

"Mighty Memoir"

The One and Only Ivan Memoir Project

Inspiration : *The One and Only Ivan* "In cheering for Ivan and his friends, we cheer for our own humanity and our own possibilities." –Gary Schmidt

Purpose : During this unit, we are going to read the fantasy novel *The One and Only Ivan*. We will compare our experiences to the experiences of an insightful gorilla named Ivan. While Ivan expresses himself through crayola crayons, we will express ourselves through memoir and photography.

"Of all the subjects available to you as a writer, the one you know best is yourself: your past and your present, your thoughts and your emotions. What we're all looking for – what we want to see pop out of your papers – is individuality. We're looking for whatever it is that makes you unique. Write about what you know and what you think. Write about yourself, by all means, with confidence and with pleasure. But see that all the details – people, places, events, anecdotes, ideas, emotions – are all moving your memoir along. Remember, your memoir isn't the summary of your life: it's a window into your life, very much like a photograph. The best gift you have to offer when you write personal history is the gift of yourself. Give yourself permission to write about yourself, and have a good time doing it." –William Zins

Requirements: Ten of the following twenty topics must be represented in a photo album. You must write enough information to give the reader a clear understanding of you, your thoughts, feelings, likes, and ideas. Each paragraph is to include a catchy beginner, topic sentence, a minimum of three elaborating support sentences and a concluding sentence. Teachers expect strong word choice in each entry. Each paragraph must be accompanied by a photograph that creatively expresses your topic in a similar style to the natural National Geographic photographer, Michael 'Nick' Nichols. The photographs must be taken by using a camera, and all writing and photos are to be arranged in a single photo album. The writings should be typed and sized down to fit inside the photo album. Your cover must be a photograph of you with your name creatively displayed.

Topics:

1. My Nickname Page:

Ivan: Julia gives Bob wings or lion's mane. Once she gave him a tortoise shell. But the best thing she ever gave him wasn't a drawing. Julia gave Bob his name.

This page should describe how you were given a nickname and how you feel about the nickname itself.

2. What I Was Born To Do Page:

Ivan: Even as a baby, still clinging to my mother, I had an artist's eye. I saw shapes in the clouds, and sculptures in the tumbled stones at the bottom of a stream. I grabbed at colors-the crimson flower just out of reach, the ebony bird streaking past.

This page should explain what you think you were born to do because it's in your genes.

3. What I Fear Most Page:

Ivan: Somehow that I knew that in order to live, I had to let my old life die. But my sister could not let go of our home. It held her like a vine, stretching across the miles, comforting, strangling.

This page should describe what frightens you most.

4. My Favorite Gift Page:

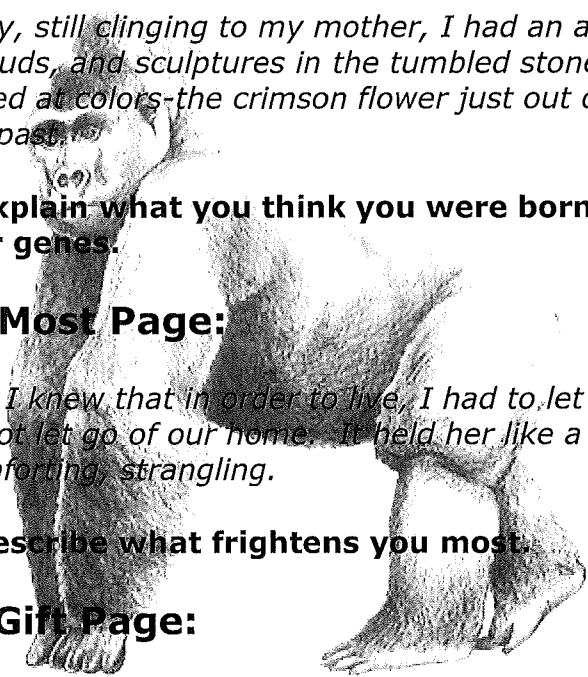
Ivan: I have a tire swing, a baseball, a tiny plastic pool filled with dirty water, and even an old T.V. I have a stuffed toy gorilla, too. Julia, the daughter of the weary man who cleans the mall each night, gave it to me.

This page should describe a gift that is most special to you.

