

Worksheet: Writing A Powerful Eyewitness Account

Imagine yourself traveling back in time, living in Judea during the time of the Second Temple.

Select an event you are curious about. Read about it in *Understanding Jewish History*, by Sol Scharfstein:

- The Reign of Antiochus IV: the Revolt of the Maccabees, pages 80-81
- The Battle for Freedom: The Restoration of the Temple, page 82-83
- Herod the Great and Economic Prosperity, page 90-91
- The Zealots Resist, page 96-97

To help you write your account complete this chart for the event you read about:

Who took part in this event?	
Where did this event take place?	
Why was it happening?	
What background information explains what's going on?	
What caught my attention most?	

Close your eyes and imagine yourselves in the scene. Open your eyes & write:

What do I hear?	
What do I see?	
What do I smell?	
What do I taste?	
What do I touch?	
How do I feel?	



Make a list in chronological order: the main events from beginning to end.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Crafting a Powerful Eyewitness Account

Write your account as a diary entry. You are writing a fictitious account so you can imagine a real time in Jewish history.

Include:

- **Expressive details:** use words and images from the charts you completed to create a full picture of the event for the reader.
- **Show instead of tell:** allow the reader to see through your eyes and hear your voice. There are several ways to show an event rather than tell it: use dialogue—the words of the people experiencing the event. Since this is fictitious you have to imagine what they might have said.
- **An attention-grabbing introduction:** pull the reader right into the picture with strong images.
- **Background information:** help the reader understand what’s going on.
- **The actual events:** retell in chronological order
- **Lots of vivid details:** make the experience real for the reader.
- **Descriptive language:** help the reader “see” it and “feel” it.
- **Your thoughts or feelings:** show the importance of the experience
- **Small events and big moments:** there is more to an eyewitness account than the big moments; include the small details and events that add up to the big moments.

Write your eyewitness account on a separate page: Start it “Dear Diary.” Include the date and place you are writing from. Include drawings or images found on the internet.

