

The Memory Box

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W

hen I woke up this morning, I knew it was going to be a great vacation. Gramps was standing by my bed, holding the tackle box.

"Already too hot for catching walleye," he said.

"I bet Zach would like to throw out a line anyway, this being his first day," Gram argued from the doorway. She was holding a plateful of butter-dripping cinnamon rolls. As I said, it was going to be a great vacation. Three weeks of fishing Gramps's lake and eating Gram's cooking.

Now, from the boat, I could see Gram waving at us fishermen from the dock on the sky blue lake. Behind her on the hillside sat their berry red house in the middle of the dark green northern woods. The colours reminded me of a painting I saw once.

Gramps and I rested our bamboo poles on the side of the boat. Our bobbers rode the glittery waves.

"It's a Memory Box day," Gramps said as we waited for the perch to decide if they were hungry.

"What's a Memory Box?" I asked, dangling my hands in the cool water. I wondered if fish ever nibbled fingers.

"Remind me to tell you after the fish fry we're gonna have tonight. Now let's get quiet and catch 'em."

And we did. We got so quiet I could hear the fish circling our night crawlers. But it still took three hours of sweaty, itchy stillness before we hauled in enough to fill Gram's skillet.

"Zach? The door, please?" she called through the screen. "I emptied an old recipe box so we can start *our* Memory Box," she said, handing me a treasure chest a pirate would love. "Now I'll leave my men alone."

My fingers traced the designs carved in the smooth, shiny wood.

"I gave that to your grandmother on our wedding day," was all Gramps said. Then we sat in the dark and watched the fireflies dart past the porch. Maybe Gramps was already searching his mind for memories to put in the box. He never said.

But for the rest of my vacation, we remembered, Gramps and Gram and me. We especially remembered when we were fishing. "Thoughts come faster when bobbers are jumping," Gram said as she wrote our memories on paper scraps.

"How about the time I climbed the water tower?" I asked Gramps. "Mom said no, but you turned your back so I could make it to the top."

"You nearly fell off, as I recall." He scratched the whiskers that appeared on his face for the first summer ever. I wondered about those

whiskers. Didn't Gramps tell me once how much Gram hated it when he didn't shave?

It was Gramps's job to add photos and souvenirs to the Memory Box. He found a picture of my second birthday party when I had taken a bite off the top of the cake. There was a shot of Gram in her wedding dress with flowers in her hair and one of Dad in his football uniform when he still *had* hair. Another was of Gramps and Mom the day he had taught her to ride a bike. She had ridden it, too. Right over his foot!

We added other important stuff, like my first soccer medal and Gram's chocolate-chip cookie recipe.

We added new memories, too.

We wrote about the morning the three of us rolled green apples down the hill for a herd of deer that rested in the long grass.

And the time we watched a raccoon bandit watch *us* as she ate a trayful of cookies that Gram had set to cool on the picnic table.

And a picture of the trophy walleye I caught the morning we put the boat on the lake before the sun even got up.

Gram moved the fastest I'd ever seen. She sat on the ground beside Gramps while I ran back for his slippers. We helped him back to the house. Led him, if you want to know the truth. While we bandaged his foot and made him lie down on his bed, Gramps was quiet. We waited until the snoring began before Gram and I tiptoed out of the room.

"Remember that first Memory Box night?" Gram asked. She sat in the kitchen.

"Gramps was trying to tell you about Alzheimer's disease...when the body stays but the mind leaves."

She stared off, and I just waited until she looked at me again.

"The mind doesn't go all at once, or all the time, but it never comes back quite the same way. When Dr. Johnson suggested Gramps might have Alzheimer's, it explained so many

things about this past year—Gramps forgetting to shave, his talking to me like we were kids again, his getting lost on trails he'd hiked for years."

I thought about the poison ivy and Francie's fishing lesson.

"It scares Gramps, knowing he'll forget. That's why the Memory Box is so important."

When Gramps woke up, he called me. I stood at his bedroom door. He sat on the bed.

"Did Gram tell you about this useless old man? And how he needs to find a home for special things like this?" He handed me the old fishing knife from the shed. "I forgot the sheath, so I went back...and got lost."

"Thanks," I whispered, holding the knife the way Gramps had taught me. My own, very first knife. I'd always wanted one. *This* one. But now it didn't seem so important.

