Directions: Complete each night’s tasks using the weekly schedule below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Read <em>Hot Combs, Watermelon, and Hello Kitty Backpacks</em> written by 16-year-old A’Rynn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Complete a reflection on Writing Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Conferencing with A’Rynn. What are A’Rynn’s strengths and weaknesses (deltas)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Brainstorm Your Own Story Outline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 1

Directions: Read *Hot Combs, Watermelon, and Hello Kitty Backpacks* by A’Rynn D., who wrote this personal narrative when she was 16 years old.

*Definition of Personal Narrative:* This type of writing is a true story about the author. The author organizes all of their ideas in the story around a central theme, or message in the story.

**Hot Combs, Watermelon, and Hello Kitty Backpacks**

“Momma, she bit me again,” I yelled rubbing the pain out of my arm. “That stupid dog!”

“Tara, don’t talk about your sister like that! Sashay, get yo’ yella behind in here, now!” When she talked her voice clashed with the silence like lightening, and her body rumbled and shook. She was a big woman, dark and creamy skinned. Momma’s words could squeeze the smallest tear from your eyes. Even when you weren’t in trouble and she called your name, just the memory of that extra cookie you took out of her special stash or the glass you dropped and tried to hide the pieces behind the curtain gave your tear ducts an 85 percent chance of a downpour even before you found out why she was calling.

“Mommy, I didn’t bite her! Tara was listening on the phone first,” Sashay whined.

“Only because you cut the hair off of Barbie!”

“That was cuz -- ”

“Girls! Lord, please deliver me from this evil!” Momma did that a lot: dropped to her knees, looked at the ceiling, and prayed. Sometimes Sashay and I got down and did it too.
That was the year of hot combs, watermelon, and Hello Kitty backpacks.

The three of us lived in a small three-bedroom house where there were really no hallways. When you walked out of one room, you were already in another. One of the rooms was occupied by Momma’s sewing machine and brought to life by the many fabrics that lined the walls. All colors and prints; all awaiting to be designed and structured into a dress for me, or a summer hat for Sashay, or a table cloth for Christmas dinner. Momma didn’t believe in buying things at the store when she could make them herself with her own “God-given hands”, as she called them.

We even had cabbage and tomatoes planted out back and chickens squawking in the coop beside the house. Oh, but our favorite was the watermelon patch about a half mile from our house. It wasn’t exactly ours, but the whole neighborhood owned it and took care of it. So when the melons were ready, usually when it was hot outdoors, all us kids would go pick a melon and sit out on the side of the road having contests on who could eat theirs the fastest. Faces soaked, hands sticky, and tummies juiced with melon, we’d return home to disgusted mothers who had to hose us down before we could walk inside.

Our days were structured with school during the day, and then we played around in the neighborhood until it got dark.

After our week of school, there was no doubt that we’d all three be cleaning the house on Saturday and waking up for church early Sunday morning. Momma woke up way before Sashay and I, cooked breakfast and had our dresses hanging up on our door. By the time we sat down to eat, she was dressed herself. We went to Fruit of the Vine Baptist Church where either you were really old or really young. Momma was the only woman her age. Most of the women were old and brought their
grandchildren with them and stuck them in the back corner where all the kids were supposed to sit. We didn’t; we sat by Momma where she could keep an eye on us. Momma said that we’d “never learn anything about the good Lord sitting back there. That’s why them kids is bad as they is,” she’d pull us close and whisper in our ears. When we were younger we never questioned why we did things so much differently from the other kids; why momma wouldn’t allow us to grow as children first, make childish choices and it be okay. But we came to the conclusion that it wasn’t her fault. Momma just didn’t understand what it meant to grow up. Momma unfortunately was never our age; she was born old and will only get older!

About once a month, or whenever Momma was tired of fighting with our hair, Sashay or I would be propped up on our knees on a kitchen chair with a hot comb laying down every strand of our hair with its intolerable heat. Momma would toast the cast-iron comb by putting it on the stove and would test it by licking a finger, quickly touch the tip of it, and the comb would hiss back at her telling her it was time. I opted to stay inside rather than playing outdoors after having my hair hot combed, in an effort to preserve my recently straightened hair.

There were only three reasons why a girl my age wasn’t found outside in the evenings: sick, in trouble, or just got her hair straight and didn’t want to reverse its results so soon. You knew better than to come home with your hair returned to its recent condition of thick wavy roots within the same week of its transformation to silky, manageable locks.

