

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

UNIT ONE: The assignment should help students describe their own reading processes and writing processes, and the relationship between the two. Instructors may take a slightly different tack and make this more of an education or language narrative, but one way or another, students should examine their experiences with language, whether in formal or informal situations.

Some important points: 1) The assignment should help students gain a greater sense of their own past literacy experiences and how those experiences have shaped how they envision themselves as writers in the current moment. 2) The assignment should have students reflect on their own schooling and/or educational influences and examine the social and technological issues involved in accessing language fluency. 3) The assignment should have students explore their understandings of the ethnic and cultural diversity of written English as well as the influence of other registers, dialects, and languages.

UNIT TWO asks students to engage with research as a process of inquiry, *with a specific focus on genre awareness*. That is, students should emerge from this unit either examining one topic from a multi-genre perspective, or one genre from a multi-topic perspective. The five paragraph theme can be discussed in order to disrupt it, but there's no reason to teach students how to do one. In fact, teaching students how to compose in a particular genre of any kind will not prove very helpful. Rather, students need to be able to investigate a genre on their own. Rather than teaching students to write in a genre (an op ed, a music review, a manifesto, etc.), it is more helpful for students to analyze op eds, music reviews, and manifestos in order to understand how they work and then to write an analysis that explains their operations. As opposed to a traditional "research paper," this assignment focuses on the process of research itself, asking students to look at sources and examine, not only the content of these sources, but also the rhetorical context of those sources (audience, occasion, exigency and so forth.)

In this unit, students should: 1) learn research skills that they will be able to transfer to other learning situations 2) learn to evaluate sources both in their content and context, and 3) begin to put sources from multiple perspectives in conversation with each other, and in conversation with the student's own perspective.

UNIT THREE asks students to compose in a genre or genres previously unfamiliar to them (most likely genres introduced in Unit 2.) To do this, they must learn to recognize, identify and label the generic conventions they notice and then begin to use those conventions. The main purpose of this assignment is *transfer*. That is, once students are able to identify and use generic conventions on their own, they will be able to compose in almost any genre.

Unit One: From Personal to Public



Part One (75%) At least 850 Words. Due Sept 12.

You've read "Mother Tongue," and an excerpt from **Voices of the Self**, both narratives about the writers' experiences with education. Now it's time for you to write an education narrative of your own. What is a particular event that had an impact on the way you view education and school?

So... where do you begin? Note that Tan and Gilyard write about specific experiences with education. In class, we've written some scenes, and talked a lot about concrete, significant detail. Please feel free to bring some of these scenes into your essay. I really want to encourage you to be both specific and honest here, as Tan and Gilyard are. I am not looking for a particular answer—I'm not, for example, searching for you to tell me that education is the greatest thing that happened to you if it isn't. I am looking for you to share your true experiences, both good and bad. I am also looking for you to use the building blocks of anecdote (story) and reflection (explaining why this story is important) that we have discussed in class. That is, I want you to, not only write about your educational experiences, but also to take a step back and look at the larger picture. What do you want your audience to take away from your story?

This can be written formally, like Graff writes, or more informally as Mellix sometimes writes—it just can't be sloppy. You should be able to explain **WHY** you chose the language you did (even if you've chosen "English paper English.") Why is that language the best tool for the job?

Everything you write for this assignment will be posted in an eBook, which will be available to everyone in the class, so don't write anything that's too personal to share.

You will be graded on:

- **Concrete, significant detail (are you painting us a picture?)**
- **The thoughtfulness of your reflections (is there a point?)**
- **The carefulness of your proofreading and organization (it doesn't have to be written in "Standard Written English," (SWE) but it does have to be written with care. You should be able to explain why you made the language choices you did, SWE or not!)**
- **Word count: At least 850 words!**
- **Whether or not it's on time (see late policy!)**

Part Two GROUP PRESENTATIONS Due Feb 24. (25%)

For part two of this assignment, you will be looking at what you think is working well and not working well in American education, using your own and your peers' writing (as well as Sir Ken Robinson's talk on education) as sources. You will present the class with what you think the biggest problems in education are (using patterns you've seen emerge in everything we've read so far) and what might be **A PLACE TO START** looking for solutions. You also might add what you think the barriers to implementing those solutions might be.

