



The Memoir & Travel Arc.

*depart, change,
return.*

The narrative arc beneath memoir and travel writing - a departure from the known, a journey of change, and a transformed return - walked beat by beat, with a worked example carried from the first restlessness to the final reckoning, and a printable arc sheet to shape your own true story.

How to use this guide.

read it once for the shape, then keep it open while you shape a true story.

The memoir and travel arc has no single author. It is the shape that true stories fall into once a writer stops recording what happened and starts choosing what it meant. Across memoir, travel writing, and the personal essay, the same spine keeps surfacing: a narrator leaves a known life, crosses into unfamiliar territory, is changed by what they meet there, and returns carrying something they did not have before. This guide walks that arc in ten beats, with a worked example so you can watch a real journey take shape.

One orientation note before you begin. This is a guide to **structure**, not to sentences. It is the companion to our craft field guide *How to Write a Memoir*, which handles voice, scene, truth, and the ethics of writing real people; here we care only about the journey's shape - where it departs, where it descends, and where it lands. Read the arc once whole, then keep it beside your draft as a map.

CONTENTS

Why true stories need an arc	03
The shared spine: memoir and travel	04
The map: ten beats, three movements	05
Departure (beats 1 to 3)	06
The road of change (beats 4 to 7)	09
The return (beats 8 to 10)	13
Adapting the arc: memoir and travel	15
Seven ways the arc flattens	16
Your narrative-arc sheet (printable)	17
Keep going	18

Why true stories need an arc.

a life is chronology. a narrative is a chosen journey through it.

Everything in your life happened in order, and almost none of that order is a story. This is the first hard truth of writing from life: chronology is not structure. A journal records what came next; a memoir decides what mattered. The raw material - the trip, the year, the loss - arrives as an undifferentiated stream of events, and the arc is the instrument you use to select from that stream, to promise the reader that this sequence is going somewhere and that its ending will answer its beginning.

So the first job is subtraction. A trip has a thousand moments; a travel narrative keeps the twenty that turn. Ask of every remembered scene whether it moves the inner journey forward or is merely true. Truth is not, by itself, a reason to keep something. The tram that ran late, the meal you forgot by morning - real, and structurally inert. Keep what changes the narrator, cut what only happened, and arrange what remains so that each beat makes the next one necessary.

Shaping is not lying. You are not inventing events; you are finding the throughline that was always there and clearing away everything that hides it. The events stay true. What the arc adds is emphasis, order, and meaning - the difference between the footage and the film. A reader does not want your whole life. They want the shape you found in it.

THE ONE-SENTENCE VERSION

A true story becomes a narrative when a restless self departs a known life, is changed by an unfamiliar road, and returns able to name what the journey took and what it gave.

The shared spine.

depart the known, cross a threshold of change, return transformed.

Set a travel narrative and a memoir side by side and the skeleton is identical. Both begin with a narrator who is restless, wounded, or asking a question they cannot answer at home. Both send that narrator across a threshold - a border, a decision, a diagnosis, a departure - into territory whose rules they do not yet know. Both put them through a road of trials and discoveries that slowly rebuilds who they are, and both end with a return, to a place or simply to ordinary life, carrying a changed self. A travel narrative with no inner change is a postcard; a memoir with no outer movement is a diary. The arc is what holds the two roads together.

You will notice this spine echoes the **Hero's Journey**, and it should; both descend from the same ancient shape of departure, ordeal, and return. But writing from life imposes one discipline the myth does not. You cannot invent the ordeal to fit the arc; you have to find the arc inside what actually happened. The monomyth reverse-engineers events to serve transformation. The memoirist does the opposite: the events are fixed, and the work is discovering which of them already carried the change. Where the two guides disagree, this one always yields to the truth.

BUILD THE ARC IN FOUR QUESTIONS

- **The longing:** what is unfinished, unnamed, or unbearable in the narrator's life before the journey begins.
- **The threshold:** the departure or decision that makes turning back impossible, and the exact known life it leaves behind.
- **The change:** the belief the road dismantles, and the truer belief that finally replaces it.
- **The return:** what the narrator carries home, and how the reader sees, in one plain detail, that they are not who they left as.

