

Essay 1—The Literacy Narrative

This unit we will be working on a memoir. It is an essay that asks you to draw upon your own life experiences and memories. Unlike more rigid academic papers, there is room to be creative. The sole requirement is that the paper is connected to literacy, a term we will work on defining in class, in some way. While I encourage you to write about any experience you would like, please make sure you are comfortable sharing your work with the class as we will be reading our work to each other.

Requirements: **4-5 pages**. Proper MLA format. 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins.

Rough Draft Due: F, Sep 4th, First Draft Due: W, Sep 9th, Final Draft Due: F, Sep 11th at the beginning of class. Late papers will receive points off for each day they are late.

In class, we will brainstorm topics and stories, practice writing with all of our senses, examine the differences between scenes and summary, and look at several examples. Refer to these when you begin drafting your essay.

What I'll be looking for:

1. **Significance:** Your essay must clearly exhibit a voice of reasoning and provide reflection on the event that has happened in the past. By paying close attention to word choices and phrase usage, you should be able to convey an “adult” voice that looks back and examines a moment in your past.
2. **Visual Impact and Sensory Detail:** Your essay should exhibit writing that is both clear and vivid. You should utilize as many senses as you can as long as they apply to your essay and improve the narrative. Your essay depends on your ability to be descriptive.
3. **Time Compression and Expansion:** Important moments should be given more detail, and important scenes should be drawn out so that they convey characters in specific ways. Moments that are not important or moments that don't necessarily add anything to the overall essay should be handled briefly.
4. **Logical and Organized Structure:** Since stories can have unconventional structures, I should be able to tell that you have put thought into the way you present your essay. For instance, if you decide to present the events in chronological order, the essay needs to show that. If you decide that you want to frame your essay so that the end of the essay refers back to the beginning, you should frame it effectively.
5. **So what?:** Your essay should interest the reader and capture their attention from the very beginning. This means that you should have a specific audience in mind that you are writing to. By the end of the essay, the reader should be able to recognize your intentions for presenting the information that you've provided. Don't tell us what you want us to understand; show us through the use of scene. We should be able to pull the meaning out of the context of your essay.
6. **Grammar and Proofreading:** Your essay should be free of grammatical errors. I do not expect your papers to be perfect, but misspelled words, comma splices, and other errors will not help your grade. Please read your papers carefully and edit them to the best of your ability.