**Autobiography vs. Biography vs. Memoir**

**An *autobiography* is your life story that you write yourself.** Autobiographies don’t necessarily have to include every single thing that ever happened in your life, but autobiographies are rather all-encompassing, starting with childhood, moving chronologically through each major period in your life, and ending at the present time. Autobiographies are very personal and describe your own feelings, emotions, and experiences. Autobiographies are written in first person (such as “I moved to St. Louis when I was in third grade”). These are very challenging to write because they cover so much, but an autobiography is also one of the very best ways to save all of the stories of your life that you want to pass on to your children and other family members.

**A *biography* is similar to an autobiography in the** [**scope**](http://yourhistoryheritage.com/autobiography-vs-biography-vs-memoir/) **of a book and the chronological structure. It covers someone’s entire life, but the book is written by someone other than the subject of the book.** Biographies are written in third person (such as “Jim Jones moved to St. Louis when he was in the third grade.”). Biographies also cover how a person felt about various parts of his or her life, and can be quite personal, but they are more objective than autobiographies. Most biographies also include supporting materials and research to provide more insight into a person’s life. Most biographies are about famous people or people who are well-known in a business setting. Some people hire writers to write a biography of their life, especially people who want to share business successes or inspirational stories about their life.

Memoirs are a bit different from both an autobiography and biography. **A memoir is an autobiography because you are writing about your own life, but a memoir covers only of a tiny slice of your life.** For example, memoirs can cover very targeted topics within a short time frame, such as your college experience during the Civil Rights movement, your memories serving as a soldier during a war, a meaningful vacation, or memories of raising a special needs child. Memoirs can also cover large segments of your life, but focus on only one activity or interest. For example, you could write a memoir about working as a teacher, or experiences backpacking throughout Colorado, or how you survived a life-altering event or trauma, or how you became a basketball phenom. Memoirs can be about anything that is meaningful to you!