

Nyad vs. Nyad: 5th-Grade Essay Variations

Diana Nyad turned 10 on August 22, 1959, so she would have been in fifth grade during the 1959–1960 school year. One of her grandparents, Jeanette Curtis, was still living, while the rest had passed away 14 or more years earlier.

GRANDPARENT	BIRTH YEAR	DEATH YEAR	AGE AT DEATH	AGE IN 1960	YEAR AT AGE 80
George Warrington	1869	1927	58	91	1949
William Lent Sneed	1881	1941	60	79	1961
Marion Elizabeth	1883	1945	62	77	1963
Jeanette Glass	1894	1973	79	66	1974

In many versions of her fifth-grade essay story (and her 6th-grade graduation tale), Nyad says she knows that her grandparents all lived into their 80s. If that were true, three of them would have been alive when she wrote that essay, so she couldn't have known their lifespans.

As you can see from the chart, none of her grandparents lived into their 80s. Moreover, in 1960, Nyad's only living grandparent was 66.

Below are excerpts from contradictory versions of Nyad's essay story.

Age Of Grandparents: "I've Done A Little Research . . ." (Or Not)

"Most of the people in my family lived until the were eighty years old."
([Glamour](#), 1977)

"My mother says that her father lived to be 79. Her mother's still living and my father's parents are still living." ([Other Shores](#), 1978, pp. 65-66)

"And I heard — I never got to meet my grandparents — but I heard they lived to be, you know, whatever: 86 and 85 and 82." ([Press Conference](#), 2013)

"I had evidently discovered my grandparents had died in their early to mid-eighties, one in his early seventies." (*Find a Way*, 2015, pp. 43-44)

"I never knew my grandparents. I don't know anything about them. My mother was adopted, etc. [sic] But let's just say I'm going to live to 85." ([WGBH](#))
[Nyad writes at length about her maternal grandparents in *Find a Way* — DS]

"I've done a little research, and now I found out they all lived to be about early 80s." ([Bold Missy Brewery](#), 2019)

"I said to my mom, 'I never got to know any of my grandparents. You know, how old were they when they died?' And she said, 'Well, it's hard to figure because [of] these circumstances [Nyad waves her hands around as if that will explain what she or her mother meant by "these circumstances"], but I'd say they were mostly in their early 80s.'" ([Fail It Forward](#), 2021)

Watch For Falling Grades

5th: “Here’s an essay I wrote at the **age of ten as a fifth-grade** assignment.”
([Other Shores](#), 1978, pp. 65-66)

5th and 2nd: “When I was in **fifth grade**, and I remember this because I had a teacher that I just love. . . . Her name was Mrs. Farr, F-A-R-R, she sent me an essay I had written. It wasn't so special. She kept every essay of every kid she ever had, teaching **second grade** over 50 years. ([re:invention virtual chat](#), 2020)

[Mrs. Josephine Farr did, indeed, teach [second grade at Pine Crest](#). But not for 50 years. She began at Pine Crest in 1952 after relocating from Detroit. She died 25 years later at 81. Since [her obituary](#) suggests she didn't spend her entire Florida-based teaching career at Pine Crest, she likely taught at Pine Crest far less than half the number of years Nyad claims.]

4th: “Diana’s motivation may be best explained by an essay she wrote when she was in **fourth grade** called ‘What I’m Going to Do for the Rest of My Life.’ ‘. . . Eighty years is a very short time,’ said the **nine-year-old Diana**, ‘so I have to get going on it.’” ([Glamour](#), 1977)

3rd: I wrote a little essay in **third grade**. **So, you’re eight**, and the essay was, “What Do You Want To Do For The Rest Of Your Life?”
([Startup to Storefront](#), 2021)

“One Of These Dedicated Teachers” Who Needed To Rent A Storage Unit

When the Manhattan Island swim happened, the teacher I had in fifth grade sent me this letter — she had saved a few of her students essays.
([Press Conference](#), 2013)

I happened to write an essay when I was 10 that . . . the second-grade teacher I had, age 10, when I was age 10, [*She would have been seven in second grade — DS*] had saved, she was one of these dedicated teachers who saved all her kids’ essays. ([Outwords](#), 2018)

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