THE RUNNING EXAMPLE • MEET THE NARRATOR

Throughout this guide we follow one invented travel memoir, working title **Learning to Stay**. Its narrator is a copywriter in her mid-thirties, competent and quietly unravelling fourteen months after her father's long illness ended - an illness she managed mostly by phone, from another city, and never felt she managed enough. Her restlessness has a pattern: she leaves before things get hard. The arc will send her to spend one spring on a goat farm above a village in the Mani, in southern Greece, learning from an old farmer named Sévi, and the road will ask the one thing she has always fled.

Ten beats, three movements.

departure, the road of change, the return. out, down, and home.

The ten beats fall into three movements that mirror the spine: the narrator departs, is changed on the road, and returns. Picture the shape as a descent and a climb. The Crisis near the two-thirds mark is the arc's lowest point and its true center of gravity; everything before it goes down into unfamiliar country and the wound it stirs, and everything after climbs back toward a self that can carry the loss.

MOVEMENT ONE • DEPARTURE

01	Life Before	~8%
02	The Catalyst	~16%
03	Crossing the Threshold	~25%

MOVEMENT TWO • THE ROAD OF CHANGE

04	Disorientation	~35%
05	Immersion	~45%
06	The Central Challenge	~57%
07	The Crisis	~70%

MOVEMENT THREE • THE RETURN

08	Turning Point	~80%
09	The Return	~90%
10	Reflection & Transformation	100%

Percentages are targets, not laws. In a true story the arc is discovered, not decreed, so expect the beats to blur and overlap. What matters is the sequence and the logic: each beat exists because the one before it made it necessary.

BEAT 01

TARGET ~8%

Life Before.

the known life, and the crack running through it.

Before the journey can mean anything, the reader needs the life it departs from: the narrator's ordinary days, their competence, their relationships, and - the beat's real work - the restlessness or wound the journey will answer. Life Before is a portrait with a crack in it. Show the narrator functioning, even thriving, inside a life that has quietly grown too small for them, organized around a question they will not ask aloud. Everything the road later overturns is established here, so the change has a baseline to be measured against.

Resist the memoirist's temptation to begin at birth. Life Before is not your whole history; it is the narrow slice of it the journey will act upon. Choose the few concrete details - a habit, an unopened box, a call screened - that carry the wound without naming it. The reader should sense the ache before the narrator admits it, and should be able to see, in behavior alone, the exact incompleteness the journey will fill.

ON THE PAGE

- Dramatize a representative day, not a biography; the routine you draw is the one the Catalyst will break.
- Make the wound visible in behavior, not confession - the door not opened, the grief not unpacked, the plan to leave already forming.
- Plant what the ending will need. The relationship or belief the final beats resolve is cheapest to establish here, in passing.

WATCH OUT

Confusing completeness with truth. You are not obliged to include everything real about your life before, and doing so buries the one thread the story needs. Select the details that bear on this journey; the rest is honest, and beside the point.

LEARNING TO STAY · LIFE BEFORE

I was good at my job and bad at my life. I hit every deadline, and let my mother's calls go to voicemail on Sundays, unable to bear the sound of the house without him in it. Fourteen months after my father died, his last box still sat taped by the door, and I had begun, quietly, looking up ways to be somewhere else. I have always known how to leave.

BEAT 02

TARGET ~16%

The Catalyst.

the decision, or the event, that starts the clock.

Something ends the holding pattern and launches the journey: a decision made, or an event that forces one. In travel writing the catalyst is often chosen - a ticket booked, a job quit, a listing answered at two in the morning. In memoir it is as often imposed - a diagnosis, a death, a letter that cannot be unread. Either way, the beat's job is to convert the diffuse restlessness of Life Before into a specific, irreversible motion with a direction and a date.

Make the catalyst land as a scene. The reader should watch the decision happen, should feel the moment the narrator's hand commits, because that moment is the first place the story asks them to believe in change. And aim the catalyst at the wound. The strongest departures are not escapes from the ordinary life but collisions with exactly what the narrator has been avoiding, dressed up as an adventure or an errand.

ON THE PAGE

- Stage the decision on the page, in real time; a journey summarized in a sentence forfeits its first jolt.
- Give it a date and a shape - three months, one season, a single walk - so the reader knows the frame the story will fill.
- Let the choice cost something visible: a job, a lease, a relationship, a version of the self the narrator is leaving behind.

WATCH OUT

The catalyst that indicts someone. When a real person - an ex, a parent, an employer - triggers the departure, the temptation is to settle a score. Render them fairly, with their own logic, or the reader stops trusting the narrator long before the journey pays off.

