



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

Activity #5

In 2008, a book entitled *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six Word Memoirs by Writers Famous & Obscure* (edited by Smith Magazine) was published. This book is a compilation of hundreds of 6-word memoirs that were submitted to the book's publisher. *Not Quite What I Was Planning* remained on The New York Times bestseller list for six weeks. This book demonstrates that:

- Everyone has a story to tell!
- It doesn't take a lot of words to communicate emotion and ideas.

Through this activity, students should synthesize their learning by examining the power of word choice as they write six-word memoirs either on a chosen object from the exhibition or from their own lives.

Students' writing should:

- Be concise. Emphasize that students should only use six words to express themselves.
- Convey tone. The reader should know the writer's attitude toward the subject. Writing style can be informal or contain slang.

Students' writing should:

- Utilize literary terms
- Describe personality/values
- Describe hobbies
- Refer to an experience or action
- Include strong verbs, adjectives, or specific nouns.

Once students have all completed their six-word memoirs, have students share with the rest of the class or post online where everyone can read each other's work. Websites like [Padlet](#) can allow students to post their memoirs and read their classmates' work as well.