

the radical write

teacher's manual

chapter 8
assignment | 4

History provides endless story possibilities.

Write a historical
feature. Follow
guidelines
provided on pages
128-129.

- Think of an important era in history. War. Cultural movement. Political event. Natural disaster.
- Find a person who was intimately connected to an era or event. In other words, a person who was there, who participated, who has a powerful, personal story related to that event. A World War II veteran who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. A man who was in Dallas on the day JFK was killed. A woman who was in the audience the night the Beatles played the Ed Sullivan Show.
- Research the event and understanding of the facts.
- Interview the person.

This will require that you ask around: Who has been involved in an important historical moment? What was that person's involvement? Is it significant enough to warrant a story?

Pay attention to details, especially regarding the subject of your story. Here's the lead of one such story:

The day remains as sharp in his mind as if it occurred 24 hours ago, not 59 years.

"The water was on fire, there was so much oil floating on it," John Evans remembered. "You'd try to help people get out, and their skin would come off in your hands. You can't get rid of the odor.

"I'll tell you, you don't get over something like that."

But as America celebrates Veteran's Day and honors the men and women who fought the nation's wars, fewer and fewer people can recount what happened at Pearl Harbor or Iwo Jima, at Omaha Beach or the siege at Bastogne.

Of the 2,000 or so men stationed with Evans on the USS Arizona on that Sunday morning almost six decades past, perhaps only a few dozen remain to tell the tale.