5. My Bad Habit That I Can't Seem To Break Page:

Ivan: A me-ball is made by rolling up dung until it's the size of a small apple, then letting it dry. I always keep a few on hand. For some reason, my visitors never seem to carry any.

This page should describe your bad habit. Explain why this habit is too difficult to break.



6. My Proudest Moment Page:

Ruby: *"No, Bob!" Ruby interrupts. "You're wrong. These humans helped me. When they saw I was trapped, they grabbed ropes and they made loops around my neck and my tummy. The whole entire village helped, even little kids and grandmas and grandpas, and they all pulled and pulled and ..."* Ruby stops. Her lashes are wet, and I know she must be remembering all the terrible feelings from that day. "... and they saved me," she finishes in a whisper.

This page should describe a time in your life that you were proud of yourself for achieving or reaching a goal.

7. My Favorite T.V. Show Page:

Ivan: *My T.V. is old. It doesn't always work, and sometimes days will go by before anyone remembers to turn it on. I'll watch anything, but I'm particularly fond of cartoons, with their bright jungle colors. I especially enjoy it when someone slips on a banana peel.*

This page should describe your favorite television show.

8. My Favorite Fruit Page:

Ivan: *Everyone knows the peels are the best part.*

This page should describe your favorite fruit.

9. My Curiosity Page:

Ivan: *I think of Ruby's endless curiosity, and of the questions she loved to ask. Have you ever danced with a tiger, Ivan? Will you turn blue? Why doesn't that little boy have a tail?*

This page should describe something that makes you curious

10. My Home Page:

Ivan: *My domain is made of thick glass and rusty metal and rough cement. Stella's domain is made of metal bars. The sun bears' domain is made of wood; the parrots' is wire mesh.*

This page should describe your favorite aspect of your home.

11. My Best Talent Page:

Ivan: *My neighbors here at the Big Top Mall know many tricks. They are an educated lot, more accomplished than I am. One of my neighbors plays baseball, although she is a chicken. Another drives a fire truck, although he is a rabbit.*

This page should describe your unusual talent.

12. My Calming Activity Page:

Ivan: *But even though I draw the same things over and over again, I never get bored with my art. When I'm drawing, that's all I think about. I don't think about where I am, about yesterday or tomorrow. I just move my crayons across the paper.*

This page should describe something you do to calm yourself.

13. The Most Patient Person I Know Page:

Ivan: *Humans speak too much. They chatter like chimps, crowding the world with their noise. Even when they have nothing to say. It took me some time to recognize all those human sounds, to weave words into things. But I was patient. Patient is a useful way to be when you're an ape. Gorillas are as patient as stones.*

This page should describe a person that you feel is most patient.

14. My Loving Mother Page:

Ivan: *I don't remember much about my early life, but I do remember this: Whenever I got the chance I would dip my fingers into cool mud and use my mother's back for a canvas. She was a patient soul, my mother.*

This page should describe your mother.

15. My Lonely Page:

Ivan: *Not long ago, a little boy stood before my glass, tears streaming down his smooth, red cheeks. "He must be the loneliest gorilla in the world," he said, clutching his mother's hand.*

This page should describe a time you felt lonely.

16. The Bad Mood Page:

Ivan: *It's been two days since anyone's come to visit. Mac is in a bad mood. He says we're losing money hand over fist. He says he is going to sell the whole lot of us.*

This page should describe what puts you in a horrible mood.

17. The Horrible Illness Page:

Ivan: *Last winter, Stella's foot swelled to twice its normal size. She had a fever, she lay on the damp, cold floor of her domain for five days.*

This page should describe a time when you or someone you loved suffered from illness.

18. My Loving Father Page:

Ivan: *My father was a master at leading us to the ripest fruit for our morning feast and the finest branches for our night nests. He was everything a silverback is meant to be: a guide, a teacher, a protector.*

This page should describe your father.

19. My Respect Page:

Ivan: *"I'm a silverback, Ruby. A leader." I pull back my shoulders and hold my head high. "They don't have to like me. They have to respect me."*

This page should describe how you respect yourself or someone else.

20. My Protest Page:

Ivan: *"More people with signs come today. They want Ruby to be free. Some of them even want Mac to shut down the mall. In the evening, George and Mac talk about them. Mac says they're protesting the wrong guy."*

This page should describe someone or something that you would protest for or against.