Let me put it this way: you are not going to be able to solve the problems with education in America in a couple hours of discussion, because they are difficult problems! But then again, you are experts: you are students in America, people that are rarely listened to on this topic of education. You will have 5-7 minutes (no less, but also not much more) to get up on a soap box and talk about issues you see. You have two full days of class time and four people to put this together, so I expect you to make it informative and interesting. This means:

1. Using your experiences and everything we've read so far, pinpoint a key problem or problems.
2. Do some research! Who is working on these problems? What do they say?
3. Make something visual to show during your presentation-- quote the experts, sure. But also quote each other. Make sure we hear from your education narratives. Let your audience know: where can we start making school a place where students actually learn better?

HOMEWORK (FOR PARTS ONE AND TWO. PLEASE SEE OPEN LAB FOR IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTIONS):

DUE 8/29: Annotate Amy Tan and respond. How is her experience similar or different to yours? BE SPECIFIC!

DUE 9/03: Read and annotate Keith Gilyard and do a Triple Entry Journal.

DUE 9/10: A less "Shi*T*y First Draft"

DUE 9/12: FINAL DRAFT ESSAY ONE

over this weekend I will compile our class ebook and post it online by Saturday. You will read your group's "chapter," the work of three other students, by Tuesday, 9/17

DUE 9/19: Work on presentations with group

DUE 9/24 PRESENTATIONS



Unit 1: Literacy Narrative Example (Kim Liao)

How Did We Get Here? Reflecting on Literacy and Your Writing Processes

Readings:

- Donald Murray, "All Writing is Autobiography"
- Amy Tan, "Mother Tongue"
- Excerpt, Vershawn Ashanti Young, "'Nah, We Straight': An Argument Against Code Switching"
- Edward Bouelle and Andrew Bouelle: "Comic Book Brothers: A Collaborative Literacy Narrative"

Rhetorical Situation, or Your Jumping Off Point for Writing:

What are best practices for reading and writing analytically to succeed in your academic environment? What have you learned about literacy over your life so far as a student, writer, and member of a community that offered you a sense of identity? What lessons about literacy can you bring to your fellow writers as you join our class and college discourse community? What are best practices to for writing in this community?

Your Task:

In this assignment, you'll write a Literacy Narrative about your experiences and growth as a writer and a member of communities that use language. These communities can be cultural, academic, family, friends, interest groups, or creative. In authoring your Literacy Narrative, consider what literacies you use on a daily basis, and what practices you can bring that will be helpful in a college or academic writing environment. Then, you'll share your finished Literacy Narratives with a partner, and together as a group, create a set of recommendations or best practices for approaching the writing process with self-awareness or "metacognition."

Writing Assignment Instructions and Due Dates:

Thurs 1/31 Defining Literacy: Preliminary Writing Exercise

Define "literacy" for you in a few informal paragraphs. Then, consider 3 formative literacy experiences and write at least one paragraph about each one. What was important about this literacy experience and how did this encounter shape you?

Tues 2/5 Literacy Narrative Outline

Outline of literacy narrative due, in which you trace the thread of the story you are planning to tell. In particular, how did one or more literacy experiences help you get to where you are today, writing in college? What can you share with others that has helped you?

Thurs 2/7 Working Draft of Literacy Narrative Due (uploaded via Course website + 2 hard copies)

Write a 3-4 page personal literacy narrative, tracing your journey to be the writer and student you are now, considering elements of reading, writing, and communication, and what practices you adopted to help you succeed.

Thurs 2/14 Peer Review Letters (2 copies of each letter, plus respond to the hard copy drafts with annotations)

In a detailed letter of 1-2 pages, respond to each author's draft by explaining what is working well, what you think his or her intention is, and how you think that they are conveying their intentions using specific language and details. Ultimately, what is the takeaway for you as the reader about this

author's understanding of literacy and how different experiences have shaped their approach to writing as a college student in this academic discourse community?

