**Personal Narrative Assignment**

The personal narrative paper illustrates an event, experience, or “enlightenment” that left an impression on you, or affected you, or one that you feel differently about now than you did before. This paper employs a first-person point of view – the vantage point from which the story is told.

Possible topics include:

* Something you never used to believe, but do now (the story of how it changed)
* Something you used to believe, but no longer do (again, the story of how it changed)
* A decision or action that you would change if you could
* What influences have shaped your literacy/how have you become the literate person you are?

Length is flexible; aim for no more than 750-1,000 words.

Some other topics that have come up in the past:

* A time when you realized you had a particular ability
* An event that strongly challenged you or one when someone relied on you
* A situation that turned out quite differently than you expected
* A turning point in your interests, actions, or goals
* A time when you dealt with very strong emotions
* The quality you consider your strongest personal asset
* Succeeding or failing at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* A tragic or out of control incident
* Your first or last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Learning how or teaching someone how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Getting caught \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* An episode when time stood still for you

**Qualities Common to Strong Personal Essays**

* An appealing topic showing the author’s particular voice
* Personal honesty in the details revealed, the relationships with others, and the willingness to expose vulnerabilities
* Descriptive language that includes sense impressions, precise details, and active verbs
* Possible use of dialogue to reveal the writer as well as others in the episode
* A satisfying conclusion that shows both the writer’s growth from the event itself and from writing about the event
* Balance between spinning a good yarn and commenting on life – either the writer’s life or the readers’ lives. Readers learn from personal reflections, not only about the writer, but also about themselves.