



### Topic A:

Practically everything Louisa May Alcott wrote drew off of profiles of members of her family, people she knew, and events in her life experiences. The argument has been made that much of her success as a writer was generated by the integrity of her fictionalized reality—her ability to capture the emotional and psychological context of people around her, to recreate the environments, events, and interrelationships of her life; and to present an introspective view of herself in the narratives and characterizations of her novels and short stories.

In a thoughtful essay, discuss (1) the environment(s) in your personal experience you would draw from if you were building a novel or a short story, and (2) one or a few people you have known whom you would use as a “pattern” for the characters in the narratives of your short story or novel. Include in your discussion an analysis of the rationale for your choices.

### Topic B:

It was the style in late-19th century America for upper-class young people, as part of their education, to go on a grand tour of Europe accompanied by one or more relatives. Louisa May Alcott and her sister May went on such a tour. Alcott recorded rich details of her travels in a journal, including specific places she visited in various geographical settings and people she met. Her travels on these tours are vividly mirrored throughout her writings.

Develop an account of a "virtual grand tour" that you would have taken. Gather specifics about the grand tour as a social concept. To give your hypothetical account a sense of authenticity, collect and integrate specific details about places you would have visited on your tour.