Thurs 2/21 Literacy Narrative Final Draft Due (uploaded via the Course Website + 1 hard copy)

As you revise your literacy narrative, consider what literacy experiences are the most important to you in forming your own theory about how your writing process works best. What best practices do you have to offer your colleagues about joining a college discourse community? You'll share this narrative with your colleagues in class, and together as a class, we'll collaborate on a group-written manifesto of what practices are most helpful for succeeding at college writing in this discourse community and what you have learned from each other.

UNIT ONE: From Personal to Public—Literacy and Education Narrative Example (Carrie Hall)

Part One: At Least 850 words.

You've read "Voices of the Self" and "Mother Tongue," both narratives about the writers' experiences with language and education. **Now it's time for you to write an education narrative of your own. What is a particular event that had an impact on the way you view education and school?** So... where do you begin? Note that both Tan and Gilyard write about specific experiences with education. In class, we've written some scenes, and talked a lot about concrete, significant detail. Please feel free to bring some of these scenes into your essay. I really want to encourage you to be both specific and honest here, as both Tan and Gilyard are. I am not looking for a particular answer—I'm not, for example, searching for you to tell me that education is the greatest thing that happened to you if it isn't. I am looking for you to share your true experiences, good, bad, ugly, beautiful, surprising and even boring-- as long as you feel they're important for readers to hear about.

This can be written formally, like Gilyard sometimes writes, or more informally—it just can't be sloppy. You should be able to explain WHY you chose the language you did (even if you've chosen "English paper English.") Why is that language the best tool for the job?

Everything you write for this assignment will be posted in an eBook, which will be available to everyone in the class, so don't write anything that's too personal to share.

You will be graded on: concrete, significant detail, the thoughtfulness of your reflections, the carefulness of your proofreading and organization, and whether or not it is on time!

Homework for part one (please see OpenLab for more detailed descriptions):

- Read and annotate "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan. Write a "lowkey" response: How does this relate to your own experiences with education?
- Read and annotate excerpt from "Voices of the Self" by Keith Gilyard. Fill out Triple-Entry journal.
- A less "Sh*tty" First Draft
- Part One Due

Part Two. Group presentation.

For part two of this assignment, you will be looking at what you think is working well and not working well in American education, using your own and your peers' writing as sources. You will present the class with what you think the biggest problems in education are (using patterns you've seen emerge in everything we've read so far) and what might be A PLACE TO START looking for solutions. You also might add what you think the barriers to implementing those solutions might be.

Let me put it this way: you are not going to be able to solve the problems with education in America in one hour of discussion, because they are difficult problems! But then again, you are experts: you are students in America, people that are rarely listened to on this topic of education. You will have 5-9 minutes to get up on a soap box and talk about issues you see. You have two full days of class time and four people to put this together, so I expect you to make it informative and interesting. This means:

1. Figure out what your key points are.
2. Find quotes from your essays. (and maybe show them on a Power Point?) that help prove your key points.
3. Bring in visuals! This always helps a presentation.

Homework for part two:

- Read the three student essays in your group and do triple-entry journal on them (at least three entries each!) Work on Projects in class
- Work on projects in class. Prepare to present.
- Presentations, 5-7 mins each.
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Just in case you are wondering, your literacy narrative will be 3/4 of your grade, the group project will be 1/4.

Please come talk to me if you have any questions!

Note: when students revise the essay, I don't require them to use the work they've done in the group projects, but I do find it often makes an appearance.

Unit 1 Portrait of a Writer- Literacy Narrative Example (Jackie Blain)

Portrait of a Writer

That's you! In this unit, you'll get the chance to take a look at who you are as a writer, a literate person — what you feel about writing, who and what influenced you for good or ill, how you developed your writing process. And you'll start to build your own theory of writing, because, even if you hate writing, you're stuck with it, both in college and in the world of work. So it's a good idea to start thinking about how you can transfer what you learn about yourself and your process to those other contexts.

For most of the unit, we'll be reading, posting, and talking about writing.

For the essay at the end of the unit, here's what you'll do:

Look back over your posts and think about the class discussions, and write about what you've learned. I'm not looking for you to persuade me about anything; I'm looking for you to think through your history as a reader and writer, your attitude toward and beliefs about writing, and the place writing now has and probably will have in the future. Then tell me what insights you've gained, and what in the readings and discussion helped you get there.