LEARNING TO STAY · THE CATALYST

The listing found me at 2 a.m.: a goat farm above a village in the Mani wanted a pair of hands for the spring, room and board and no wages, milking at dawn. I had no reason to be qualified and every reason to go. I gave notice on the sublet before I let myself reconsider, wired a deposit to a woman named Sévi whose emails were four words long, and told my mother over the phone, fast, the way you confess a thing. "It's only three months," I said. She said, "It always is, with you."

BEAT 03

TARGET ~25%

Crossing the Threshold.

the point of no return. the old life recedes.

The narrator enters the new place or chapter, and the old life recedes behind them. This is the arc's first act break, and its essential quality is **irreversibility**. The plane lifts, the visa stamps, the door of the old apartment shuts for the last time. On the far side the rules change - a language you cannot speak, a body of knowledge you do not have, a pace your city self never learned - and the narrator's old competence stops being enough, which is exactly the point of coming.

Mark the border with everything you have. In travel writing the threshold is a gift: geography, light, smell, and sound all shift at the line, and the reader should feel the change before it is explained. Let the crossing be felt as loss as well as arrival. Something is given up here - a comfort, a certainty, a way of being known - and the beat is richer when the narrator notices the door closing behind them even as they step through it.

ON THE PAGE

- Show the way back closing on the page, so neither narrator nor reader keeps one foot in the old life.
- Shift the sensory palette hard across the line; the new world should be feelable a paragraph before it is legible.
- Name what the crossing costs - a language, a role, a name people knew you by - so arrival carries a shadow of loss.

WATCH OUT

The frictionless arrival. If stepping into the new life costs nothing and closes no door, the reader keeps waiting for the story to start. Even a chosen departure should strand the narrator somewhere they cannot simply undo.

LEARNING TO STAY · CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

The bus climbed until the sea was a rumor below and let me out at a village that was mostly cats and stone. Sévi was smaller than her silences, seventy at least, and she looked at my city boots and my one soft bag and said nothing that needed translating. The taxi that had brought me up from the coast turned around in the square and went back down. I watched it go. There was no other way down that I knew, and I did not yet have the words to ask for one.

BEAT 04

TARGET ~35%

Disorientation.

the gap between the trip you imagined and the one you got.

The new world pushes back. The first stretch past the threshold is defined by the distance between expectation and reality: the romantic idea of the simple life meets the 5 a.m. cold, the blistered hands, and a language that turns the narrator back into a child. This is culture shock in the widest sense, the disorientation of a self that worked fine at home and does not work here. Mistakes are the beat's currency. Let the narrator get things wrong, publicly, and feel the size of what they do not know.

Disorientation is where many true stories quietly cheat, smoothing the early clumsiness into competence to protect the narrator's dignity. Do the opposite. The reader bonds to the narrator through failure, not mastery, and the arc needs the low water here so the immersion to come can be felt as a rise. Write the homesickness and the second thoughts honestly; the wish to quit, voiced now, is what will make staying mean something later.

ON THE PAGE

- Dramatize specific mistakes, not general confusion; the wrong word, the spilled pail, the offense you did not mean to give.
- Let the narrator want to leave, out loud, at least once - the pattern from Life Before, tested early.
- Use the unfamiliar to expose the familiar: what the new place refuses shows the reader what the old life trained the narrator to expect.

WATCH OUT

The place as backdrop, the people as scenery. A foreign village is not a set for the narrator's growth. Render the people who live there as full and unimpressed by your journey; condescension curdles a travel narrative faster than any other error.

LEARNING TO STAY • DISORIENTATION

I had imagined myself useful. Instead I let a doe out the wrong gate on the second morning and spent an hour chasing her through an olive grove while Sévi watched, unhurried, from the wall. My hands cramped at the milking. I mistranslated the word for salt and ruined a batch of curd. At night I lay in the cold little room doing the arithmetic of escape - the bus, the coast, a flight - the way I always had. I had come a very long way to be exactly the person I was at home: already half gone.

BEAT 05

TARGET ~45%

Immersion.

competence, belonging, and the world seen clearly at last.

The narrator settles in. Rhythms that were baffling become second nature, the language loosens, relationships deepen, and a kind of belonging arrives - or, in a more clear-eyed story, a clarity that is not quite belonging but is real sight. This is the arc's widening breath, the stretch where the road stops punishing and starts teaching. Immersion is the reward for surviving disorientation, and it is also the trap being set: the more the narrator comes to love this life, the more the coming crisis will cost.

