

## Essay 1: Literacy Narrative 100 points (10%)

*Assignment:* Write a 4-5 page narrative that tells a story about your own experience with literacy.

*Due Dates and Formatting:*

- This assignment should follow MLA formatting guidelines discussed in class and detailed in *Everyone's an Author* (chapter 27, p. 535)—see Purdue OWL for additional resources).
- Preview Draft (half the length of the final: at least 2 pages) to be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Final draft to be submitted by 11:59 pm on Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Literary Narrative:* A genre of writing that tells about a writer's experience learning to read or write.

*Key features of a literacy narrative:*

**A well-told story:** conflict or crisis, resolution, suspense.

**Vivid detail:** sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, descriptions of places and people.

**Significance:** So what?

*Purpose:* A literacy narrative is a personal story about reading or composing in any form, or context, or any language. As you consider our working definition of “literacy,” reflect on your own literacy practices and a significant moment within that literacy growth. This essay provides an opportunity for you to describe the event/moment in detail and draw deeper meaning from the experience. This essay is also the starting point for you to begin to develop your own writing voice and style, using strong verbs, vivid details, and connecting to a larger application drawn from the literacy event described.

Literacy does not only apply to competency in the areas of reading and writing (though those are certainly two areas you might explore in this paper). Your literacy narrative should explore the process of becoming literate, which we can define as being proficient in a certain skill or medium of communication, in whatever subject you choose. In this essay, your task will be to explore a significant event in your life through the lens of a specific literacy of your choosing (ex. dance, reading, writing, cooking, painting, etc.).

This essay should narrate a significant personal experience with literacy. Concentrate on one brief, specific memory that deals with literacy in your own life. The importance of the specific event should be obvious, not merely a “tacked on” detail; in other words, the significance should be integral to the story.

A successful narrative will include the following: a definition of the language within the subject of literacy (ex. the “language of football” might include audibles, hand gestures, physical movements, a firm grasp of the game's rules, knowledge of how to properly gear up for a game, etc.); address a moment (or moments) of struggle in your attempt to become literate in your subject and how you overcame those challenges\*; and a significant amount of sensory detail and scene work.

\*Depending upon your personal literacy experience, you may also wish to address a moment in which your literacy was challenged and subsequently declined or disappeared; the narrative you choose does not necessarily have to be a positive one or result in a positive outcome.

*Requirements:* This essay should demonstrate your ability to:

- Craft a clear, organized narrative that explores the role that literacy plays in your life.
- Create vivid scenes using description and strong verbs (you may use dialogue if/when appropriate).
- Convey the significance of the event being narrated (this may include a connection to a larger social or cultural issue).
- Exhibit development through the writing process (drafts, peer review workshops, conference).
- Create clear, well-edited writing that is largely free of proofreading errors and errors of grammar, mechanics, and syntax.
  - Make sure to use MLA formatting.

*Grading Rubric:* The following criteria will be used to evaluate the literacy narrative:

- Significance (30 points)- Connection of event to larger meaning
- Word Choice/Language (30 points)- Use of details to describe the scene
- Organization (30 points)- Ordering of information and story development
- Grammar/Mechanics (10 points)- Spelling, punctuation, and sentence fluency

*Steps to writing a literacy narrative:*

1. Choose a topic—a single event during a brief time span. Idea prompts will be provided in class and on D2L.
2. Consider the rhetorical situation—purpose, audience, stance, and medium.
3. Generating ideas and text—describe the setting, think about the characters, explain what happened, consider the significance.
4. Organize—chronological or plot-driven?
5. Draft—beginning, ending, and middle, title.
6. Polish—feedback, editing, proofreading, publish, and evaluate your work.