

The Project:

1. To begin, have students brainstorm as many memories as they can, making a list. Have the students review their list and begin writing details of some of their most vivid memories. The students should write approximately five memory poems (depending on the age and ability/skill level of the students), going through the writing process for each one. (To help students get started, share with them how Kevin began writing his book of memories, found below.)
2. Each student will combine his or her poems into a book.
 - Using a computer (or by hand), they will design a front cover, dedication page, back cover, and icons for each poem.
 - Each student will also decide on the order of the poems in their book – which poem should be first, which should be last, etc. (See “Discussion Questions” to discuss with the students why Kevin chose the specific poems with which to start and end the book.)
3. Upon completion of their book, each student will select *one* of their poems to be featured in a classroom book of memories, along with a one to two sentence explanation of *why* they chose that particular poem.
4. Small groups should be formed to decide on (1) the cover design (front and back), (2) the title and dedication pages, (3) the index, and (4) the order of the poems in the classroom book.

Once the classroom book is complete, have the students think of ways to share the book with others! (Have the students share their individual books as well!)

Facts on the Making of *I Remember...*:

Kevin began writing his book one day after having a conversation with his grandmother. She was sharing memories from her childhood and life. Later that day, Kevin wrote down some of the memories that she shared. A few days later, while visiting his parents, he began making a list of anything he could remember from his own childhood. He looked through his box of old photos, letters, and toys. After he had a pretty good size list, he began elaborating on those memories by writing the first drafts in his journal. As he was going down the list, some memories just didn't seem to be explainable, or interesting enough, or right for the book, so he skipped over them. By the time the book was finished, over 100 memories had been written down as possible memories to write as poems.

Over the period of time that Kevin worked on this book, he drastically revised and changed what he had written as well as thought of more memories to add. The first draft of the book had only five poems in it; the final draft was draft number twelve, with thirty-seven poems. Kevin asked friends to look over the poems as well, and between all of them, countless changes were made until the final draft was ready. The day the project began until the day it became a published book was just under three years.

Kevin made the icons by reading through each poem and listing all of the possible images that he could create that would connect with the poems. He thought about what would be funny, meaningful, and/or recognizable. He then made his choice based on what he thought would be the most effective, which idea he could draw the best, and which images would look good as small icons.

Discussion Questions:

Here is a list of discussion questions that you may want to use with your students before making the books. It is by no means meant to be a comprehensive list, but rather just a springboard for further ideas and/or questions. Our hope is that you will use some or all of these to get your students thinking about how they would like to write their book of memories.

- Why would people want to write down their memories?
- What information in a memory is important when writing it as a poem?
- Why do you think Kevin put the titles of his poems in the back of the book, but not on the actual pages of the poems? (So that the poem would be read as if he was standing right next to you, telling you the story.)
- Why do you think Kevin began his book with the poem *Poopy Pants*? (To start the book off with a bang, to get the reader hooked)
- Why does he end the book with *Basement Fort*? (Because he was too big, symbolizing the end of his childhood.)
- In Kevin's book, what do the icons indicate? (Visual titles)
- What do the asterisks indicate? (The end of the poem)
- Why do you think Kevin chose to put icons for each poem, but not illustrations for each? (He thought that the icons would give the reader a glimpse as to what the poem was about, whereas full illustrations might give too much away.)
- What would you do differently to make your memory book?



I Remember... is a collection of poetry based on childhood memories. In this 5" by 7" paperback book, the poems range from silly to sentimental. This lighthearted book is recommended for ages 8 and up. ISBN 0-966504-2-9

As Kevin wrote *I Remember...* he specifically had this project in mind. He wanted to provide a model of a simple format which students would find interesting and would have success with.

This project was created to aid teachers and students in the writing and creating of their own memory book, as well as the putting together of a classroom book of memories. It is meant to be worked on over an extended period of time.



KA-THUMP!

Objectives:

- The students will practice going through the writing process many times.
- The students will use higher order thinking skills (analysis and synthesis) to organize their individual poems so that their book as a whole flows and feels complete.
- The students will create icons for their poems, pulling key elements out of each piece of writing to decide which image will represent each poem. This process allows the students to again use higher order thinking skills.
- The students will evaluate their own work in order to select the piece of writing that has the most quality and then must explain that choice.
- The students will work in cooperative groups, in which they practice teamwork.
- The students will have hands-on practice working with computers through the design of the individual and classroom books.