Ground the belonging in acquired skill and specific people. Competence is the most persuasive form of change on the page - the hands that now know the work, the greeting returned in the local tongue. Give the relationships their own weight and their own wants, especially the mentor figure who so often lives at the center of this beat. The immersion that matters most is into other lives, not just a landscape.

ON THE PAGE

- Show change through earned skill; the task that broke the narrator in Disorientation, now done without thinking.
- Deepen one relationship past usefulness into affection; the mentor or friend must matter for their own sake, not the lesson.
- Let the narrator glimpse the wound from a new angle here - safe, immersed, they can finally look at what they came carrying.

WATCH OUT

The travelogue that forgets it is going somewhere. Immersion is the easiest beat to overstay, a warm plateau of lovely detail and no motion. Keep the inner clock running: every charming scene should also tighten the thread the crisis will pull.

LEARNING TO STAY • IMMERSION

By the fifth week my hands knew the milking before I was awake. I could greet the women at the spring, tell Sévi's goats apart by temper, turn curd without ruining it. Sévi began to talk while we worked - her husband, gone eleven years; the farm she had refused to sell. One evening she asked about my father, and I answered, saying his name for the first time since the funeral without lowering my voice.

BEAT 06

TARGET ~57%

The Central Challenge.

the difficulty the whole journey exists to meet.

The defining difficulty now surfaces - the obstacle, conflict, or hard truth the entire experience exists to confront. In travel writing it is often a concrete ordeal: the season that must be survived, the summit, the illness, the work everything has been building toward. In memoir it is frequently a truth that immersion has made impossible to keep avoiding. Whatever its form, this beat names the real stakes and points them, at last, straight at the wound from Life Before.

The craft key is **convergence**. The outer challenge and the inner wound should turn out to be the same problem wearing two faces, so that meeting one requires facing the other. A well-built arc has been quietly loading this beat since the first page; here the reader realizes that the journey the narrator chose was, all along, an appointment with the exact thing they left home to escape. Let that recognition dawn on the narrator, too, a beat before it breaks.

ON THE PAGE

- Converge the outer difficulty with the inner wound; the challenge should be unbeatable without touching what the narrator fled.
- Raise the stakes past the narrator alone - a person, a place, a shared endeavor now depends on them not leaving.
- Withhold the resolution. This beat names the difficulty and its cost; the collapse and the change are still to come.

WATCH OUT

The manufactured obstacle. In fiction you may invent a crisis to fit the theme; in a true story you must find the one that was already there. If the central challenge feels imported, you have chosen the wrong journey to tell, not the wrong events to invent.

LEARNING TO STAY • THE CENTRAL CHALLENGE

Kidding season came, and with it the reason Sévi had wanted a second pair of hands. The does dropped their kids across three brutal weeks of broken nights, and the farm - her whole livelihood, her husband's and his father's before him - turned on getting them through. Sévi's knees were failing; more of the night watch fell to me. And there it was, the appointment I had booked without reading the fine print: to sit up in the dark, hour after hour, with lives I could not guarantee, exactly as I had not sat by my father.

BEAT 07

TARGET ~70%

The Crisis.

the low point, where the wound and the road collide.

This is the bottom of the arc: the failure, loss, or collision that makes the journey's meaning genuinely uncertain. The hard-won belonging of Immersion cracks, the central challenge exacts its price, and the old wound named back in Life Before reopens at full depth. Something the narrator half-hoped the journey would fix instead comes due. For a real and terrible moment, the reader should doubt the trip was worth taking at all.

The essential craft is honesty. Do not flinch from the low point or rush the reader through it; the change to come is worth only as much as the darkness it answers. And let the crisis be the wound's doing, not mere bad luck. The most powerful crises are the ones where the narrator meets, in the new place, the precise failure they carried from the old one - and this time cannot look away.

ON THE PAGE

- Let the narrator's oldest reflex fail them here; the crisis begins where the wound's coping strategy runs out.
- Write the low point at full length and full stop; grief and failure need duration, not a summary sentence.
- Make the collision explicit but unresolved - the narrator sees the pattern, and has, as yet, no way out of it.

WATCH OUT

Borrowing someone else's tragedy for your arc. When the crisis turns on a loss that was principally another person's, tread with care: the story is your experience of it, not a claim on grief that was not yours. Keep the camera on your own part and your own change.

