

# Literacy Narrative: Communication in Our Communities

## An Essay Progression

### ESSAY PROMPT

In the next few weeks, we will empower ourselves to write personal narrative essays about how we communicate, think, and learn in the world around us. In our readings, our written Practice assignments, and our class discussions, we will practice making assertions, providing anecdotal and textual evidence, explaining evidence, and connecting paragraphs to a global statement. In particular, we will read and analyze the following narrative essays: “Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan, “‘La Double Vie de Veronica’: Reflections on My Life as a Chinese Migrant in Australia” by Veronica Zhengdao Ye, “‘Nah, We Straight’: An Argument Against Code Switching” by Vershawn Ashanti Young, and “Leave Your Name at the Border” by Manuel Muñoz. We will read these texts not only as critical thinkers but as writers.

Explore the following question in essay form: What is the relationship between your life and writing?

As a way to begin writing, consider whether you can build a paragraph around any of the following questions. These questions may help you brainstorm, so give yourself space to think about each of them. But your essay can discuss only a few of them in extraordinary detail. The relationship you describe does not have to be entirely positive, entirely negative, or somewhere within that spectrum per se.

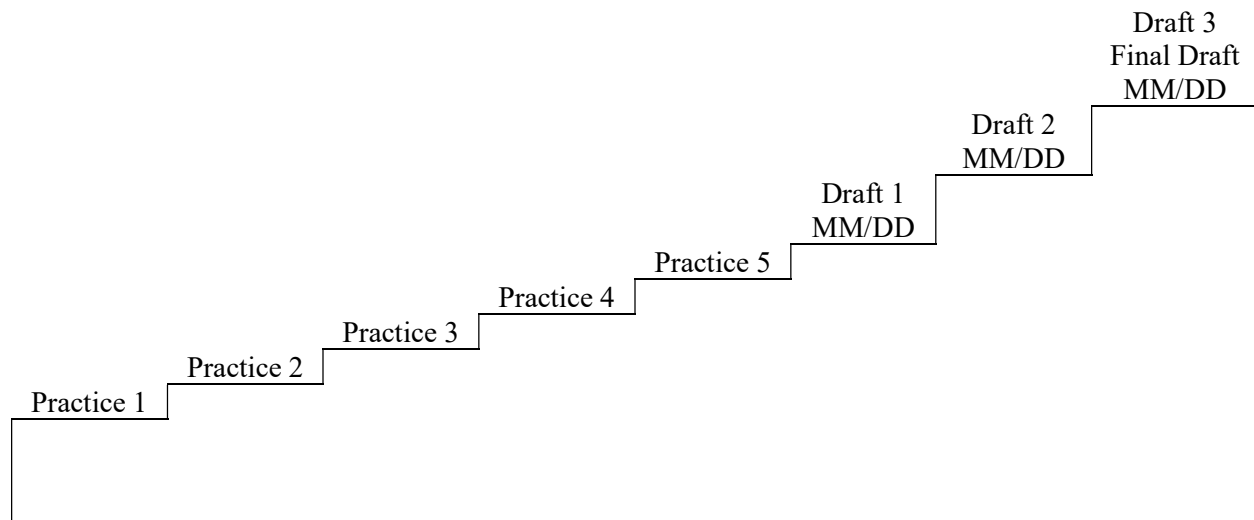
- Recall a moment when you felt confident about your writing.
- Recall a moment when you felt discouraged about your writing.
- What kinds of writing have you ever been asked to write?
- What kinds of writing do you do even when you’re not asked to?
- How does your writing vary depending on who you’re communicating with? For example, reflect on how you do or do not communicate with friends, family, instructors, classmates, coworkers, customer service, neighbors, ...
- What languages or varieties of English do you write in?
- How different is your writing from the way you speak? Why do you think that is?
- How does your writing vary depending on the kind of text you’re creating? For example, reflect on what it’s like to write a grocery list or a poem or an email or a text message or an essay or a lab report or a post on social media, and beyond.
- What kinds of texts do you read? How similar or different are they from what you write?
- Would you call yourself a writer? Why or why not?
- How have previous experiences affected your approach or attitudes toward writing?
- What are the most challenging, rewarding, or practical aspects of writing?
- When you’re trying to write something, what do you do when you’re feeling stuck?

As you revise your own literacy narrative, you will choose one or two of the texts above as a so-called *mentor text*, some of whose organization and strategies you can selectively try out for yourself. As there is not one perfect way to write an essay, and as there isn’t just one type of essay, you will practice deciding for yourself what communication strategies may be effective for your goals, audience, and context.

Write for someone who knows little to nothing about your topic and personal experience. Include a brief introduction, a specific global statement that directly addresses the question, body paragraphs in APEC structure, a brief conclusion, and a title. For this essay, you may use personal experience, anecdotes, and your own previous writing as the main evidence for your assertions and global statement. You can also include and cite textual evidence as needed. Include a word count at the end of each Draft. For Draft 1, submit 1000-1500 words (approximately 4-6 pages before Works Cited), which you will revise for Draft 2 and Draft 3. Overall, your final draft will be graded on specificity of detail, relevance to the prompt, organization, and sentence structure. Write in any varieties of English that you are familiar with.

