

## CRITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY ESSAY

This essay is designed to supplement our discussions on reading, writing and identity while also getting used to the process of peer review. We have read and discussed texts that describe the importance of literacy and language for who we are as people. In composing this essay, you have a choice between prompts that ask you to consider how you view yourself and your experiences in a larger context. We will continue exploring these ideas through thoughtful analyses and collaboration as we reflect on our experiences and our writing processes as a whole.

### ESSAY PROMPT: (750-1000 words)

Write an essay that incorporates at least one of the readings and responds to one of the following prompts.

- Describe a transformative moment in your life that shifted your view of the world. Go beyond description to analyze why this instance is significant to the person you are today.
- Write about a moment in which language, writing, or reading played a major role in your life – for better or worse. Analyze the importance of this moment and explain how it has affected you as an individual and changed your view of language.

### YOUR AUDIENCE:

- You will be writing this essay for your classmates and myself. We are your intended audience. Peer review for this assignment will be less about mechanics and more about recognizing and fine-tuning major ideas, using descriptive language to show meaning, clearly emphasizing the importance of a topic, addressing the prompt, and helping each other create compelling writing.

### EXPECTATIONS:

- You must directly quote at least one of the texts we've read to help you contextualize the topic you choose and relate your essay back to our readings. This can mean using definitions or critical moments from the text, putting your experiences in conversation with those of the authors we've discussed, or any other thoughtful use of your annotations and readings.
- Go beyond mere *description*. Give your reader an engaging *analysis* of the topic you chose. The authors in our readings have used various "lenses" (culture, gender, language, identity) to shape their texts and explain why certain moments were transformative from both a personal and a social context, and you should feel free to use these elements (or any of your own) to explain to us how this particular experience was significant for you.
- Demonstrate careful editing to make your paper "reader friendly" and appropriately academic.
- Follow the formatting conventions that are listed in the syllabus, and refer to Purdue OWL for MLA standards.

A strong paper will show critical thinking and a depth of meaning in many ways, including by **showing rather than summarizing events**. Strong papers organize and structure the author's thoughts in a way that makes it easy for us to follow main points and WHY the topic is significant.

### TIPS TO CONSIDER FOR DRAFTING:

- In your writing process, you may want to ask questions: Who were you before this experience? What did you gain or lose? Was there a critical choice involved? Were circumstances within or outside of your control? How was language a part of this experience, or how can language give voice to its meaning?
- Review your annotations on articles we read. Consider the excerpts that stood out most to you. As these authors have done, your essay should show your audience how your own experience was meaningful.
- Reflect on your reactions as you formulate your critical autobiography. You have already done "pre-drafting" work and generated many ideas. You are more than welcome to use these as a starting point for this essay.
- I encourage you to take risks and stretch yourself, though please be sure to choose a topic that you are comfortable sharing, and we will all be respectful of classmates' papers during the peer review process.

### DUE DATES:

- Mandatory First Draft of 750 words or more: 11:59p Tuesday 6/25
- Mandatory Peer Review Feedback Due: 11:59p Thursday 6/27
- Final Draft: Due via TurnItIn on Canvas by 11:59pm Sunday 6/30