

Roots: Where Do You Come From?

This is an invitation to talk about the place where you were born and raised. The place that shaped the beliefs and values you bring to your writing. The place that shaped your native dialect. (Will your tutor hear the sound of that dialect as he or she listens to you talking on paper? What regional dialect do you sometimes hear as you listen to this "talking" invitation?)

Instead of merely naming your hometown, please try to tell your tutor what that particular place has meant to you over the years, and what it means to you now. Of course, some families have lived in several or many different communities. So you may want to begin with the sense of loss you felt when you had to leave a place you loved and start over in a strange new place. Or did you leave an unpleasant or dangerous community for a happier and safer one?

As you recall the place(s) where you've spent most of your life, what do you see? What scenic views or ugly landscapes do you remember? Is your home community a small town or a spacious countryside? A big-city neighborhood, a suburban village, or miles of exurban sprawl? As your mind returns to the scenes of childhood and adolescence, what do you miss most? Maybe it's the sights and sounds of busy streets. Or the particular feel of the old neighborhood, even though it may not have escaped what sociologists and environmentalists would call urban or suburban blight.

Some of us feel nostalgic for the quiet beauty, but unbearable boredom, of a little country town. Or the still nights and busy days on a family farm. Others long to return to a homeland across the sea on another continent.

Whether your home is far away or across town, whether you return every weekend or won't see it again for a whole year, give your reader a brief but vivid glimpse of whatever you're remembering. Share with her/him your sense of the place you come from, the place you call home.