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| ENG 1101  ESSAY #1  **Narrative and Descriptive Essay** |

**DUE:** Tuesday, February 24 at the end of class

Essay should be handwritten in class

In class, we’ve analyzed three essays that use elements of narrative to forward a clear thesis. These essays are:

* Colson Whitehead’s “Colossus of New York” Here, Whitehead focused on different ways New Yorkers experience and know the city and on how New York City has a different meaning for each person.
* Nelson George’s “Fort Greene Dreams” shows how the artistic culture that grew up in Fort Greene provided him lessons about synchronicity, slow and consistent artistic success, and the personal value of playing a role in community.
* Katie Roiphe’s “Coney Island of the Mind” compares the beginning and end of relationships to the Cyclone, a famous rollercoaster.

**Assignment:**

For your first essay assignment, you will write an essay incorporating elements of narrative experience and description to support your stated main idea, responding to **one** of the following prompts:

1. Like Colson Whitehead’s essay, use your own specific experience in the city to show how you knew you were a “New Yorker.” **Your thesis** must indicate when you knew you were a “New Yorker.” If you chose this option, you must summarize Whitehead’s essay in the introduction and refer to it twice in your body paragraphs.
2. Like Nelson George’s essay, use your own experience to prove a point about how community and/or a place can influence and form an individual. You might consider art or sports organizations, community groups, local places where people congregate, an individual interaction you have with a neighborhood figure. **Your thesis** must identify how a community or place changed you. If you chose this option, you must summarize George’s essay in the introduction and refer to it twice in your body paragraphs.
3. Like Katie Roiphe’s essay (2 options):
4. Use your own experience involving place to describe how you came to terms with a family reality. This does not have to be a “break up” story. It might have to do with accepting a shortcoming of yourself or others, or losing someone you love or a time you discovered a positive quality about a family member you were previously unaware of.
5. Write about a time in your life in which you made a decision you came to regret. As Roiphe does, describe that moment, what happened and what you would change.

For either option, **your thesis** should clearly indicate what you learned and where. You also must summarize Roiphe’s essay in the introduction and refer to it twice in your body paragraphs.

As you write:

Remember the components of **narrative technique**:

* Main point: what was learned?
* Setting: you must describe place and clarify time (both duration and time period)
* Conflict
* Sequence of events
* Character
* Resolution

*Transitions* appropriate to narratives include: afterward, currently, eventually, finally, first, later, meanwhile, next, now, soon, and then.

Remember the components of **descriptive technique**:

Use the five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling?  
Visual details are especially powerful.

Be specific to provide clarity.

*Transitions and connections* appropriate to descriptive technique are words such as next to, near, close, between, above, toward, away, left, right, center, front, back, and middle. (There are obviously many of these words. Use precision!)