

Name _____

Date _____

Analyze Text: Memoir

A **memoir** is a form of autobiographical writing in which a writer shares his or her personal experiences and observations of significant events or people. Memoirs are often written in the first person. Authors of memoirs often "talk" to readers, using informal language and sharing personal feelings recall actual events and emphasize their reactions to them show how their experiences changed their attitudes and lives.

Read the following memoir excerpt and answer the questions.

First Day in America

I will never forget my first day in America. At twelve years old, I clutched my small suitcase as we stepped off the airplane into the brightness of a California afternoon. The air smelled different—a mixture of car exhaust, unfamiliar food, and something I later realized was the ocean.

My parents had prepared me for this moment for months. "America will give you opportunities," my father had repeated countless times in our tiny apartment back in Vietnam. Now, standing in the bustling airport, I felt both excited and terrified. Everything was bigger than I had imagined—the buildings, the cars, even the people.

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Date _____

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My uncle met us at the airport, hugging each of us tightly. He had left Vietnam five years earlier and now spoke with an accent I barely recognized. On the drive to his home, I pressed my face against the window of his car, amazed at the wide highways and tall buildings. I remember thinking the streets looked just like in the American movies we sometimes watched at home.

That night, unable to sleep from jet lag and excitement, I sat by the window of our new bedroom. The neighborhood was quiet except for unfamiliar cricket sounds. Looking up at the same moon that had shone over my old home, I whispered a promise to myself: "I will learn English. I will work hard. I will make my family proud." That promise became my anchor during the challenging months that followed.

1. What makes this passage a memoir rather than fiction?

2. What emotions does the author experience in this memoir excerpt?

3. Identify two sensory details the author uses to describe their first day in America.

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Analyze Text: Memoir - Answer Key

1. What makes this passage a memoir rather than fiction?

This passage is a memoir because it's a first-person account of the author's personal experience arriving in America as an immigrant. It contains personal reflections and memories of a significant real-life event.

2. What emotions does the author experience in this memoir excerpt?

The author experiences excitement, fear, amazement, and determination throughout their first day in America.

3. Identify two sensory details the author uses to describe their first day in America.

- "The air smelled different—a mixture of car exhaust, unfamiliar food, and something I later realized was the ocean" (smell)

- "The neighborhood was quiet except for unfamiliar cricket sounds" (sound)