A Trip to Remember

by Tyler Carr, Kaitlyn Gonzales, Peter Veljovic, and Bliss Baird
How to use this book

1. Learn about the genre by reading pages 2–3. Get background information about the authors on pages 4–5. (Shared reading)

2. Read the personal narratives for enjoyment. (Leveled texts)

3. Reread the narratives and answer the questions on pages 13 and 21. (Shared reading)

4. Reread the last narrative. Pay attention to the comments in the margins. See how an author writes a personal narrative. (Leveled text)

5. Follow the steps on pages 22–23 to write your own personal narrative. (Shared reading)

6. Complete the activity on the inside back cover. Answer the follow-up questions. (Shared reading)
What is a personal narrative?
A personal narrative is a nonfiction text that recreates an experience from the author’s life. A personal narrative has a strong point of view, usually in the first person. It also communicates a distinct mood, or overall feeling. Most personal narratives are about something “big” in the author’s life, such as a proud or sad moment, a trip or adventure, or an event that changed attitudes or actions.

What is the purpose of a personal narrative?
A personal narrative is a way to describe an experience so that others feel like they were there. Writers do this by using sensory details—what they saw, heard, touched, smelled, and tasted—and by including important events, characters, and dialogue. Writers explain what happened and also tell what they were thinking at the time and how they felt.

How do you read a personal narrative?
The title will likely give you a clue about the experience that the author will describe. As you read, pay close attention to the sequence of events. Ask yourself: Did this event happen to the person, or did the person make it happen? How did this event affect the person’s life? Is the author simply writing to entertain, or is there something that I can learn from his or her experience?

Who writes personal narratives?
Everyone does! People record their experiences in diaries and journals, and share them in letters, e-mails, and even blogs. These informal writing opportunities provide valuable practice in selecting just the right details to make the experience come alive for others.
Meet the Authors

“NYC, Here I Come”
Name: Tyler Carr
School: O’Connell Elementary, East Hartford, Connecticut
About Me: I like to ride my bike and learn stuff on the Internet. I want to be a video game creator, but that means I will need to be good at math.

“Mission Beach, San Diego”
Name: Kaitlyn Gonzales
School: Blattman Elementary, San Antonio, Texas
About Me: I like to read and play softball. I love to study extreme weather and want to be a meteorologist.

“Montenegro”
Name: Peter Veljovic
School: Aspire Prep, Bronx, New York
About Me: I like to read and write, but I also like soccer and exciting video games. I am going to start my own business.

Tools Writers Use
Writer’s Voice

When your friends call you on the phone, can you recognize their voices? Each voice is distinctive, just like each friend's personality. Writer’s voice is no different. Everyone’s writing is different from everyone else’s. Every writer chooses certain topics, selects certain words, includes certain details, and uses a certain style and mood that make his or her writing as unique as a fingerprint. Good writers use their voices to add feeling to their writing. Good writers also adapt, or change, their voices for different audiences and purposes. For example, you would use a different voice to write an e-mail to your cousin inviting him to your soccer game than you would use to write a letter to your principal requesting a field trip for your class.

“Climbing the Snow King”
Name: Bliss Baird
School: Wellington Christian Academy, Wellington, Kansas
About Me: I enjoy writing and want to be an author or teacher. I swim competitively.
One sunny Sunday morning in late summer, my family and I went to New York City. I had never been there before! The two-hour car ride seemed to take forever. I was so excited. I tried to not let my sister and brother bug me. It was a glorious day for a glorious event.

The first thing we did was go on a boat that seemed to be as big as the *Titanic*. We were going to see the Statue of Liberty. When we passed by the statue, I felt a weird kind of chilling warmth. I think it was my patriotic spirit! We all felt happy because the Statue of Liberty is an important symbol of freedom. She is also HUGE when you see her in person.

Next, up, up, up we went! We went up 102 floors to the top of the Empire State Building. The *elevator* ride went on and on and on. We walked the last couple of flights of stairs. My sister (age thirteen) was huffing and puffing, but not me. I am in great shape. However, when we got to the top, the view took my breath away. I could see the whole amazing city spreading for miles. We were up so high (a quarter mile) that I couldn’t see the people on the street. The cars looked as small as beads.
NYC, Here I Come

We took the long ride down and reentered the busy streets. I could not believe the number of people coming and going in every direction. And they moved so fast! We joined the hustle and bustle and walked to Times Square. Walking is what people in NYC do. They walk everywhere they need to go. During the fifteen-minute walk, my head kept swiveling back and forth, forth and back, as I took in the constant action happening all around me.

