

ENG 1101
ESSAY #1 – Literacy Narrative

Assignment:

Over the last few weeks, we have spent some time reading about and discussing literacy practices, your thoughts about these, and your relationships to those practices. Last week, we read Sherman Alexie’s “Superman and Me,” which is a personal narrative essay—meaning that the focus of the essay is on the life and experiences of the writer himself and used narrative, or storytelling, to structure and present the material being discussed. This essay is also about the practice of writing and reading. In other words, it is a literacy narrative, which is a specific type of personal narrative essay.

The focus of our first essay is your own literacy practices. For this essay, you will need to choose a specific topic to write about. This could be anything: how you learned to write, how you learned to read, how you used to read and write a lot and why you later stopped doing those things as much, or even how technology has changed the ways in which you read and write. These are just a few of the many possible topics you might choose for this essay. If you were particularly inspired Alexie’s essay, you may even choose to write an essay modeled on and responding to it. What is important is that you write about a specific topic that is significant to you and that you have a lot to say about. It is almost impossible to write anything when you don’t have material to work with. Therefore, please make sure that whatever specific topic you choose is a) something you have thought about and are interested in, and b) related to the general topic of reading and writing practices.

Process:

Before beginning a draft of this essay, you will need to do some PREWRITING to decide on your own particular approach to this literacy narrative. Look back at the informal writing that you have done in this class so far. Is there an idea or sentence in one of those writings that you’d like to expand on and develop into an essay? I encourage you to freewrite, brainstorm, ask questions, or make lists to help generate ideas (see Chapter 4 in *Good Writing Made Simple* for more information on how to start and organize your essay). In addition to filling out the prewriting worksheet, you must create an outline for your essay before you start drafting. All prewriting must be turned in with the final essay.

For those looking for more guidance on how to write a literacy narrative essay, please consult the Norton Web site. There, you will find a step-by-step guide to writing a literacy narrative, along with a sample literacy narrative, which is perhaps a bit duller than Alexie’s essay, but a perfectly competent essay nonetheless.

(http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/write/fieldguide/writing_guides.asp#06)

Format Guidelines:

- The paper should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced and with 1-inch margins.

- A cover page is not necessary. Put your name, the course and the date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page.
- Be sure to add page numbers and staple all pages *before* coming to class.
- Use parenthetical documentation (MLA style) to cite any quotations.
 - o Example: When quoting a text, you will want to show that “this is a quoted sentence from hypothetical page twenty-five” (Author 25).

Grading:

Your essay, which will be two to three pages in length, will be graded on the effort you have put into thinking about the personal literacy narrative essay, and about your topic for this particular essay, as well as on the presentation of your material to your audience. The essay should include a clear title and introduction, well-structured sentences, clean paragraphs, and proper grammar and spelling. Your writing should not only clearly describe and explain information, but also engage your reader. You must use specific, descriptive details in your story. Remember the five senses: see, hear, smell, taste, and touch.

Please make sure you write this essay for a specific audience. This audience can be your instructor, your classmates, the students at City Tech, or the readers of a particular publication. I ask you to choose and specify an audience so you know who you are writing to and tailor the content and style of your essay to that audience.

Due Dates:

Tuesday, Feb. 17: Prewriting worksheet due in class. You are also encouraged to try other prewriting techniques.

Tuesday, Feb 24: First draft due in class. This is not a “rough” draft, but a first draft. It must be complete. Do your best!

Thursday, March. 5: Final draft due in class. You must include all process work with the final draft including the prewriting worksheet and the first draft with my notes.

Prewriting Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

What will your essay be about?

Who is your audience? How will you make that evident in your paper? (Word choice? Style? Other?) How can you interest them in your subject?

What are some possible titles for your paper?

In addition to fulfilling the assignment of course, what is the purpose of your essay? (The “what” and the “how”)

What strategies might you use to fulfill your purpose?

How will you organize the information in your essay?

Where does your narrative predominately take place? Describe the setting, using the five senses.

Besides yourself, who are the people involved? Describe them.

What happened?

Why is this particular moment/experience/etc. significant to you? What meaning does it have for you today?