



## **MY LIFE NOW, IN SIX WORDS:** PERSPECTIVES PROJECT & CONTEST: GRADES 6-12

SIX-WORD MEMOIRS FOUNDER LARRY SMITH, the editor of nine books of six-word stories on topics ranging from teen life to immigration stories, invites you to challenge your students to share their stories **about life during the coronavirus pandemic**.

### **What's a Six-Word Memoir?**

Writing in six words is a creative way to catalyze conversation, spark imagination, and boil big ideas down to their essence. A few examples from teens: "Finally learned 'weird' is a compliment"; "Mom just revoked my creative license"; "Living my dream; please send money." As a classroom lesson, it's a simple and proven way to engage students and promote collaboration.

### **The Assignment**

#### **1. Write Your Story**

Write your own story about your life during the Coronavirus pandemic in six words (no more, no less). Your story does not have to be a complete sentence, but try to avoid making a list of six unrelated words. Use powerful words, mainly nouns and verbs. The most important thing is to make it personal, be honest, and be yourself.

Prompts:

1. What does social isolation feel like?
2. How has your family life changed?
3. What do you miss the most or least about school?
4. What have you discovered? Describe a new book, show, podcast, recipe.
5. What advice do you have for surviving your parents or caretaker?
6. How do you think life will change when this is over?

#### **2. React and Reveal**

Pick one of these stories about the pandemic that especially intrigues you. Imagine a narrative based on those six words and write a short story.

- ★ Hallway hike, bathtub swim, Spotify concert.
- ★ Eighth hour of TikTok. Send Help!
- ★ Finding beauty everywhere from virtual windows.
- ★ Trapped in a house with ghosts.
- ★ Virtual hugs are not the same.

### **Classroom Projects**

To see how teachers from around the world bring Six-Word Memoirs into classrooms as a tool for self-expression and collaboration, check out our schools blog:  
<https://bit.ly/sixinclass>

### 3. Make Your Story Visual

**Option 1:** Write or type your Six-Word Memoir. Be visually creative.

Use different sizes/styles of handwriting and fonts to match your words

**Option 2:** Create a Google Slide with your Six-Word Memoir and an original photograph or drawing

**Option 3:** Draw postcard-sized picture (at least 3.5 x 5 in., or larger) with your Six-Word Memoir written on the back



### 4. Share a Backstory

The backstory of a Six-Word Memoir is just as important as the memoir itself. It expresses the author's motivation for writing and reveals the full story. Using descriptive language, tell us the backstory behind your six words.

### Class Discussion Questions

1. After hearing or reading six-word stories, what surprises you about this form? What can you learn from it to take to other types of writing?
2. What were the common themes from your classmates? Why did these stand out in particular?
3. Which of these stories is the most moving, tragic, surprising, funniest, and why?

### What's Next?

#### Be in a Book

Share your students' stories at [sixwordmemoirs.com](http://sixwordmemoirs.com) or email their work to [sixwordsinclass@gmail.com](mailto:sixwordsinclass@gmail.com). We'll be featuring hundreds of these student stories in a free ebook. One student's six words will become the title of this new collection.

#### Back in School? Have a Story Show

Hold a "Six Words and More" backstory show in which each student shares the 3-6 minute story behind their six words. Invite parents, make popcorn, and watch your students shine! If you record the stories, send a link to [sixwordsinclass@gmail.com](mailto:sixwordsinclass@gmail.com) and your students could be asked to retell their story on a special live Zoom show.

### The Story of Six Words

Larry Smith launched Six-Word Memoirs in 2006 with a simple online challenge: Can you describe your life story in six words? Now, more than 1.5 million short life stories have been shared on [sixwordmemoirs.com](http://sixwordmemoirs.com) and countless more in classrooms, veterans' groups, festivals, and anywhere people gather, both virtually and in real life.

For more on Six-Word Memoirs and the many ways the form has been used for self-expression across the world, watch Larry's TEDx talk: [bitly.com/tedxsixwords](https://bitly.com/tedxsixwords)