Then we went to a big record store. (My teenage brother wanted to go there.) My dad, brother, and sister went to different sections. After looking around some, I got bored. My mom and I went outside.

When they were done shopping, it became my turn to pick what we did next. The biggest toy store in the world was staring me in the face. “Let’s go,” I said.

As soon as we entered, I saw a sixty-foot Ferris wheel. I know what you are thinking: It was not outside the store, it was INSIDE! This store had toys, toys, and more toys. I was allowed to get one. I couldn’t decide what. I ended up getting a launcher for the alien creatures series I collect.

We ate dinner at a theme restaurant. Then my mom said, “It’s such a delightful night. Let’s walk around some more.” It was a beautiful night. The lights from the buildings lit up the sky. The streets were still busy, but with fewer people and less noise. Compared with how the city was in the daytime, it seemed peaceful and quiet. The energy level was just as high, though. This is the life for me, I thought as we went to our car. I can’t wait to go back to NYC.
Mission Beach, San Diego

My family and I pulled into the sandy parking lot at the beach. I jumped out of the car, a black convertible. It was very cool of my dad to rent us such a cool car for our vacation in San Diego, California. I opened the trunk. I got out a big, red beach bag. I carried it to a sunny spot and set up a place for us to settle down. I took in the view of the white sand and the crystal blue water. *This place is twenty million times nicer than in Corpus Christi,* I thought. (That’s the only other beach I had been to, in Texas on the Gulf of Mexico. Compared with here, that beach was a trash can. The water there is brownish and filled with seaweed. Yuck!) Then I grabbed a snorkel and a pair of goggles and headed for the Pacific Ocean.

I had never snorkeled before. The mask made my head tilt. The flippers made it hard to walk. But I didn’t care. It was “Ah, what a day!” weather: hot enough to go swimming but not too hot to be outside. I swam with all my might. I put my face in the water and opened my eyes. Under me I saw a beautiful coral reef. It looked like a picture in a magazine. It was full of bright, neon yellows and pinks. There were tons of fish swimming in schools. Huge clams were everywhere.

I couldn’t believe fish came in so many different shapes, sizes, and patterns. I saw stripes. I saw dots. I was dazzled by the bright colors. Some of the fish swam right up to me. Then they darted away. Then they did the same thing over again. One tiny fish swam right over my hand. It felt so weird how the rubbery flippers tickled my hand.
I also saw a huge fish that looked like it could swallow my whole arm! I stayed away from it!

I loved watching the coral reef sway from side to side. It was so relaxing, almost hypnotic, floating with the gentle current. The warm water lapped against my cold body. The sandy ocean floor felt sticky as my feet sank in. I had never felt so peaceful.

After a while, I got tired from treading water. I took a clamshell to show my parents and swam back to shore. The clamshell was the size of a half-dollar. It was different from the other shells I collected because I could open and close it.

I still have that clamshell. It reminds me of my adventure. It takes me back to that day on that beach. It reminds me how lucky I am to have been there.

Analyze the Narratives
• What experiences do these narratives describe?
• Where do they happen? How does each setting affect what happens?
• Which people are involved? How do these people affect what happens?
• How do the writers feel about their experiences now?

Analyze the Tools Writers Use: Writer’s Voice
• On pages 7 and 9, Tyler repeats the words up and toys. What does Tyler tell you about himself when he uses these words in this manner?
• What does Kaitlyn think about the Corpus Christi beach? What words does she use to describe it? (page 10)
• On page 11, Kaitlyn describes her snorkeling experience. How can you tell that Kaitlyn had a wonderful time?

Focus on Words: Word Origins
A word’s origin is the history of that word. Many words in English come from words in other languages, especially Latin and Greek. For example, patriotic, on page 6, means “loving your country.” It comes from the Greek word patria, which means “lineage.” Knowing the history of a word can help you understand its meaning. Make a chart like the one below. Use a dictionary to find the origin and meaning of the words from the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Origin and Meaning</th>
<th>Dictionary Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>symbol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>elevator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>sections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>convertible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>hypnotic</td>
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</table>
Montenegró

My family is from Montenegro (mahnt-neh-neh-groh), a tiny country in Europe. It is on the Adriatic (ay-dree-A-tik) Sea across from Italy. Three years ago, when I was eight, I went there for the first time. I had no friends there so I did not have such a good time. This past summer, though, I went back and had a blast. I guess it is because I understood more about my family’s roots. I got a better feel for my family’s Albanian heritage. Also, I got to connect with my family.