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### OVERVIEW

For the Narrative Essay, we will use the concepts of assertion, evidence, analysis, and global statement to read and write personal narratives. You will develop your writing step by step, through a progression of practice assignments and drafts, leading to a final draft of 1000-1500 words (approximately 4-6 pages before Works Cited) in any varieties of English that you choose.

### WHAT'S THE POINT OF A PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT?

Each Practice is a take-home writing assignment that builds toward and can be used to construct Draft 1. For example, Practice 1 asks you to write a few sentences that closely read a specific text, while Practice 5 asks you to expand your previous assignments into a few paragraphs. In this way, the Practice assignments are neither whole drafts nor isolated assignments. They begin a guided path through the writing process. Instead of simply telling you to submit a Narrative Essay one month from now, I've broken down the writing process into smaller actionable steps so that you can exchange feedback with me and with your peers along the way.

### WHAT'S THE POINT OF A DRAFT?

Each Draft is a writing assignment in which you make a full attempt at the essay. However, a single attempt will rarely be enough to create a strong piece of writing. The writing process, put simply, is an ongoing cycle of three modes: Generating New Writing, Revising, and Editing. Especially in the first two modes, you practice strategies for creativity, critical thinking, reading, writing, and discussing. A single Draft would provide you with a platform to engage intensely with these strategies. But each subsequent Draft offers you space to get some strategic distance from what you've written, workshop your draft with real readers, approach your ideas and writing with a fresh perspective, and then make major changes. From one Draft to the next, your goal is to continue generating new writing and to revise at least one-third of what you had written. In this sense, revision is *re-envisioning* what you had first submitted. As you approach the final Draft, you can then dramatically shift your focus from generating new writing and revising to editing.

To help you jumpstart revision and editing, I provide feedback as outlined below, I reserve office hours to discuss with you individually and in small groups, and I coordinate peer reviews for you to exchange feedback with peers, who themselves are in the middle of the writing process.

## HOW TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS

- Type ~~and print~~ all assignments in Times New Roman, 12pt black font, 2.0 spaced with 1” margins on 8.5”x11” white paper, ~~double sided if possible, stapled~~. Prepare in-line citations and Works Cited in MLA format for each assignment. Include your name and the assignment title.
- Consult the Course Schedule for related readings and due dates. ~~Submit all writing assignments by the beginning of class in person or in my mailbox~~. For each day (rounded up) that an assignment is late, the grade will be reduced by 20% of the maximum possible grade. Computer, printer, or file errors will not excuse lateness; back up, store, or synchronize your files with free cloud programs like Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive, Box, or Amazon Drive.
- ~~If you are absent, you are responsible for (i) emailing relevant assignments by the start of class and (ii) submitting printed copies by the next class in person or in my mailbox. Otherwise, the assignment is late. To catch up on what you missed in class, (iii) consult the Course Schedule and visit me during office hours.~~

## FEEDBACK

- PRACTICE 1 – DRAFT 2. I will grade your writing based on completion, according to Rubric A.

### RUBRIC A

| Work     | Complete the task and practice specific writing strategies as defined by the prompt and syllabus |     |       |
|----------|--|-----|-------|
| Grade    | 0  | √-  | √, √+ |
| Credit   | 0  | 50% | 100%  |
| Feedback | Suggestions for next steps, questions, or resources as needed                                    |     |       |

- DRAFT 1. You will use a guided worksheet to do a peer review, during which you will focus on generating new writing and brainstorming major revisions.
- DRAFT 2. Similarly, you will use a guided worksheet to do a peer review. However, for this peer review, you will focus on minor revisions, editing, and final polishing.
- DRAFT 3 (FINAL DRAFT). I will grade your writing according to Rubric B (attached). Overall, your final draft will be graded on specificity of detail, relevance to the prompt, organization, and sentence structure. If I do not receive Draft 3 within the lateness window, I will treat Draft 1 or Draft 2, if submitted, as Draft 3.
- MINI PORTFOLIO (OPTIONAL). For extra credit, you can submit a “mini-portfolio” by email. For our class, the mini-portfolio is a single Word, PDF, or similar file that contains all assignments that you did for the essay progression. Label and put the assignments in order, including the final draft. I will grade your progress based on completion, according to Rubric A.
- DRAFT 4 (OPTIONAL). Near the end of the semester, you may submit Draft 4 for one essay progression of your choice. You must attach any feedback that you had received on Draft 3, and you must attach a three-paragraph reflection that guides me through how you revised and edited the paper. Between Draft 3 and Draft 4, lateness and length penalties will carry over, and the higher grade will entirely replace the lower grade. Requirements for Draft 4 will be finalized and announced later in the semester.