

Snapshot Memoir

Self-Revision Via Comparison

Directions: Analyze the model provided using the criteria below. Identify how your writing is *similar to* and *different from* the model. Use these observations to then decide upon the revisions you need to make to improve your story.

Criteria	How My Writing Is <i>Similar</i> to the Model (1 point per box)	How My Writing Is <i>Different</i> from the Model (1 point per box)
<u>Lead</u> (Do you capture the reader's attention?)		
<u>Characterization</u> (Do you characterize yourself and others well? Do you use dialogue to help bring personalities to life?)		
<u>Interior Dialogue</u> (Do you incorporate your thoughts and emotions throughout?)		
<u>Sensory Details</u> (Do you use sensory details and strong verbs to paint a vivid scene for your reader?)		
<u>Significance</u> (Do you carefully point out how this experience has helped you to understand yourself, others, or a specific situation?)		
<u>Construction</u> (Do you vary sentence structure? Do you attempt advanced vocabulary and compositional risks?)		

Specific Steps for Revision (2 points each):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Finale

The July breeze brushes across my face as I step onto her grey porch.

“Are you nervous?” my mom asks.

“No,” I reply. The future scares me more. About a month ago, my piano teacher told me that I needed a new teacher. She said that I was getting too advanced and that I needed someone who could teach me new techniques, someone who could get me somewhere.

“But I don’t want another teacher!” I cried. “I just want it to be the same as it’s always been!” Now, a month later, I’m standing here, waiting to play in my last recital with the person who’d been teaching me for as long as I could remember.

I push the white button and ring the doorbell. It doesn’t take long for her to answer the door; it never does. This is the last dress I’ll wear to a recital. The striped red and white sash scoops up the matching striped dress with my long, dirty blonde hair draped over my shoulders.

“Okay guys!” my teacher, Jen, exclaims. “Let’s get started.”

Before the recital, we agreed that I should go last. I thought it would be a good way to end this chapter of my life, but now I’m wondering if that was such a good decision. As it gets closer to my turn, I can’t even listen to the music anymore. One kid played the song I played at my first recital. Another played the one that made me realize what I want to do with my life.

I want to be a singer-songwriter. Everyone tells me I can’t do it, but I can just see myself years from now sitting at the piano, writing a song that’ll be played on radios everywhere. Singing the melody I came up with while playing a piano at Madison Square Garden, telling others, “I never thought I’d make it this far.” Everyone says it will never happen, except for Jen.

Jen is the one person who tells me that I could do it. She has given me the tools and the knowledge to make it happen. She has given me hope and advice and everything in between. I can’t thank her enough for that. And leaving her, I hope she can say that she learned something from me as well.

I snap back to reality, just in time for my turn. Stepping up to the brown piano, I feel the gazes of strangers pass over me. Staring at the brown piano that I’ve grown to love, memories come back with this piano as the

setting. I even wrote my first song on this piano. I'll always remember this. No matter what happens, I'll never forget.

For my last set, I chose songs that have made an impact on my life, the songs that expressed my emotions completely. Music has always been a big part of my life and I wanted my songs to be evident of that. Sometimes, I feel like music is the only thing that will last forever. Music will always be there, no matter what. I feel the ivory keys against my fingers; I'm ready.

My first piece is classical. Jen always makes us play a classical piece in the recital. I hate classical. I always have, but somehow, I get out of playing a classical piece every year. It's sort of a running joke. How many times can Shannon get out of playing a classical piece? So, I decided that I should probably follow the rules once and play a classical piece. Thankfully, I picked a short song. Before I know it, I'm done playing.

Next, I play a song that helps me relax every time I have a rough day. Even though there are no words in the song, you can hear the emotion in the dynamics. Just the way the songwriter placed each note is perfect. The pages of the lengthy song stare me down. Bring it on. The extensive battle begins. I take each song as a challenge. How much emotion can I put into my playing? Can I go through the whole song without making any mistakes?

I don't know how time goes by so fast. I can still remember my first piano lesson. I was five. Running down the stairs, I was so excited to learn to play. I learned a short song that consisted of only three notes. At the time, I thought it was as complicated as Bach or Beethoven. To be honest, I don't remember a time I wasn't learning to play. It's been such a huge part of my life and I think it'll always be. I can only hope that I get to follow my dream of making music for a living, but if I don't, I think I'll still play. I can't give this up; I'll never give this up.

I start to play the last piece and all the things I'm thankful for are coming back. I should be thankful for being able to play. I should be thankful that I got to have such an amazing teacher. Even though she won't be teaching me anymore, I will never forget the real lesson she taught me, which is to follow my dreams. The final measure comes and I force all my emotions down to my fingers. I play a C, a B flat, a G, an F. My last recital is done, but at the same time, it isn't.

This recital will continue for my whole life. It may not be with Jen any longer, but it's not over. It's hard to say goodbye, but I'm still so grateful that I had such an amazing teacher. I'm going to make it one day; I'm going to be a big name in the music business, no matter what anyone may say. There will be a finale someday, but not today.