We stayed in a house right next to the beach. This is a special place. My father built the house with his brother and father. He was so proud and happy, showing me all the work he did.

The house is in the city of Ulcinj (OUL-chin). It has a beach that is twelve miles long. It is a resort town, so there was lots to do: swimming, waterslides, suntanning. Yet the most fun was a volleyball game that my dad, sister, and I made up.

Since we were on vacation, we ate in some restaurants. But the best meal was when my mom cooked “glush.” This is a typical Albanian meal of meat, peas, and mashed potatoes. I don’t know why it tasted better there. My mom said it is because the food is fresher.

We visited with aunts, uncles, and cousins. I also met some new relatives. We listened to Albanian folk songs and cracked jokes about our culture. The adults talked about their country and the good old days. I learned that when my father was a teenager, and even older, he made a living selling watermelon to people on the beach.

I visited, in a way, with some other relatives I had never met: my grandparents. My dad took me to their graves. He cried. I cried, too. I was sad because they died before I was born.

My dad and I spent a lot of time together on that trip. We swam and ate in local restaurants. He took me to a famous spa. Most of all, we talked. At home, we don’t have much time together. During our trip, I found that I could talk to him about anything.

Now, when I think of Montenegro, all I can say is, “O! sah ven ee BOOK-oor,” which means, “What a wonderful place!”
Slap! I shut my book as Mom called to me. “Ready to hike?” she asked as I neared her. I nodded and replied, “Absolutely!”

It was a sunny August morning in Jackson, Wyoming. We were on a family vacation. Even though I had been there three times, I had been eager to return. Last summer, Mom, Dad, and I had hiked up a mountain named Snow King. It is used for skiing in the winter. I loved the hike so much that we decided to do it again. I wanted today’s hike to be as much fun as last year’s. I hoped it would be even more fun because my grandparents were hiking with us this time.

We walked out of our hotel and onto a street. It was a fairly long walk, but soon enough we were at the base of the towering mountain. Horses trekked up a winding, steep path. Their riders bounced around as the horses jogged. The walking trail was beside the horse trail. I pointed to a steep shortcut on the trail while I raced toward it yelling, “Let’s go!”

I had to take big, running strides to climb the trail. After a while I was breathing quickly and needed to stop. The sun was intense. I was afraid that if climbing this part of the trail was so difficult, we wouldn’t be able to make it to the top.

When my grandmother reached the shortcut, she told us that going onward would be too hard for her. She said she’d meet us at the top by riding the ski lift instead. My grandfather said he’d tough it out with us. We moved up the steep trail. It was so hot out that we had to rest frequently in the shade. People would jog by us and we marveled at their energy. We often had to grab rocks on the steepest inclines just to keep from slipping back.
The sights along the way made it totally worthwhile. We passed a graveyard in a steep decline right next to the trail and joked, “That’s where people who die hiking the trail are buried.” I noticed workers on the mountainside putting their supplies in a shed bearing a warning sign:

“Explosives! Stay out!”

My favorite sight was the wildflowers. They bloomed abundantly all over the mountain in vivid patches of orange and blue. They brought an oasis of color to the drab mountainside.

Suddenly, we came to a fork in the road. “Which way should we go now?” we wondered. Two ladies who lived in Jackson told us that a shortcut was to the right. Tired and hot, we took their advice.

The shortcut trail seemed more like a “longcut.” We zigzagged up the mountain. There were so many switchbacks that it was almost dizzying. Plus, the trail was very narrow. We could walk only single file, in a line, not side by side. The sun continued to beat down on us without mercy. Still, we continued on. Soon we were rewarded with a stretch of trail where we were surrounded by different grasses and wildflowers. Then we came to a place under the ski lift where the ground slanted sharply. “Stay on the trail!” a sign commanded. We didn’t need to be warned. One misstep and you could go rolling a long way down.
Finally, we could see the top of the mountain. We ran up a steep trail. An hour and a half after we had started, we crossed a finish line of flowers and bugs. We were so happy! We are from flatland Kansas. We had just climbed a steep rise to a peak 7,808 feet high.

My grandmother rode up the ski lift as she had planned. We took pictures and stared at the beautiful view below. After that, we rode down the ski lift together.

It would have been quicker and easier to simply ride up the ski lift. But I have long-lasting memories because my family and I hiked up Snow King together. We would have missed out on so much if we rode up the mountain: the flowers we smelled, the pictures we took, and the laughs we shared.