LEARNING TO STAY • THE CRISIS

The night the grey doe went into hard labor, Sévi was down in the town and the road had washed out behind her. It was mine to manage, and I froze - the same freeze as the night two years before, when my father took a turn and I told myself I would drive up in the morning. One kid came breathing; the second did not. The old verdict landed like a stone: that I am the one who is not there in time. I sat in the straw with the small still weight and could not tell which loss I was crying for.

BEAT 08

TARGET ~80%

Turning Point.

the inner shift the crisis made possible.

Out of the crisis comes the change. The turning point is the internal shift - an insight, an acceptance, a reframe - that only the low point could have earned. This is the beat the entire arc is built to deliver, and in a true story it is almost never a triumph. It is usually a quieter thing: the narrator stops fighting a fact they cannot change and, in stopping, is changed. The belief that ran the old life is set down. Something truer takes its place.

Locate the shift in a concrete moment, not a paragraph of realization. Memoir dies in abstraction - *and then I understood* - and lives in the specific scene where understanding becomes visible: a thing said, a thing done differently, a hand that stays where it used to leave. Let another person often be the hinge; mentors, strangers, and the newly grieving frequently say the sentence the narrator could not say to themselves. The reader should be able to point at the line where the self turns.

ON THE PAGE

- Dramatize the shift as action or dialogue; show the new belief operating, do not announce it.
- Rhyme it with the crisis - the same situation, met by a changed self - so the turn is measurable, not merely claimed.
- Keep it proportionate and earned; a true turning point reframes the wound, it does not erase it.

WATCH OUT

The epiphany the events have not paid for. If the insight is larger than anything that actually happened, the reader feels the author reaching in from outside. The change must fit the crisis exactly - no wiser than the night earned.

LEARNING TO STAY • TURNING POINT

Sévi got back at dawn, walked the washed-out road on her failing knees, and found me still in the straw. She did not tell me it was not my fault; she was too honest for that. She knelt, took the surviving kid from my arms, and said, in her four-word English, "You stayed. That's the work." Then she showed me how to feed the living one through the night. Holding that warm, stubborn small life at 4 a.m., I understood that I had spent my whole life believing care meant preventing loss. It never had. It meant being there for it. This time, I had been there.

BEATS 09 & 10

TARGET 90 TO 100%

The Return & Reflection.

coming home changed, and naming what changed.

The journey ends and the narrator comes back - to a literal home, or simply to ordinary life - carrying what the road gave them. The Return's quiet demand is **contrast**: the narrator re-enters the world of Life Before, and the reader measures the journey by what is now different. Honor the asymmetry of homecoming - the narrator fits the old life strangely now, and the best returns show it in one plain, changed detail: a call made instead of screened, a box finally opened.

Then the arc does the one thing fiction rarely can: it names its own meaning. Reflection is the narrator stepping forward to say what the experience amounted to, making the before-and-after of the self explicit. This is memoir's privilege and its trap: done well it delivers earned wisdom; done poorly it lectures. Keep it short and specific, and let it rise from the concrete return rather than float above it.

ON THE PAGE

- Mirror a Life Before image and change one decisive element; the echo does the arithmetic of transformation for the reader.
- Keep the reflection brief and rooted; a paragraph of earned meaning outweighs a page of general wisdom.
- Leave a trace of the journey on the narrator - a habit, a word, a scar - so the return never reads as a reset.

WATCH OUT

The bow tied too tight. Real journeys resolve unevenly, and a reflection that claims total healing rings false. Name the change honestly, including what it did not fix; the reader trusts the wisdom that admits its own limits.

LEARNING TO STAY • THE RETURN & REFLECTION

I flew home in June with cheese in my bag and Sévi's number in my phone. At the gate I called my mother before I could screen the impulse away, and we talked for an hour about nothing, which was everything. That week I opened my father's box. I did not go back to being the person who left; I went forward as the one who had learned to stay. The farm did not cure my grief, but it taught me the difference between a loss you failed and a loss you were present for. I had gone not to get away, but to learn how to remain.

Adapting the arc.

inner change, place as protagonist, and the voice that looks back.

MEMOIR: THE INNER JOURNEY

In memoir the outer journey may be almost still - a marriage, a year, a house, an illness - and nearly all the movement is internal. The arc still holds, but you locate its beats inside: the threshold is a decision or a diagnosis, the road of change is a season of the self, the return is simply the narrator arriving at who they now are. When the geography will not carry the structure, the change of belief must. Track what the narrator holds true at each beat, and let that be the journey the reader follows.

