

Essay 3: Narrative Essay with Research

Topic: In this essay, you'll write a personal narrative (a story about something significant that happened to you) designed to solve a particular problem, then you'll do research to support how some aspect of your experience is common to a larger group of people.

The Problem: After living a long and satisfying life, you arrive at the Pearly Gates, ready to be welcomed onto the streets of gold. Unfortunately, St. Peter hasn't gotten the memo about what a sterling citizen you've been your whole life. (In fact, the rules for entry seem a little different from what your childhood Sunday school teacher led you to expect.) Saint Peter doubts whether you've done anything interesting your whole life long, and wants proof that you learned from your time on earth. He doesn't have time to listen to any long-winded explanations, either. He sends you down the hall to write a narrative essay about one significant experience you had in life and how that experience changed you. What story will you tell? (The problem is imaginary, but your answer should be real: write about something that really has happened to you.)

Tips: Write so readers can vividly relive the experience and learn something about and themselves. Be passionate. Include characters. Create memorable descriptions.

Audience: You're trying to convince St. Peter, but since none of us has met him personally, it may help to write as if you were addressing students who are less familiar with your experience and research than you are, but who are college-level adults who can be challenged a little by your material.

Sources: Integrate facts, ideas, or quotes from at least three separate scholarly or news articles. See the back of this page for what sources you can use and how to find them. There are some specific guidelines for you to follow. Please print out at least the first page of any sources you use and hand them in with your essay.

Format: Use one inch margins and 11 point font. Cite your sources for the essay in MLA format: put a Works Cited list at the end of the essay, and put the author's name and the page number in the text after you quote, paraphrase, or summarize someone else's words or ideas. There are no minimum or maximum number of pages for the assignment; just write as much as you need to in order to make it a good essay.

Peer/Instructor: When the peer draft is due, bring a first draft of the essay to class to use in peer review; also bring a printout or copy of the first page of at least once source you plan on using. When the instructor draft is due, bring in the final draft of the essay for me to read, respond to, and grade, and a printout or photocopy of at least the first page of any sources you use in the essay. You must attach your peer draft and any peer review you've received; anything that led up to the final product.

Grade Weight: This essay is worth 11% of your grade for the course.

Important: Your essay must be persuasive, showing what you learned from your experience and how. Your sources must be reliable and credible.

Sources and Research for Essay 3

In this essay you'll begin the practice of finding and integrating material from reliable, credible sources into your essays. Once you have your narrative under way and know what the focus of your essay is, think about how your experience might be applied to a larger group of people than yourself. Think about what you'd really like to learn more about. (Remember that concept from the film *Shaped by Writing*? Rather than starting an essay with something you know, start with something you don't know: a burning question.)

You can go to the library physically, or access materials online. The college library has research librarians on staff who are experts in research, and who will be happy to answer questions. (Of course, you'll consult them well in advance of your due date and be respectful of their time.)

Because I want you to gain familiarity with credible sources, and because I want to give some guidelines to keep your research from being overwhelming, I'm limiting what kind of sources you can use. Please draw your information from the sources below and no others:

Acceptable Sources

You may use articles from the following newspapers, whether print or accessed online:

- Boston Globe
- Christian Science Monitor
- New York Times
- Washington Post

You may use articles from the following online academic databases, which are accessible through the college library (either visit physically or use library web page):

- Academic Search Premier
- Communication and Mass Media Complete
- Business Source Premier
- Medline
- PsychARTICLES

The library website is <http://library.fpc.edu>.

Click on Research (look for the blue link) then click on the heading Academic Databases.

Click on the name of the database you want to use (choose from the list above)

Enter any the username and password you were given in class.

Experiment with entering search terms and seeing what kind of results you get. **Whenever there is a checkbox available that says "Full Text," click on it** to use that option. That way your search results will include only articles you can access (read) the full text of online.