**Language & Literacy Narrative Brainstorms Worksheet**

Your name:

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Instructions: Please respond to the questions below. Take as much space as you need. The more details you add and the more you put into reflecting now on the complexities of your language and literacy development, the better off you’ll be in completing our major assignment for our first phase of this course: *narrating ONE moment from your language and literacy experiences, using vivid details and rich description*.

When it comes to your experiences with language (speaking, listening, presenting, accents, learning new languages) and literacy (reading and writing in any language), take a moment to brainstorm what **specific moments** in your life you recall that are particularly vivid or that emerge as being significant to you. It could be…

* **a memorable encounter**—a moment of tension, confusion, or triumph—that has to do with your language and/or literacy
* **an example from your earliest memories** of *learning* to speak, read, and write (in school or elsewhere and in any language)
* **an experience developing** additional dialects/languages and advanced literacies (i.e., learning to speak/write in different peer groups, at school, at work, with family, online, in different locations across the nation or world, etc.

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| Examples of **specific moments**: * Last week on the subway, my cousin and I were talking when a stranger shouted at us, “Speak English! This is America!” But we were already speaking English!
* My mom used to read to me every night. One night, she was tired and fell asleep. It was my first chance to read on my own, and I did pretty well.
* I moved to the US at 6 and was placed in ESL classes. I remember the horror of being taken out of class and figuring out how to speak English and make friends.
* When I was 12, I had a few tutoring sessions that changed my perspective on reading. My tutor’s own love of reading old literature inspired me a lot.
* In high school, I wrote a story about my grandma’s culture that meant a lot to me. My teacher returned my essay with red marks all over but no comments.
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1. Please brainstorm and list below **3-5 specific moments** from your life when language and literacy played a major role. Bullets welcome.

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2. For better or worse, **who** in your family, at school, among your peer group, or in your community played a part in you learning a first or additional language and developing your literacy (aka reading and writing skills)? Brainstorm below. Bullets welcome.

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3. For better or worse, **what** sorts of issues, experiences, schools, programs, organizations, laws, societal expectations, or life circumstances played a part in your language and literacy experiences? Brainstorm below. Bullets welcome.

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4. What **advantages** did/do you have and what **disadvantages** did/do you face as a result of your language and literacy learning? Brainstorm below. Bullets welcome.

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5. Now choose JUST ONE specific moment from your language and literacy experiences (from any of your brainstorms above or even a new idea) that feels meaningful to you. **Write 1-2 paragraphs describing the one specific moment in vivid detail**. Your goal is to get your reader to see what you saw, feel what you felt, think what you thought, and to smell/taste/hear what you smelled/tasted/heard. Vividly describe the setting, people involved, and what happened.

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6. How might the one specific moment with language and literacy that you just wrote about above **connect to larger social realities**? In other words, what larger lesson(s) might readers learn from this moment you described? How might this moment reflect a bigger trend in your life, family, generation, gender, race, culture, nation, geographic location, current moment of time? Brainstorm below. Bullets welcome.

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