

Autobiographical Incident

Attention-grabbing opening

Background information

Beginning of incident

Sensory details

Middle of incident

Sensory details

Action details

End of incident

Action details

Sensory details

The Night the Lights Went Out

What would you do if you were alone with a baby in a dark house during the worst thunderstorm of the year?

Everything was calm when I arrived for my first baby-sitting job. The Losoyas' baby, Anna, was playing in the living room, a clutter of toys all around her. Although nervous, I was proud that the Losoyas trusted me with her and I wanted to prove worthy of that trust.

Soon after the Losoyas left, I fed Anna and settled her down for the night. As I tucked the blankets around her, I touched her soft skin and listened to her low gurgling.

Shortly after eight o'clock, I heard the sharp crack of nearby thunder. Every few seconds, vivid streaks of lightning lit up the sky. Then at nine o'clock the lights suddenly went out. I picked up the phone to call my parents, but there was only static. By now the wind was howling, and dead branches rattled the windows. Suddenly, Anna's terrified cry rang out. Controlling my fright, I groped through cabinets to find flashlights and candles. Fumbling in the drawers, I found candles and a box of matches.

I felt my way to Anna. When the next lightning flash lit up the room, I put a candle in a saucer and lit it. I held the tense, frightened baby and rocked her. I crooned to her, "Everything's okay, sweetie. We'll be fine." When I heard her steady breathing, I laid her in the bed. And that's how her parents found her, fast asleep, bathed in the glow of candlelight.

Autobiographical Incident *continued*

Reason this incident is important to you

That night, I learned that I could handle an emergency like an adult. I was scared, but I put aside my own fears in order to protect the baby. Now when the Losoyas ask me to baby-sit Anna, I know that I deserve their trust.

Autobiographical Incident

Definition

An **autobiographical incident** tells the story of an experience that took place in the writer's life. It includes details about the incident as well as the author's thoughts and feelings about what happened.

Many autobiographical incidents use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own autobiographical incident.

Framework

Directions and Explanations

