

Narrative #1: The 'Who Am I NOW and Here?' ESSAY 2016

Playwright Oscar Wilde quipped, “Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.”

Another great British writer, Thom Yorke of Radiohead asks “What the hell am I doin’ here?/I don’t belong here.”

As you likely noticed, questions of identity and environment fueled our summer reading texts. These narratives present protagonists struggling to understand who they are and who they can become. In these novels, the narrators labor to understand the influence of place upon identity and the importance of clearly considering critically the opinions of external authorities eager to impose their ideas upon the identities of the young.

We tend to believe that unfamiliar narratives can drive us to a better, deeper understanding of what it means to be human while also leading us to a fuller understanding of who we are as individuals.

So, then, who are *you* now and here?

Consider the stories that define who you are. Narrow your contemplation to those moments in which you derived a greater understanding of yourself. If possible, concentrate on a moment that revealed your relationship to your environment, or revealed aspects of your character that differed from the perceptions of those who perceived you. Or, following the lead of the Arctic Monkeys, recall a moment in which you could say, “Whatever people say I am, that’s what I’m not.”

Assignment: Write a personal narrative that recounts a moment in which you learned something about who you are.

Remember: your familiarity with the events in your tale can cause problems unless you remember to meet the demands of an audience that was not present at the events. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the narrator present and describe characters clearly? Do characters possess distinct characteristics? Is the identity of the narrator established?
- Does the story revolve around a central conflict? Is suspense developed? Is there a clear climax to the conflict?
- Is the story complete? Does it contain a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Does the narrator reveal the specific setting clearly? Is the exposition (time and place of the action + introduction of major characters) sufficient?
- Are the journalistic questions (who? what? when? where? why? how?) answered clearly throughout?

- Are there sufficient and relevant descriptive details that would locate an audience in the narrative through their senses?
- Has the author used any figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, symbol, allusion, etc.) effectively?
- Are grammatical transitions (between paragraphs) and dramatic transitions (in time and place) clear?
- Does the story mean anything? Can it yield a point, a theme? Is it stated explicitly? What is the rhetorical purpose in telling the tale?

Length: 2 pages in MLA ms format

Important Dates:

All portions of this exercise submitted for peer or instructor review must be word-processed in MLA manuscript format.

N.B. Please save paper by learning to produce **double-sided** copies of all work.

August 21/22- Narrative I: The “Who Am I Now and Here?” Essay assigned

August 23/24- Peer Review Draft due

Prior to class on this date, you will upload your work to Turnitin.com. On this date you will bring to class three (3) copies of a “final” draft, the draft you would normally submit to your instructor. One copy of your draft will be submitted to your instructor, while the others will be submitted to the members of your Peer Review Team.

August 25/28- Peer Review #1 due

Prior to class on this date, you will upload your work to Turnitin.com. On this date you will bring to class the essay you have annotated AND two (2) copies of the first Peer Review that you have written in response to a Peer Review Draft that you have considered. You will mention both the strong and weak points of the work you have considered, citing specific examples and providing specific recommendations. One copy will be submitted to your teacher, while the other will be given to the author you have reviewed.

August 29/30- Peer Review #2 due

Prior to class on this date, you will upload your work to Turnitin.com. On this date, your second Peer Review is due. Do not forget to bring two (2) copies of this work to class.

also- Metacritical Analysis Assigned

August 31/September 01- Instructor Review Drafts and Metacritical Analyses due

Prior to class on this date, you will upload your work to Turnitin.com. On this date you will submit to your instructor the Instructor Review Draft and all the materials that have contributed to the development of the Instructor Review Draft, excluding Peer Reviews you have written for other writers. You will also submit a brief guided assessment of your Instructor Review Draft, in which you discuss your narrative essay’s strengths and weaknesses.