Project 1: Literacy Narrative + Reflective Cover Letter

Drawing on what you have read thus far in class, reflect on your own literacy and language history, beliefs, and experiences, and make a claim about some aspect. The purpose of this inquiry is to get to know yourself better as a reader, writer, and language user. Awareness gives power, purpose, and confidence; this is why the threshold concept “writing is impacted by identities and prior experiences” is so important.

It is a composition assignment, but also a chance to communicate. To guarantee the success of the communication, please consider who your audiences are, what you attempt to express, and how you can manage your voice. Please also take a record of your writing process: how you select the theme; how you get started; how you design your organization; how many drafts you compose; how you participate in peer review; whether procrastination is a problem; whether Writing Center is helpful…

## 1. Collect Data on Yourself: Conduct a Self-Study

* You have already begun to reflect on your literacy history in your reading responses and in-class work. First, consult the scaffolding questions[[1]](#endnote-1) on pages 358-9 of our textbook. Respond to at least ten questions that interest you and/or that you have the most to say about. Feel free to copy what you’ve written for previous discussion board responses, but make sure to answer new questions, too.
* Don’t know what a literacy narrative looks like? You can see Julie Wan’s “Chinks in My Armor: Reclaiming One’s Voice” as an example (WAW, p.349-356). But please remember, that is only an example. You have your freedom to decide what to write and how to write it.

## 2. Identify a Main Theme or Central “Finding”

* From the material you’ve generated, look for an overall “so what?” – a main theme, central “finding,” an overall conclusion that your consideration leads you to draw. It might be an insight about why you read and write as you do today based on past experience. It might be an argument about what works or doesn’t in literacy education, on the basis of your experience. It might be a resolution to do something differently, or to keep doing something that’s been working. It might be a description of an ongoing conflict or tension you experience when you read and write–or the story of how you resolved such a conflict earlier in your literacy history.
* As you figure out this main theme, make connections to course readings. How do they help you understand your experiences? How do your experiences confirm, further nuance, or challenge concepts in the readings?
* Your narrative will demonstrate and support this theme, drawing in stories, experiences, moments, and/or descriptions to help explain your point.

## 3. Frame or Freedom

* **Structure/design:** 
  + Because your literacy narrative tells the story of a particular person—you—its shape will depend on the particular experiences you’ve had and the importance you attach to them. Therefore, it’s difficult to suggest a single structure for the literacy narrative that will work for all writers. The structure that you use should support your particular intention and content.
  + Headings or sections (e.g., Part 1 or Act 1 or “Early Literacy Memories”) may be helpful, but your content may better lend itself to one unbroken essay. Do what works for you, given the material you want to include. Just be sure to organize it and make some sort of point (or points).
  + Give your literacy narrative a title.
* **First Person:** 
  + Using “I” may make this piece feel somewhat informal to you, but “I” is perfectly appropriate for a narrative. Go for it!

## 4. What Makes It Good?

* Appx. 4-5 double-spaced pages (literacy narrative) + 1 page reflective cover letter
* MLA style
  + a writing center handout might be helpful: [mla-8th-edition (louisville.edu)](https://louisville.edu/writingcenter/for-students-1/handouts-and-resources/handouts-1/mla-8th-edition)
  + go to [MLA Sample Paper // Purdue Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_paper.html) for a sample paper reference
* Provides detailed examples from your experiences to support a main theme about your literacy experiences
* Uses concepts in the readings to help analyze your experiences and the theme
* Is thoughtfully organized
* Is thoughtfully edited depending on the conventions of the language varieties you are using in your project
* Paraphrases, quotes, or cites at least 1 source appropriately to support your narrative

## 5. Scaffolding Due Dates

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 3 | Sept 6 (Tue)  by 8:00 am | Brainstorm and material collection  1 page scribbles |
|  | Sept 9 (Thur)  by 8:00 am | Scaffolding and outline. Students are suggested to start writing an outline for their project.  1 page outline |
| Week 4 | Sept 13 (Tue)  by 8:00 am | At least 1.5 pages (around 500 words) draft for project 1 Post the “shitty first draft” in Discussion Board |
| Week 5 | Sept 20 (Tue)  by 8:00 am | At least 4 pages (around 1200 words) draft for project 1  Post in Discussion Board  Bring your laptop or a hard copy for peer review |
|  | Sept 22 (Thur) in class | Peer review, in-class writing for the reflective cover letter (1 page) |
| Submission Due | | Sept 24 (Sat) by 23:00 pm |
| Due after grace period | | Sept 25 (Sun) by 23:00 pm |

1. Scaffolding questions on *Writing About Writing* p.358-59.

   Start your literacy narrative by considering your history as a reader and writer. Try to get at what your memories and feelings about writing / reading are and how you actually write / read now. Take bland generalizations (“I really love to write”) into detailed, concrete description and examples of why, and of how you learned to write / read. Mine your memory, thinking carefully about where you’ve been and where you are as a reader and writer. You might begin by answering questions such as these:

   * How did you learn to write and / or read?
   * What kinds of writing / reading have you done in the past?
   * How much have you enjoyed the various kinds of writing / reading you’ve done?
   * What are particularly vivid memories that you have of reading, writing, or activities that involved them?
   * What is your earliest memory of reading and of writing?
   * What sense did you get, as you were learning to read and write, of the value of reading and writing, and where did that sense come from?
   * What frustrated you about reading and writing as you were learning and then as you progressed through school? By the same token, what pleased you about them?
   * What kind of writing and reading do you do most commonly?
   * What is your favorite kind of writing and reading?
   * What are your current attitudes, feelings, or stance toward reading and writing?
   * Where do you think your feelings about and habits of writing and reading come from? How did you get to where you are as a writer / reader? What in your past has made you the kind of writer / reader you are today?
   * Who are some people in your life who have acted as literacy sponsors?
   * What are some institutions and experiences in your life that have acted as literacy sponsors?
   * What technologies impact you as a writer? When, where, and why did you start using them?
   * What have any of the readings in this chapter reminded you about from your past or present as a reader and writer?

   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)