



PEN YOUR PAST:

The First Stories Collection

YOUR MEMORY KEEPER'S GUIDE

How to Use Your PEN YOUR PAST Guide

Welcome to your memory-keeping journey! Think of these prompts as little conversation starters—just like we're sitting at my kitchen table, sharing stories over coffee. There's no right or wrong way to do this—your stories, your rules!

You will find **sample questions to each prompt** in your purchased Mimi's Memories XO journal pages **in the following pages of this guide**. So, keep them handy when you're in the mood to write and don't know where to start.



*Use this guide for personal journaling **OR** as a fun activity with family, friends, or at special events!*

Here are some quick tips for creating your memory collection:

1. **Start anywhere!** There's no need to go in order. Pick the prompt that makes you smile first!
2. **Keep it real!** Your stories don't need to be perfect. The messy parts are often the best parts!
3. **The details are gold!** Include those little things that might seem silly now but make the memory come alive:
 - The way someone laughed
 - What the weather was like
 - The song playing in the background
 - The outfit you'll never forget
4. **Add your personal touches!**
 - Add photos to pages
 - Draw little doodles
 - Add ticket stubs or recipes
 - Include a favorite saying



If all else fails and you don't know how to start, just go with "I remember..." and let the stories flow. You've got this, and your family will treasure these words more than gold!

Remember: You're not just keeping memories – you're passing down pieces of your heart. That's the most precious gift there is for your future generations.

Get Those Stories Flowing!

Sometimes the hardest part is just getting started. Here's a little help from me, your memory-keeping friend. 😊

Cozy Starter Sentences

Pick one when you need a push to get started and let the stories flow!

- 😊 “I’ll never forget the day when...”
 - 😊 “This story always makes me laugh because...”
 - 😊 “If these kitchen walls could talk, they’d tell you about...”
 - 😊 “The thing nobody knows about this memory is...”
 - 😊 “Let me tell you about the time when...”
 - 😊 “This tradition started because...”
 - 😊 “I wish you could have been there when...”
 - 😊 “One of my favorite memories is...”
 - 😊 “This photo brings me right back to...”
 - 😊 “The best part of this story is...”
-

Memory Sparks: Questions That Work for Any Story

The Feelings File

- 😊 What makes your heart smile when you think about this?
- 😊 If this memory had a soundtrack, what would be playing?
- 😊 What scents, sounds, or tastes take you right back there?
- 😊 Who else treasures this memory with you?

The Little Details Drawer

- 😊 What was happening in the world at this time?
- 😊 What were you wearing?
- 😊 What would make someone else laugh or cry about this story?
- 😊 What surprised you most about this moment?

The Time Capsule Corner

- ♡ What else was going on in your life then?
- ♡ Who else needs to be part of this story?
- ♡ What would you tell your younger self about this moment?
- ♡ What do you hope others will learn from this memory?

The Heart-to-Heart Hook

- ♡ Why does this particular memory matter so much?
- ♡ What life lesson came wrapped in this story?
- ♡ How did this moment change you?
- ♡ What makes this memory worth passing down?

When Words Just Won't Come...Try These Tricks:

1. Close your eyes and put yourself right back in that moment
2. Look through old photos to jog those memories
3. Call someone who was there and reminisce together
4. Start with "You'll never believe what happened..." and just let it flow
5. Pretend you're telling this story to your best friend over coffee

Your stories matter, every single one of them! They don't have to be perfect – they just have to be yours - recorded and shared. Don't just keep them to yourself!

So, grab your favorite pen, get cozy, and start saving those precious memories!

Tip: Stuck on a particular prompt? Use the following pages to find some inspiration.

“The Recipe That Brings Everyone Running” writing ideas:

- ♡ What’s the one dish that makes everyone’s eyes light up and gets requested the most?
 - ♡ Who taught you to make it?
 - ♡ What’s the secret ingredient you learned or added?
 - ♡ Any cooking disasters that turned into family jokes?
 - ♡ What does the kitchen smell like when you’re making it?
 - ♡ Who always asks for second (or thirds)?
-

“The Story Behind My Favorite Photo” writing ideas:

- ♡ Where were you when this photo was taken?
 - ♡ What was happening just before or after?
 - ♡ Why does this moment mean so much?
 - ♡ What can’t be seen in the photo that you never want to forget?
 - ♡ What sounds, smells, or feelings does this photo bring back?
 - ♡ Who else remembers this day, and what would they say about it?
-

“A Tradition I want to Pass Down” writing ideas:

- ♡ How did this tradition start?
- ♡ Who started it in your family?
- ♡ What makes it so special to you?
- ♡ Any funny mishaps along the way?
- ♡ What’s your favorite part about keeping it going?
- ♡ What do you hope future generations will understand about it?

“The Mistake That Turned into A Blessing” writing ideas:

Sometimes our best stories start with something going wrong.

- ♡ What were you trying to do originally?
 - ♡ What went hilariously (or not so hilariously) wrong?
 - ♡ Who else was there to witness it?
 - ♡ What unexpected, good thing came from this “oops” moment?
 - ♡ How did this change your perspective on things?
 - ♡ What lesson did you learn that you still carry with you?
 - ♡ Who have you shared your story with before?
-

“The Ordinary Day I Wish I Could Relive” writing ideas:

Not the big moments- those perfect little snippets of everyday life.

