

# Writing the Personal Experience Story

## Essentials - and pitfalls - of good PE story writing

### 1. Clear focus

Pitfall - want to tell too much

### 2. Create reader identification

Pitfall - story important to you but not relevant to your reader

### 3. Be honest

Pitfall - temptation to make yourself look better than you are

### 4. Use 4 C's of fiction

**Characters** - contrasting & strongly motivated

Pitfall - don't lose the reader's sympathy

**Conflict** - credible problems & obstacles

Pitfall - can't remember all the details; inconsequential or unbelievable events

**Crisis** - black hole

Pitfall - too emotional or not emotional enough

**Change/resolution** - take-away

Pitfall - "I came to realize" or "suddenly I realized"

### 5. Structure using scenes

Pitfall - telling instead of showing

## Drawing the Story

The Hinge Story

Mountain Top Plot

Dark Moment Plot

### 6. Dialogue used effectively

Pitfall - unnatural, stilted dialogue

### 7. Strong take-away

Pitfall - failure to give reader something he can apply to his own life