

Composition: Personal Paper

Required:

- 600 - 1000 words
- narrative (event) plus reflection (comment on event)
- typed, double-spaced
- shared (anonymously) in silent readaround

Process:

1. **Prewrite** (choose topic and brainstorm parts to include)
2. **Draft** (write body paragraphs)
3. **Revise** (introduction, conclusion; add/remove/reorganize as needed)
4. **Edit** (polish spelling, grammar, punctuation: 200-word challenge!)
5. **Publish** (turn in for grade and anonymous readaround)

Option #1: Write a **personal narrative** about a significant event in your life: an event you can remember in detail, and one that influences who you are today.

Option #2: Write a **personal essay** for college or scholarship applications. (If the rules for your school/scholarship do not permit at least 500 words, write on two or more topics.)

Option #3: *If you have a future opportunity that will require a different kind of personal writing, please discuss with MsB; projects like a formal business plan or job application letter may also be suitable for this assignment.*

"This story should be about PEOPLE, the DECISIONS they make, and the CONSEQUENCES that follow." --NIU Writing Center

Personal Narrative: What to include

Situations or events that led up to the event

Where/when the main action started

How old you were

What you intended or expected to happen

Background information that will help us understand the situation and events:

Who, What, When, Where, How, Why

Background information we need to understand why it is significant to you

Who was involved (star* most important)

Places where things happened (star* most important)

Mini-events that make up the overall event (star* most important)

Sensory details (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell) that are strong in your memory:

people, place/s, objects, events, actions, reactions (star* most important)

Dialogue you remember: what people said

Anything especially funny / sweet / scary / confusing / memorable

At key moments, exactly what you were thinking / feeling

What you understood about the experience at the time

What other people thought/think about the experience

What you understand about it now

What went into your decision/s or reactions (values, advice, emotions,
information, misinformation...)

How it all turned out in the end

How it affects you now

Why this event is significant/meaningful

_____ add categories here!

_____ and here!

_____ and here!

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