- ♡ What made this regular old day so special?
 - ♡ What were the little details you remember?
 - ♡ What smells, sounds, or tastes take you right back there?
 - ♡ Who was there with you?
 - ♡ What makes your heart smile when you think about this day?
 - ♡ If you could bottle up one moment from this day, which would it be?
-

“The Family Saying That Tells Our Story” writing ideas:

Every family has those phrases that make no sense to outsiders but mean the world to us.

- ♡ What is the phrase everyone in your family knows?
- ♡ Who started saying it first?
- ♡ What’s the story behind how it became a family thing?
- ♡ When do people typically use this phrase?
- ♡ How do newcomers to the family react when they first hear it?
- ♡ What does this saying tell others about your family?

“The Lesson I Learned the Hard Way” writing ideas:

Sometimes life's best teachers don't come with textbooks.

- ♡ What did you think you knew for sure?
 - ♡ What moment made you realize you were wrong?
 - ♡ Who helped you through this learning curve?
 - ♡ What makes you laugh about it now?
 - ♡ How has this lesson shaped your choices since then?
 - ♡ What advice would you give others about this?
 - ♡ How has this story become part of your family wisdom?
-

“The Tradition That Started by Accident” writing ideas:

Sometimes the best family traditions come from those 'well, that wasn't planned' moments.

- ♡ What were you actually trying to do?
 - ♡ How did it turn into something more?
 - ♡ Why does this moment mean so much?
 - ♡ What can't be seen in the photo that you never want to forget?
 - ♡ What sounds, smells, or feelings does this photo bring back?
 - ♡ Who else remembers this day, and what would they say about it?
-

“Words of Wisdom I Wish I'd Listened To” writing ideas:

Turns out Mom actually DID know what she was talking about!

- ♡ Who was your wisest advisor?
- ♡ What advice did you ignore (and regret)?
- ♡ What life lesson took longest to learn?
- ♡ What would you tell your younger self?
- ♡ What advice are you glad you ignored?

“The Job That Taught Me Everything” writing ideas:

Sometimes life’s best lessons come with a paycheck.

- ♡ What was your first real paycheck?
 - ♡ What did you spend it on?
 - ♡ Who gave you your best work advice?
 - ♡ What makes you laugh about it now?
 - ♡ What was the biggest workplace drama?
 - ♡ Did you make a best friend at work?
 - ♡ How much did things cost back then?
-

“How We Had Fun Before Screens” writing ideas:

Back when ‘social media’ meant hanging out at the mall.

- ♡ What did you do for entertainment?
 - ♡ Where did young people hang out?
 - ♡ What were the popular songs/movies/shows?
 - ♡ How much did a movie ticket cost?
 - ♡ What would your parents say about your fun?
 - ♡ What was your favorite toy?
-

“The House That Built Me” writing ideas:

Every squeaky floorboard and secret hiding spot tells a story.

- ♡ What did your childhood bedroom look like?
- ♡ What was the ONE piece of furniture everyone remembers?
- ♡ Where did the family gather most?
- ♡ What could you see from your favorite window?
- ♡ What sounds and/or smells would you wake up to in the morning?

“Fashion Choices I Thought Were Fabulous” writing ideas:

Someone needs to explain those school photos.

- ♡ What was your signature style?
 - ♡ What did your parents hate that you wore?
 - ♡ What were the “must-have” brands?
 - ♡ What beauty routines were popular?
 - ♡ What do you wish you’d kept?
 - ♡ Did you make a best friend at work?
 - ♡ How much did things cost back then?
-

“Technology That Blew My Mind” writing ideas:

Remember when we thought we’d never need more than 100 channels?

- ♡ What was your first TV/phone/computer?
 - ♡ What did you think would never catch on?
 - ♡ What tech do you miss?
 - ♡ How did you learn new gadgets?
 - ♡ What would kids today not understand?
 - ♡ What kind of tech do you think still needs to be invented?
-

“The Family Member Who Shaped Me Most” writing ideas:

Some people leave footprints on your heart forever.

- ♡ Who was your biggest influence?
- ♡ What mannerisms did you get from them?
- ♡ What would they be proud of today?
- ♡ What secrets did they share with just you?
- ♡ What do you wish you’d asked them?

“My First Car Story” writing ideas:

Freedom, adventure, and occasional roadside drama.

- ♡ What was that first set of wheels?
 - ♡ How did you get it?
 - ♡ What adventures did it take you on?
 - ♡ What catastrophes did you face?
 - ♡ What made you finally say goodbye?
-

“The Life Skill That Saved My Behind” writing ideas:

Not everything important comes from a textbook.

- ♡ Who taught you this valuable lesson?
 - ♡ When did it first come in handy?
 - ♡ What disaster did it help you avoid?
 - ♡ Who have you passed it on to?
 - ♡ Why don't they teach this in school?
-

“The Family Recipe Nobody Can Recreate” writing ideas:

Some kitchen magic can't be measured in cups and spoons.

- ♡ Who was the original cook?
- ♡ What makes it so special?
- ♡ What's the secret ingredient everyone argues about?
- ♡ Who claims they can make it best now?
- ♡ What family stories get told when someone tries?

I hope this guide helps you capture stories that future generations will cherish. Keep an eye out for new collections in the Pen Your Past™ series!

Share your experience or story on social media and use #PenYourPast