

Essay #1 – Reading a Personal Essay

Our first 3 course readings (from the *Across Cultures* anthology) explore the tensions of living between cultures. These essays are based on personal experience, and then this personal 'data' is often used to develop a larger argument about society at large.

This assignment is to explore how the authors of our sample essays use and interpret 'evidence' from their own personal stories. **CHOOSE ONE ESSAY TO WRITE ON -- FOR STEP ONE OF THIS THREE-PAGE ESSAY. AIM TO DISCUSS YOUR CHOSEN ESSAY WITH 3 SHORT QUOTES AND CITES.**

CHOOSE ONE ESSAY ONLY!

* Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue" -- [Link](#) to PDF

* Shirley Geok-Lin Lim's "Two Lives" -- [Link](#) to PDF

* Taneisha Grant's "To Speak Patois" -- [Link](#) to PDF

 Click to view readings!

1) In a first (long) paragraph or two, describe the central 'conflict' (or tension) described in your chosen essay. Next, describe the moment in the text where the author comes to a moment of 'realization' or 'insight' and/or 'argument.' How does she use their realization to make a comment a larger aspect of identity or culture?

Try to back up what you say with quotes and/or a paraphrase. It is all right to cite by using author and page number, for example, (Tan 9) or (Lim 15). Remember if you are paraphrasing another author's story, you should also cite that information using the author and page number. **AIM TO USE 3 SHORT QUOTES IN 'QUOTE SANDWICHES,' WHICH ARE PRESENTED, CITED CORRECTLY AND EXPLAINED.**

2) In a second paragraph (or two), tell a story from your own life (or someone you know, or someone you have read about) who resembles the character portrayed in your chosen essay in some way. Try to choose a story that also has a moment of 'insight' when you (or someone you know) realized or learned something about culture, identity, reading or language (the same themes in your source essay). How does your personal narrative reinforce--or challenge--the assumptions made in your source text?

3) Finally, in a concluding paragraph (or two), speculate on the meaning of personal narratives. Is it fair to generalize from one's personal experience when making larger arguments? Why or why not? What are the dangers of relying exclusively on autobiographical experience to make sense of the world? What are its advantages? Is personal experience more 'true' than other forms of information? Is it more powerful, appealing or convincing? Try to develop an argument that connects your two stories--the source essays and your own.

****Use the above questions as your guide as you create a first draft. But make sure you add an introduction (which probably will use an idea from Step 3) with an argumentative thesis, several body or evidence paragraphs and a conclusion in your drafts that you bring to class. Use the steps to guide you as you write. In your second draft, you want to create a more 'traditional' essay with an introduction (with a clear thesis), a few body paragraphs and a short conclusion. YOU MAY WANT TO CUT AND PASTE MATERIAL FROM STEP #3 TO BUILD YOUR INTRO. AND THESIS SINCE THIS IS THE PART OF THIS ESSAY WHERE YOU THINK ABOUT AND 'ANALYZE' YOUR SOURCE ESSAY AND YOUR STORY AND WHAT THEY MEAN.**

 For better essays, don't skip Step 3!

FORMAT: Typed, double-spaced; 650 - 750 words (about 3 pages).

 The maximum word count for this asg. is 900 words!

•DRAFT DUE DATE: TUE. OCT. 11th (2:15 pm) -- For peer editing

•REVISED DRAFT DUE DATE: THU. OCT. 20th (11:59 pm) -- For grading

Upload your Revised Draft to submit101.lagcconline.com