TRAVEL: PLACE AS PROTAGONIST

Travel writing tilts the other way. The outer journey is vivid and literal, and the place itself can become a character with moods, wants, and the power to change the narrator against their will. Beware the trap that follows: a landscape so beautifully rendered that the inner arc goes missing. The remedy is to make the place *act* on the narrator - to let the country teach, refuse, wound, and reshape - so that description is never idle and every mountain is also a mirror.

THE REFLECTIVE NARRATOR

Both forms are narrated by a self who already knows how it ends. That double vision - the younger self living it, the older self understanding it - is the arc's signature voice and its most powerful tool. Use the retrospective narrator to seed meaning early and to reflect at the close, but do not let hindsight rob the past of its suspense; the reader should feel the younger self's uncertainty even as the older one quietly frames it. For the craft of that voice - scene, truth, memory, and the ethics of writing real people - this guide pairs with our field guide *How to Write a Memoir*.

Seven ways the arc flattens.

read this list again after your last draft.

- **1. Chronology with no change.** And then, and then, and then - events in order, none of them turning the narrator. Fix: for every scene, ask what belief it moves; cut or combine any that only happened.
- **2. A trip log with no transformation.** The itinerary is complete and the narrator returns identical. Fix: name the inner journey in one sentence before you draft; if the self at the end matches the self at the start, there is no arc to write.
- **3. No reflection, or all reflection.** Either the meaning is never named, or the narrator lectures over every scene. Fix: earn reflection with scene first, then deliver it briefly at the turns and the close, never as running commentary.
- **4. Too many episodes, no throughline.** A dozen vivid adventures that could be reordered without loss. Fix: choose the single thread - the wound, the question - that each episode must advance, and drop the ones that advance nothing.
- **5. The place as backdrop.** A foreign world used as scenery for the narrator's growth, its people flat. Fix: give the place and its people their own reality and wants; let them act on the narrator, not just around them.
- **6. The crisis that is only bad weather.** A hardship that tests stamina but never touches the wound. Fix: converge the outer low point with the inner one, so the narrator meets, on the road, the exact failure they carried from home.
- **7. The bow tied too tight.** A closing that claims total healing the events did not earn. Fix: name the change honestly, including what it left unresolved; the truest returns admit their own incompleteness.

THE MASTER DIAGNOSTIC

For any beat that feels dead, ask the same question twice: what did the narrator believe when it began, and what do they believe when it ends? If the answer does not change across the arc as a whole, you have written a chronicle, not a journey - and readers feel the difference in the first idle page.

Your narrative-arc sheet.

print this page. one line per beat is enough to begin.

THE DEPARTURE (LEFT BEHIND)

06 THE CENTRAL CHALLENGE

57%

THE QUESTION / LONGING

07 THE CRISIS

70%

01 LIFE BEFORE

8%

08 TURNING POINT

80%

02 THE CATALYST

16%

09 THE RETURN

90%

03 CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

25%

10 REFLECTION & CHANGE

100%

04 DISORIENTATION

35%

THE TRANSFORMED RETURN

05 IMMERSION

45%

ONE-LINE PREMISE

Keep going.

the paper version ends here. the fill-in version doesn't.

This entire arc sheet exists as a **free interactive planner** at One More Draft: the same ten beats, each with a text box beneath it that saves as you type. Read the beat, draft your own true story's version of it right on the page, and walk away with a full narrative outline in an afternoon.

onemoredraft.com/guides/memoir-travel

One More Draft is a complete workshop for writers: a distraction-free manuscript editor, industry-standard screenplay formatting, story planning tools for characters, beats, and worlds, and Quill, your resident story editor, for when you want a second pair of eyes. The editor is free, and there is a free desktop app for Windows.

MORE FREE FIELD GUIDES

- How to Write a Memoir · the craft companion to this arc
- The Hero's Journey · the twelve-stage myth this arc descends from
- Three-Act Structure · the load-bearing classic
- How to Outline a Novel · from a raw idea to a working plan
- How to Write a Synopsis · your whole story on a single page

All free, all fill-in-able, at **onemoredraft.com/guides**.



ONE MORE DRAFT

The memoir and travel narrative arc is a widely shared way of describing how true stories take shape; it has no single owner, and this guide is One More Draft's independent commentary on it. © 2026 One More Draft. You are welcome to share this PDF in its original, unmodified form.