

VIDEO

Write With. . . Life Stories: From Your Perspective with Tony Hawk

by 826 National and Life
Stories

GRADES 9–12

TYPE

NARRATIVE

From skateboarding to fashion, we all have a deep love for something. Choose a hobby or skill that you're passionate about and then tell the story of how you grew to love it.

WHAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LEARN

About [Life Stories](#)

Life Stories is a 501(c)(3) non-profit media organization that creates and distributes documentaries, interviews, and educational resources about people whose lives inspire meaningful change. These stories address issues of civics, history, politics, the arts and culture by shining the spotlight on relatable human stories of purpose and meaning in times of change. We provide open access to all our content for communities and classrooms through our curated website and YouTube channel.

About [The Thread](#)

The Thread is a new documentary interview series exploring what it means to live a purpose-driven life through conversations with multi-faceted people who have helped shape our society. Each 30-minute episode takes viewers on a personal journey into the life of extraordinary people who candidly share their triumphs and failures. *The Thread* is available on the Life Stories website and YouTube channel, and as a podcast across all major platforms. Teaching *The*

Thread brings the series into the classroom with episode lessons designed to strengthen social emotional learning and media literacy skills and expand the scope of subject matter in Social Studies and English Language Arts. Future seasons of *The Thread* will include similar curricular support.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

Introduction:

In this video, Tony Hawk describes his skateboarding journey as a mix of passion and determination, talks about overcoming challenges by obsessively honing his skills, and recalls the iconic moment when he landed the 900 at the 1999 X Games. Hawk reflects on the entrepreneurial spirit that led him to start Birdhouse Skateboards in 1992, shaping a culture defined by art, lifestyle, and sport. Please visit [Tony Hawk: Finding Your Passion](#) to see the full lesson created by Life Stories. .

STEP 1

Begin by watching this clip of Tony Hawk’s *The Thread* video: [0:35–7:09](#). In this clip, Hawk reflects on his determination when learning a new trick or skill. In your writing journal, briefly write about a skill or a hobby you’ve gone on a journey with—how did you first learn it, and how have you grown with it?

STEP 2

- **Vignette:** a literary device that uses imagery and sensory language to zoom in on the story.

A vignette is a short scene (generally no more than 1,000 words) that uses imagery and sensory language to zoom into a story. Vignettes are often crafted in a series, or a string of short scenes that share a common subject. In this case, you will write a series of vignettes that are tied together by the skill or hobby you wrote about in STEP 1.

Vignettes focus more on sensory descriptions than on action—they do not move a story’s plot forward; rather, they give the reader a chance to pause and learn more about the external and internal worlds the writer is creating.

Think about the skill or hobby you wrote about in STEP 1. Then, on page 1 of the [From Your Perspective with Tony Hawk—Handout](#), break down your learning journey into three to five memorable moments. Briefly name the setting where each moment took place, sensory details, and how you felt at the time.

STEP 3

Next, choose at least three of those memorable moments to expand on—they do not need to be in chronological order, since time doesn’t matter when writing vignettes. On page 2 of the handout, answer the questions to further describe the setting and the feelings of each moment. Complete one handout per moment—so, if you’ve chosen three moments, you should have three total handouts. If it’s easier for you to tease out the details through sketching, you can draw the three moments in your [writing journal](#) instead.

STEP 4

Tim to write your vignettes! Things to remember:

- **Each vignette is a short scene and paragraph (1,000 words or less).** Have you ever seen a movie in which the main character has their life flash before their eyes? Generally, these are individual, incomplete scenes that feel heightened to the viewer. Your vignettes should feel similar to you. Now is the time to lean into “show, don’t tell” in your writing.
- **No need for cohesive narratives.** Vignettes don’t need traditional story arcs—beginning, middle, and end—because they are more about descriptions and details. Think of writing vignettes like zooming a camera in on the moments you brainstormed.
- **Bring the drama.** If you’re having fun lingering on a sensory detail or a feeling, go with it! You can always edit it down later.

MATERIALS

- “Tony Hawk: Finding Your Passion ” – *The Thread* video
- [From Your Perspective with Tony Hawk—Handout](#)
 - Page 1: 1 copy per student
 - Page 2: 3 copies per student and a few extra, in case students write about more moments
- Writing journal and writing utensil