So get out in nature and see what special place you can find—and what memories you will make on the way.

**Analyze the Narratives**
- What experiences do these narratives describe?
- Where do they happen? How does each setting affect what happens?
- Which people are involved? How do these people affect what happens?
- How do the writers feel about their experiences now?

**Analyze the Tools Writers Use: Writer’s Voice**
- On page 15, Peter says he and his dad visited his grandparents’ grave and they cried. What does this tell you about Peter and his dad?
- On page 17, Bliss says, “I was afraid that if climbing this part of the trail was so difficult, we wouldn't be able to make it to the top.” What do these words tell you about Bliss? Do you think she is a grumpy hiker, or is she enjoying her walk?
- Bliss expresses her voice by using lots of description. Find three examples where you can see what Bliss saw on her walk.

**Focus on Words: Word Origins**
Knowing the history of a word can help you understand its meaning. Make a chart like the one below. Use a dictionary to find the origin and meaning of the words from the text.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>heritage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>vacation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>typical</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>mountain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>explosives</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How does an author write a Personal Narrative?

Reread “Climbing the Snow King” and think about what Bliss Baird did to write this narrative. How did she keep a narrow focus? How did she make you feel as if you were there?

1. Decide on an Experience

Remember: A personal narrative is an actual retelling of something you have experienced. Therefore, you will use words such as I, me, and my as you write. In “Climbing the Snow King,” the author wanted to tell about a memorable hike up a mountain she made with her family.

2. Decide Who Else Needs to Be in Your Narrative

Often, other people—or even animals—were a part of your experience. Ask yourself:
- Who was there with me?
- Which people are important to my story?
- How will I describe these people?
- Which people should I leave out?
- Can I tell my story without embarrassing another person? If not, what other experience could I write about?

3. Recall Events and Setting

Jot down notes about what happened and where it happened. Ask yourself:
- Where did my experience take place? How will I describe it?
- What was the situation or problem I experienced? Was the experience happy, scary, sad, or surprising?
- What events happened?
- How did my experience turn out?
- What questions might my readers have about my experience that I could answer in my narrative?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>How My Experience Turned Out</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snow King</td>
<td>1. We walked from the hotel to the base of the mountain. 2. We hiked up a steep trail to a shortcut. Grandma opted to take the ski lift. 3. We continued to a fork in the trail. We took the advice of two local women and went right.</td>
<td>We made it to the top! It was a long, difficult hike but worth it because of the sights and smells along the way and the laughs I shared with my family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackson, Wyoming</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person(s)</th>
<th>Importance to Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mom, Dad, Grandpa</td>
<td>went with the author all the way to the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandma</td>
<td>left partway up the trail; took ski lift to the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joggers</td>
<td>passed the author at a quick glance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Women</td>
<td>gave a tip about a shortcut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

**convertible** (kun-VER-tih-bul) a car with a top that can be lowered (page 10)

**elevator** (EH-leh-vay-ter) a cage or room for lifting people or objects to different levels (page 7)

**explosives** (ik-SPLOH-sivz) items that create explosions or blasts (page 18)

**heritage** (HAIR-ih-tij) traditions of a group of people that one inherits from past generations (page 14)

**hypnotic** (hip-NAH-tik) holding attention, likely to produce sleep (page 12)

**mountain** (MOWN-tun) a very high hill (page 16)

**sections** (SEK-shunz) distinct portions or parts of something (page 8)

**symbol** (SIM-bul) an object or picture that stands for something else (page 6)

**typical** (TIH-pih-kul) having the characteristics of a specific group (page 15)

**vacation** (vay-KAY-shun) a time away from work or school, sometimes spent away from home in traveling (page 14)

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Make Connections Across Texts

Complete a graphic organizer like the one below.

**Analyze the Narratives**

Use your graphic organizer to help you answer these questions.

- How does each title prepare you for reading the personal narrative?
- What connections can you make to these personal narratives?
- How did you feel as you read each personal narrative?
- How are the personal narratives alike?
- How are the personal narratives different?
- What can readers learn from these personal narratives?
Four Personal Narratives

A first-time visit to New York City . . . Exploring a coral reef on a beach in San Diego . . . Discovering family roots in Montenegro . . . Hiking to the top of a mountain in Wyoming. Read about these kids’ memorable trips. Then learn how to write about one of your own trips.

Tyler Carr
lives in Connecticut.

Kaitlyn Gonzales
lives in Texas.

Peter Veljovic
lives in New York.

Bliss Baird
lives in Kansas.