Sometimes, during the summer, we had church outside under a tent with chairs spread underneath it. The heat inside the church would be so unbearable that the direct beating of the sun outdoors somehow felt better. The summer meant that we were free
temporarily and out on bond until we had to return back to school and to prearranged days.

As a child, you never actually take in life’s beauty, but I always knew that Momma had something that I didn’t see in other women; a glow about her, making her set apart. I’ve come to realize that Momma was a beautiful woman from the smile on her face, on down to the way she stuck her chest out and arched her back when she walked, and to the way you couldn’t help but listen when she talked. The words she spoke were always as beautiful as the mouth they flowed from.

Momma and her guest sat on the porch while Sashay and I played in the sprinklers and with the water hose in the front yard. Momma always said not to listen in on “grown folk's conversations”, but when she’d be talking and sitting on the porch, I’d watch her and observe everything she did, the way her mouth rounded out her words, and the way her eyes never left yours when you talked to her. Sometimes when me and Sashay played, I’d pretend to be Momma and I’d try to walk slow but still cover a lot of ground like she did, and make my hands cut through the air as I talked. Momma was who I would one day become if I continued to stay under her wing. If I kept practicing her moves, if I kept sitting by her in church, and understanding why she gave us the look when we did wrong, I’d allow her to mold me and make me the woman my momma was. It was all a part of her master plan. She knew one day I would understand what she was doing. She knew that in time I’d realize that my momma was instilling morals and the idea that I don’t have to accept the minimum that life hands to us, but to go far and beyond the average and create my own standards and live above them everyday.

It was then, the year of hot combs, watermelon, and Hello Kitty backpacks, that I lost my mother and the same year that I found out exactly who she was and who I longed to be when my time comes.
Section 2

Directions: Answer the following questions about the writing process for *Hot Combs, Watermelon, and Hello Kitty Backpacks.*

Write in college complete sentences and fill in all of the lines provided.

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.”
— Philip Pullman

1. Pullman’s quote above describes the importance of writing. Do you agree with Pullman’s quote? Why or why not? Write in college complete sentences.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. How do you think a sixteen-year-old sophomore in high school learned to write a detailed and meaningful personal narrative about her family? *Take a risk and make a guess using college complete sentences!*

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
3. Why is writing challenging for you? How can you become a more effective writer?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Section 3

Directions: Answer the following questions about conferencing in college complete sentences.

Remember, conferencing is a one on one meeting you will have with Ms. Truslow to discuss how to improve your writing.

Definition of Personal Narrative: This type of writing is a true story about the author. The author organizes all of their ideas in the story around a central theme, or message in the story.

Imagine A'Rynn D. (the author) had a conference with Ms. Truslow to discuss her personal narrative.

1. What details or descriptions in the story stuck like glue for you as a reader? (In other words, what are the strengths of A'Rynn’s writing?) Choose and copy down two sentences from the text.

   1.______________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   2.______________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
2. Why did these details (or sentences) stick out to you? Think specifically about word choice, figurative language, and vivid verbs. Be as specific as possible in your answer and write a response for each sentence you chose above.

1. ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

3. Which element from the list below do you want to work on incorporating into your own writing? Why?
   ✓ Vivid Verbs
   ✓ Clarity of Main Ideas
   ✓ Author’s Voice
   ✓ Organization of the Story
Section 4

Directions: Fill out your personal timeline with the most memorable moments of your life by grade. Then, choose one memory and use the Personal Memoir organizer to brainstorm the details of the story.

Part 1: Personal Timeline

Directions: In a complete sentence, write down a memory for each year of your life beginning at age 5. Write only one sentence per year for your most memorable (good or bad moment of that year).

Kindergarten:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

1st Grade:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

2nd Grade:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

3rd Grade:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

4th Grade:

______________________________________________________________
Part 2:
Directions: Choose **ONE** of the memories you wrote about above and fill out the Personal Narrative Graphic Organizer below. In the first box of the graphic organizer below, copy the memory you chose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade:________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory: ______________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describe the 5W's of the memory you chose in college complete sentences.**

| Who: | ______________________________________________________ |
|------| ______________________________________________________ |
|      | ______________________________________________________ |

| What: | ______________________________________________________ |
|------| ______________________________________________________ |
|      | ______________________________________________________ |
|      | ______________________________________________________ |

| When: | ______________________________________________________ |
|------| ______________________________________________________ |
|      | ______________________________________________________ |
|      | ______________________________________________________ |

| Where: | ______________________________________________________ |
|-------| ______________________________________________________ |
|       | ______________________________________________________ |
|       | ______________________________________________________ |

| Why: | ______________________________________________________ |
|-----| ______________________________________________________ |