



ENG 2575 Assignment | Fascination Inventory

Our fascinations are what absorb our complete attention, even for just a little while. They produce a state of engagement and flow within us. We feel compelled to learn about them and contemplate the possibilities they may play in our lives. They drive us forward.

What are you interested in? What are you passionate about? What fascinates you? What is the horizon of your interests?

These are the questions that you need to begin to answer to become a more effective writer and communicator in any environment, but particularly out in the professional world where too often we are lulled into a sense that our own needs don't matter, or will simply be provided for. The truth is that, for successful people, their vision drives their success in everything they do. It's time for you to really start considering what makes you tick.

Directions

Compose your responses in one formatted document by following the directions below. Upload your assignment to Drive by next Monday, September 11th at 11:59 p.m. Bring a copy to class.

- 1) Create a document using standard margins, font choice, and organization as you understand them from your previous college writing course. Except, make it **single-spaced** and **well-organized** using formatting features—much like this assignment sheet is doing with subject headings, lists, and indentations (but you don't need to copy this style).
- 2) Write a list of 40 (yes, 40) things that you are interested in. What you want to be sure of is that your list of 40 items are not just general words (e.g., love, sports, poetry, music, etc.). You must write a carefully considered selection of what you spend your time thinking about, doing, not doing, etc.

So, rather than "guitars," you would write, "custom Japanese electric guitars." With each interest, be sure that your explanation conveys why it is interesting to you.

For example, you might include:

- a. The culture surrounding "sneakers" and the people who collect them.
- b. Designing and soldering circuits.
- c. Hacking Linux boxes.
- d. Domestic violence in professional sports.
- e. Wingsuit flying and dying.

Take those 40 things and write a three-to-four sentence of explanation for each (approximately one short paragraph).

For example:

Community blog websites – I’ve always been a compulsive reader and enjoy learning about things through conversations by knowledgeable people. Reading community question-and-answer sites is one way that explore worlds that I don’t otherwise have access to. Whenever I’m bored, or overwhelmed with work, I check into these sites because I always learn something new. My favorites are Reddit, Metafilter, and Quora.

This may require a bit of thinking and research on your part to articulate your interests well enough. Be sure to give yourself enough text to connect your interest to an external audience (i.e., me).

- 3) In the second section of this document, take five of those specific things that fascinate you and elaborate on them. Your list of five items can range across your entire life. You used to be fascinated by trading Pokemon cards. If you need to go back to that, do it. For each fascination, write two complete, single-spaced paragraphs about this fascination (approximately 200-300 words per fascination). The first should be an explanation of what your fascination is, and the second, why you are fascinated by it.

For example:

Data visualizations – Data visualizations are a type of communication that is structured almost exactly the opposite of what I’m trained to do, which is write. They take information (including data) that exists in some relationship and in a particular context and demonstrate that visually, using graphics, images, color, proximity, charts, etc. The kinds of data that are used, and how it is represented visually depends on a lot of different factors, including the ones that go into the creation of the visualization (time, expertise, equipment and technology, audience, others). As digital display of information becomes more advanced and cheaper, data visualizations have become more complex and moved beyond two dimensions.

I’ve always been fascinated by complexity, organization, and information. I’m not good at a lot of things, but I’m absolutely awesome at seeing connections between information in systems. So, while I don’t have the skills to create the kinds of visualizations I enjoy, I’m able to understand them really well, and use them to improve my ability to share ideas. Not to mention that my mind is highly analytical, so I struggle to be creative. When I see creatively done visualizations, it gives me an idea of what the combination of a creative and analytical mind could look like. I’m not sure that I’ll ever study design to the degree that I can create awesome visualizations, but I do try to incorporate using them into my professional work as much as possible.

Grading

This assignment is worth 50 points and is graded on your ability to use the directions to generate an appropriate volume of content suitable to developing a conversation about your interests and fascinations. Your grade *will not* be determined by how correctly your writing approximates Standard Business English, so write freely, but with care.

You must thoughtfully complete the entire assignment for full credit. Credit cannot be awarded for work not loaded to Drive. Incomplete work (i.e., missing sections, lack of full paragraphs, unformatted) will be given partial credit. Most importantly, some of ideas will quickly become the basis for future work so do it well and do it on time.