7th Grade Writing

Weekly Schedule

☐ Section 1: Tuesday
  ✓ Read Chelsea’s personal narrative about her family.

☐ Section 2: Wednesday
  ✓ Answer the questions about Chelsea’s narrative.

☐ Section 3: Thursday
  ✓ Interview a family member about an important event or experience that you will use for your personal narrative project.
The End of Adolescence
By Chelsea S.
age: 17
Texas

The salmon colored walls were all my eyes could see as I breathed in the disturbing smell of the waiting room: a smell beyond cleanliness, a smell I would soon come to hate-- the smell of death.

I attempted to focus my mind on plans for Thursday, wondering where my family would go for Thanksgiving, if we would even have one at all. I would have wondered whether the sky was purple just to keep my thoughts away from the bitter truth I knew was coming.

The door opened and the surgeon walked in. My aunts, uncles, father, and I crowded around him in silent fear, but the look on the doctor's face told me what I needed to know; it was the look of guilt that taints the face of a bearer of bad news.

Even before I heard that deep voice say "malignant," (cancerous) tears welled up in my eyes, blurring my vision. As my mother's doom for the next year, and maybe the rest of her life, was named, I looked up into my father's eyes-- I looked at them. I could never have looked in his eyes; I barely even knew the man I called daddy. He worked all the time and was never really there for me to know.

What I saw in my father's eyes scares me still, today: pools of sadness, fear, and, above all, love for my mother. The three emotions swirled into two dark brown galaxies of despair staring at the surgeon, begging him to be mistaken or lying. As much as I wished the same then, I am grateful for it now, because the threat to my lifestyle was what made me live.

Of course, even with a full mastectomy (a surgical procedure), my mother had to take treatment for the cancer. Chemotherapy (a way to treat cancer) was no easy task, for her or me. Every time she took one treatment, a trip to the hospital was inevitable, and she took treatment...
every three weeks. Because of her sickness, I basically had to do everything on my own, including getting my dad up in the morning and getting him ready for work. I cried countless times alone, in the dark, with no one to really pull me through. My dad never got home until after I was in bed and both of my sisters lived too far away to even know. It was then that I realized that I had been jerked out of my adolescence, and I was past the point of return-- I could never go back to my carefree childhood.

When mom was home, I could not even think of crying or letting her see how weak I was. My mom was the one who was always there for me, the one who I could talk to about anything, my friend. What would happen if she died? She came so close to death so many times in the hospital and I couldn’t even go see her for the fear I would get her sick. I stopped crying. As cold as it sounds, I got used to the fact that she could die and distanced myself so it could not hurt me.

But now, looking back on it, I cry even more because I know I can never go back. If I did, I don’t even know if I would change her illness for my own sake, because her cancer is what taught me how to grow up and really live, no matter how hard responsibility can be. I wish I never had to smell death again, but then, there’s always going to be another trip to the hospital.

Section 2

Directions: Answer the following questions about Chelsea’s personal narrative. Write in college complete sentences.

“If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There’s no way around these two things that I’m aware of, no shortcut.”
— Stephen King, On Writing

1. What is the central theme or message the reader learns from Chelsea’s story?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
2a. How did you determine the theme of the story? Was it clearly written in the story or did you have to make an inference?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2b. A theme should be integrated into a personal narrative and stated at the end of the narrative. Did Chelsea do this effectively? What did you like about the way theme appeared in her story?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. Chelsea’s narrative followed a clear story arc.

![Plot Diagram]

- **Beginning (Introduction):** Provides reader with information about who, what, when, where, why.
- **Middle (Rising Action):** Outlines series of events in chronological order
- **End (Climax/Falling Action):** Summary or personal reaction

*(Question continues on next page.)*
Why did clear organization make the story easy to understand?

____________________________________

4. **Re-write the following paragraph from the perspective of Chelsea’s father.** Imagine you are Chelsea’s father. Think about how he feels in this moment. You may add any details you choose!

> What I saw in my father's eyes scares me still, today: pools of sadness, fear, and, above all, love for my mother. The three emotions swirled into two dark brown galaxies of despair staring at the surgeon, begging him to be mistaken or lying. As much as I wished the same then, I am grateful for it now, because the threat to my lifestyle was what made me live.
Section 3
Directions: Interview a family member (not you) using the guiding questions below. Record their responses. You will use these answers as the basis of your family narrative writing project.

Remember, these questions are NOT about you. You are interviewing a family member!

1. What is one event or experience that has had a long-lasting impact on you as a person?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Why was event or experience meaningful?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
3. Where did this event/experience happen? Describe the setting.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Who else was involved in this event/experience?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
5. How did you feel throughout the event/ experience?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

6. What would have changed if this experience hadn’t happened or happened differently?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________