adult
  - Education
  - Employment: First Job: volunteering
  - Military
  - Relationships; First Date; Forever Partner
  - Children
  - Residences
  - Travel

Great Book: *How to Write your Personal or Family History* by Katie Funk Wiebe, 2009