

Language & Literacy Narrative



As people tell literacy stories, they also formulate their own sense of self; with each telling, this self changes. — Cynthia Selfe

Overview

This assignment invites you to critically reflect on your past experiences with language and literacy and to then tell the story of one specific moment you select.

Length, Genre, and Audience

625 - 750 words | Narrative | Classmates + Teachers

Due Dates

FULL draft:

FINAL draft:

PORTFOLIO draft:

Notes



Assignment Introduction

Our perspectives on language and literacy don't arise out of thin air. How and why we learned and presently "do" speaking, reading, and writing depends on our individual backgrounds, experiences, and motivations: where and how we grew up and what we want out of life, language, and literacy.

And it depends on societal realities, including dominant beliefs that deem some language "good" and others not. We never speak, read, or write in isolation—there is always some history, issue, person, structure, institution, standard, or belief system affecting our language and literacy habits and choices.



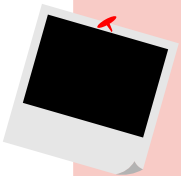
One way to reflect on the reading, writing, and language experiences that shape a part of who we are today is to **reflect** on and then **narrate** these experiences.

First: Choose Just One Moment

For this assignment, you're asked to **zoom into one particular moment** from your life where language and literacy played a major role.

What moments stand out to you when it comes to how you learned and/or currently use language and literacy? Perhaps you might recall:

- a family, cultural, school, or social event related to reading or writing that you found enlightening, encouraging, awkward, challenging, or unjust?
- a key language or literacy moment when positive or negative emotions soared, where you struggled or triumphed?
- an object or artifact that serves as a memory of a place, activity, or person connected to your language and literacy development?



Later: Connect Your Experience to Something Bigger

For this assignment, you're also asked to **decipher the larger social significance** of your story. After all, we don't learn language or literacy in a vacuum. Our individual narratives reflect larger trends in society and history.

- What lessons does your narrative teach readers about society, public/private education, and common/shared beliefs?
- What lessons does it teach readers about your culture, generation, gender, race, linguistic background, ability, and/or where and when you live?



Instructor's Learning Goals

1. Narrow Your Story's Focus to a Specific Moment from Your Life

Narrowing down what we choose to write about is hard. Select just one specific moment that stands out to you (or maybe two). The moment/example should be focused on language and literacy. And it should be a subject matter that you are comfortable sharing.

2. Provide Rich Description & Details about Your Selected Moment

Telling stories that draw readers in is hard. Practice appealing to audiences by bringing them into the moment, providing rich description and details so they see what you saw, hear what you heard, smell what you smelled, feel what you felt, and think what you thought.

3. Provide Explicit Comments on the Implications of Your Story

Making connections between our own lives and larger societal systems and trends is hard. Practice incorporating questions or statements into your narrative that will encourage your readers to think about the larger significance and societal implications of your story.

4. Personalize Your Use of Language and Media

Making your writing feel like you is important. You're encouraged to carefully consider your tone and language choices. As you see fit, draw on your "native," "home," or "other" languages, literacies, and ways of being. And to fit within today's digital age, practice creating a multimodal narrative by incorporating two or more images, memes, graphics, charts, and/or hyperlinks that connect with or extend your narrative.

5. Practice Specific College-Level Writing Goals

- Practice reflection and self-assessment (see Self-Assessment Prompt).
- Meet the assignment deadlines for rough and revised drafts.
- Meet the length requirements.
- Participate in the peer review process.
- Practice revising based on feedback.



Your Learning Goals

Identify 1-3 learning goals you want to set for yourself.

Identifying your own learning goals is an important part of developing as a writer. Your goals could be about trying something new, managing your time, changing your process, changing how/where you work, avoiding procrastination, utilizing a resource, building confidence, overcoming a challenge, sharing your writing, or something else altogether.

Later, you will assess how well you have met the goals set by your instructor and by you.

Goal (What)	Rationale (Why)