This is NOT a chronology of your life. This IS a "so what do I think?" piece. What have you found out about yourself as a writer? What's surprising? What's annoying? What's giving you hope or even despair?

This is also NOT an "Introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, concluding paragraph" piece. Tell me what you're thinking, in whatever length and structure you want to tell it.

One word: when you cite something from a reading, be sure to say where it came from. We'll talk about in-text citations in class, but when you're writing it, don't panic about it—just give the author credit by saying his/her name, and we'll make it "formal" later.

Have fun with this. Dig deep. Be honest. And get things in on time! At least 800 words!

Blog Post 1: What are your goals for college and what does writing have to do with those goals?

Blog Post 2: Respond to Cheryl Ball's essay on "Bad Ideas" about writing. What was she saying? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Be specific and quote from the text!

Blog Post 3: What are the rules you've learned for writing? Do you agree with those rules?

Blog Post 4: Write a letter to a "literary sponsor" in your life. It does not have to be positive (though it certainly can be!)

Blog Post 5 (after rough draft): "Things I should try to do when revising my draft."

UNIT 1 - Literacy Narratives

Reading and writing are a part of the everyday life of a college student. Often, we don't think too much about reading and writing - they are just things that we do while we are doing whatever else it is we are doing. We read and write texts and social media posts. We read signs and advertisements. We read our math homework, restaurant menus, MTA schedules. We write greeting cards, online reviews, and lab reports. But the point of this unit is to take a step back and think about how we read and write, how we came to learn how to read and write, and how reading and writing define us as individuals.

Specifically, for this assignment, you are going to think about how you learned to read and write and/or the moments of your life that are shaped by reading and writing. Maybe you learned in school and spent hours reading in the library - a stereotype of reading and writing as academic subjects but not necessarily part of your everyday life. Or maybe your experiences are outside the classroom and shaped by cellphones rather than library books. Your experiences may be good or bad or both (or somewhere in between). The point is for you to consider your individual experiences. Don't write about what you think I want or even what you want your experiences to be. Write what is true for you.

Readings:

Amy Tan - "Mother Tongue"

Vershawn Ashanti Young - "Should Writers Use Their Own Language"

Gloria Anzaldua - "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"

George Orwell - "Why I Write"

Assignments:

Step 1: Gather Your Ideas

Write down some rough ideas about how and when you write and about what aspects of your life (work, friendships, dating, etc.) are shaped by various forms of writing.

Classwork on 9/3

Step 2: Reflection 1

Compose a brief reflection paragraph on what you think your literacy narrative will become: what will you write? how will you write it? Why will you write it that way?

Due Online 9/3

Step 3: Outline Your Narrative

Compose an outline for your literacy narrative. What will you address? In what order? How will all the elements of your narrative relate to each other? It can be a very detailed and specific outline in a formal style or it can be a loose collection of ideas in a specific order.

Due Online 9/10

Step 4: Reflection 2

Compose a brief reflection on your own literacy narrative draft: why are you choosing to write what you are writing how you are writing it?

Due Online Before Class 9/12

Step 5: Draft

Compose a complete draft of your literacy narrative (at least 750 words) that is proofread and edited.

Due In Class (Print 2 Copies) 9/17

Step 6: Peer Review

You will read, review, and comment on a classmate's literacy narrative. Why do you think they wrote what they wrote how they wrote it? Offer constructive criticism on how they can improve their narrative.

In Class 9/17

Step 7: Reflection 3

Compose a brief reflection on how the peer review went: what did you learn about your own writing by reading someone else's? Include a reflection on what you think needs to be improved in your draft and what revisions you can focus on for your final draft.

Due Online Before Class 9/19

Step 8: Final Draft

Compose an edited and revised final draft of your literacy narrative (at least 850 words).

Due In Class (Print 1 Copy) 9/24

Step 9: Reflection 4

Compose a brief reflection that addresses your final draft: why did you write what you wrote how you wrote it?

Due Online 9/24

Grading Criteria:

You will be graded on:

- Whether your assignments are submitted on time
- Whether your assignments meet the stated criteria
- Your use of clear and specific details
- The level of care and effort that the assignments demonstrate
- The level of thought and depth present in the assignments
- Proofreading, presentation, and mechanics