# Six Word Memoir

*Drowning in the accomplishments of others.*

*I’m a rebel. Get over it.*

***What do the words we write really have to say about us? Using the power of words, write a six word memoir about you and your life.***

1. What is a “life story”? How can it be told? Is it a novel? Can it be short story? A poem? In six words?
2. Watch “Six-Word memoirs: The Video Story” for ideas <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZOxhHXZW6o>
3. Watch video “Six Word memoirs by Teens” for ideas

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejndNExso9M>

1. After watching these videos, discuss:

*“Former third wheel. Now a unicycle.*

* 1. Which memoirs did you like the most? Why?
  2. What is the difference between a story and a memoir?
  3. How is it possible to distill the essence of who you are into six words?

To Do:

1. Watch “Six Tips for Writing Six Word Memoirs” <http://www.smithmag.net/sixwordbook/2010/09/13/video-six-tips-for-writing-six-word-memoirs/>
2. Begin brainstorming by writing down the words that **describe your life and who you are**. Don’t think about it too deeply, just write. Eg. *Mother, teacher, friend, happy, restless, traveler, reader, loving, nagger, runner, friendly, married, controlling, sibling, responsible*
3. Circle a few words that you think best describes your past and who you are.
4. Write some phrases using these words. Don’t worry about exactly six words yet, we can change it. Eg. ***Love life especially my family and friends***. OR ***Always in control, when am I going to let it go?*** OR ***Restless to travel and explore.***
5. Choose **one** focus word from your memoir and find some synonyms in the thesaurus or your computer. Eg. ***Life***= experience, existence, being
6. Discuss synonyms and their use. How do you find the “best word”? It can have a similar meaning but the connotation, register, sound and rhythm might be wrong/better.
   1. **Connotation**- the emotional or personal associations the word carries (the word ***school*** can have different meaning for each person. One might love it, another hate it)
   2. **Register**- the level of formality or informality associated with the word (*book vs. literature)*
   3. **Sound and rhythm**- the way words sound can contribute to their appropriateness
7. Discuss “audience”. Do we need formal or informal words? Who is our audience?
8. Substitute your focus word with each of your synonyms. See what you like best. Play with connotation and formality, and your rhythm and rhyme.
9. Play with the order of the phrase. Instead of saying “Restless to travel and explore” make it “Exploring and travelling means I am restless.”
10. Substitute words and phrases to make it into six words. Eliminate any unnecessary words- **keep the strong verbs and nouns.**
11. Share your memoir with others. Change word order, play with synonyms.

**Final Product**

In your group, you will create a short video as seen in the “teen” example. Each person is to write their memoir on either

* A photo of yourself
* An art piece of your making
* An image from the internet (make sure it is not a copyrighted image)

When complete,

* ONE person in your group will create a short video with a soundtrack of your choice as background.
* The final slide should have a “bibliography” of the author of the image if applicable.
* We will show these to the class to introduce yourself.

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

*By Ernest Hemingway*