



SAN DIEGUITO HERITAGE MUSEUM

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Fourth Annual Wendy Haskett Writing Contest Helpful Hints

Select Your Topic

People like to read about the old days. They want to know how ordinary folks lived their lives in the past. So your topic might be about everyday life when things were different. Children collected eggs on the farm and walked long distances to school. A mother washed clothes every Monday and darned the family socks. Or your story might be about an event, a bit of history that changed people's lives. The family had to cope with wartime rationing. A son or daughter went away to war. A farmer moved to town and became a baker. A son or daughter went away to college for the first time in the family's history. A student had to transfer to a big new school from a one-room school. The house burned down and the family had to move to a new home. Remember, the events of your story must take place within the San Dieguito region.

Collect Your Information

Older family members or neighbors are a good source of information. They like to tell stories of the past based on their own experiences. But you will likely need additional information to set your scene for the reader. A visit to your library, the Internet, or the Heritage Museum can help. Pictures seen there provide interesting details. Horse-drawn buggies shared the road with autos. The streets weren't paved. An avocado ice cream cone at the grocer's cost five cents. Steam locomotives ran through town. Select whichever details will help your reader understand your story in its own time and place.

Organize Your Ideas

A Focused Beginning: A good way to begin your story is by telling the reader very briefly what your story is about. You can include some of the descriptive details that help the reader to share a picture of the past in which your story takes place. You need to identify the time and place at which your story happens.

A Middle with Interesting Details: Tell your story. Remember, the reader wasn't there to see history happen. You're sharing your own picture of the past, the bit of history, or the events that took place. Tell how the events affected the lives of the people who experienced them.

A Strong Ending: Finally, end your paper with a closing statement that briefly summarizes your story and contrasts the people and events in it with the way we are and the things we do today.

Write Your Paper

Your story must be written on no more than 3 sheets of 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. You must include your own artwork to illustrate your story. Your paper must be original, written by you alone. Deliver your paper by mail or in person to the San Dieguito Heritage Museum not later than March 25, 2010. Judging will be complete by May 3, 2010. Prizes will be personally awarded to the winners. Winning entries will be placed on display at the Heritage Museum in May.1