THE MEMORY BOX

1. Why was the boy looking forward to spending vacation with his “Gramps” and “Gran?”
2. Find and write a descriptive sentence on page 26.
3. What was the “cook’s rule” that Gram used?
4. What did Gramps allow the boy to use?
5. Why did Grandpa want to make a memory box?
6. What was the boy’s job to do with the memory box?
7. Give an example of a new memory that was added to the box.
8. What strange thing did the boy first notice about his grandpa?
9. What happened when Grandpa became lost?
10. Why did the boy and Grandma feel that the Memory Box was so important?

VOCABULARY

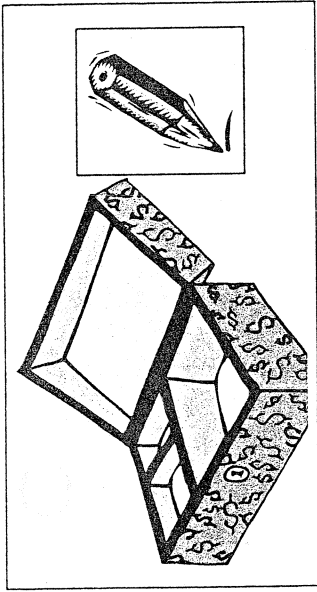
Use a dictionary and write the meaning of the following words:

glittery bamboo filet knife rickety bandit
horizon squish scout

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

MEMORY BOX



MY PLAN:

MY LIST OF ITEMS TO PLACE IN MY MEMORY BOX.

MY PROPOSED LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF MY MEMORY BOX.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT MEMORY BOX ASSIGNMENT

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

UPON REFLECTION:

By reading the story, and then discussing memory box ideas with a group, I learned

Sometimes when we make a plan, we have to make changes to the plan for a variety of reasons. I had to make the following changes to my plan for the reasons listed:

If I had to do another memory box, three things that I might do the following differently next time are:

Three good things about my memory box display are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Two areas that I can improve on the next time that I do a display are:

- 1.
- 2.

MY TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

Write a recount of a memory that you would like to share with your grandchildren when you get older.

You could choose to write about one of the items that you decide to put in your memory box. Your recount should be at least a page and a half in length written every other line.

Remember that you have a copy of the rubric that we are using to mark this assignment

Nipigon Region PLC – Recount Writing Rubric

Expectation	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
<p>1.7 Analyzing Texts Identify specific elements of texts and explain how they contribute to the meaning of the texts</p>	<p>Identifies the elements of a recount from a mentor text and their own writing with limited effectiveness.</p>	<p>Identifies the elements of a recount from a mentor text and their own writing with some effectiveness.</p>	<p>Identifies the elements of a recount from a mentor text and their own writing with considerable effectiveness.</p>	<p>Identifies the elements of a recount from a mentor text and their own writing with a high degree of effectiveness.</p>
<p>1.5 Organizing Ideas Identify and order main ideas and supporting details into units that could be used to develop short, simple paragraphs, using graphic organizers. (Note: The graphic organizer must match the student writing in order to be effective)</p>	<p>Identifies and orders main ideas and supporting details with limited effectiveness where limited planning is evident.</p>	<p>Identifies and orders main ideas and supporting details with some effectiveness using an appropriate planning strategy.</p>	<p>Identifies and orders main ideas and supporting details with considerable effectiveness using an appropriate planning strategy.</p>	<p>Identifies and orders main ideas and supporting details with some effectiveness using an appropriate planning strategy with a high degree of effectiveness.</p>
<p>2.2 Voice Establish a voice in their writing (see grade specific expectations) Gr. 4 – personal Gr. 5 – appropriate Gr. 6 – distinct Gr. 7 – distinct Gr. 8 - distinct</p>	<p>Limited demonstration of personal feelings or attitudes towards the event.</p>	<p>Conveys the writer's personal feelings or attitudes towards the event with some effectiveness and grade appropriate voice.</p>	<p>Conveys the writer's personal feelings or attitudes towards the event with considerable effectiveness and grade appropriate voice</p>	<p>Conveys the writer's personal feelings or attitudes towards the event with a high degree of effectiveness and grade appropriate voice</p>
<p>2.1 Text Forms Explain how the particular characteristics of various text forms help communicate meaning, with a focus on literary texts (sequential order, big idea, past tense, relating/relevant details)</p>	<p>Expresses the author's personal experiences of the event or day with limited effectiveness</p>	<p>Expresses the author's personal experiences of the event or day with some effectiveness</p>	<p>Expresses the author's personal experiences of the event or day with considerable effectiveness.</p>	<p>Expresses the author's personal experiences of the event or day with a high degree of effectiveness</p>