Creativity is drawn from experience

• Mark Twain based the town of St. Petersburg in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn on his boyhood home of Hannibal, Missouri. Many of the characters and events in the books are based on real-life experiences.

• In The Call of the Wild, Jack London vividly depicts harsh environmental conditions in order to portray man’s never-ending struggle with nature.

• John Steinbeck used fiction as a means of portraying the social injustices of his time, especially in his novels The Grapes of Wrath and Of Mice and Men.

• Zora Neale Hurston set her novel Their Eyes Were Watching God in Eatonville, Florida, the town where she grew up.

• Elie Wiesel based Night on his experiences in a concentration camp during World War II.

Many writers use their own life experience as the basis for their writing. Fill in the outline below with examples from your own life. Try to be as detailed as possible—your answers will be the framework for your essay.

**Teachers Who Have Influenced Me:**

1. Name: ___________________________________________________
   Personality Traits: __________________________________________

2. Name: ___________________________________________________
   Personality Traits: __________________________________________

3. Name: ___________________________________________________
   Personality Traits: __________________________________________

   **Personal Notes:** _________________________________________

**Classes I’veTaken:**

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

   **Personal Notes:** _________________________________________

**Books I’ve Read in My Class:**

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

   **Personal Notes:** _________________________________________

**School Trips I’ve Taken:**

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

   **Personal Notes:** _________________________________________

**Extracurricular School Activities I’ve Been Involved In:**

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

   **Personal Notes:** _________________________________________

**Essay Contest!**

Your chance to WIN a $500 U.S. savings bond and a classroom makeover for your teacher!