



Borrowing from mentor text's *structure* for narrative/memoir writing
[When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth](#)
by Jamie Lee Curtis

Part 1: When I was _____.
Now that I _____.

This narrative is a series of observations (two, three, or four sentences long) that center on these two sentence frames. It concludes with a powerful end statement

When I was in fifth grade, we didn't have the Internet. All our research was found in the encyclopedia, which we copied from. Now that I am a teacher, my students copy from the Internet at home.

When I was in fifth grade, we had real hot lunches. Our school had a team of cooks who spent all morning making the school smell amazing with fresh-baked cornbread and chili that didn't come from a can. Now that I am a teacher, I watch my students eat Lunch-ables and drink juice from foil pouches.

When I was in fifth grade, if the teacher wrote on my report card that he wanted my parents to call or meet with him, two things happened: a) I lived in fear of my own actions for weeks and b) my parents called and met with my teacher. Now that I am a teacher, less than ten percent of the parents I request to meet with seem to ever return my phone messages.

When I was in fifth grade, school carnivals and ice cream socials were huge events. A sea of people came to school to socialize and watch pageants and just be together, and it didn't even feel like we were in school. Now that I am a teacher, I meet less than five percent of my students' parents at open houses and other school events.

When I was in fifth grade, school was a magical place to return to over and over again. Now that I am a teacher, I make it my most important goal to help my students feel the same way I once did.

--written by teacher [Corbett Harrison](#)