**LCCC English 162 - Literacy Narrative Essay Assignment**

Your task is to think about yourself as a reader and/or a writer. You must examine your reading/writing experiences and pick out memories of events that shaped the kind of reader and writer you are today. You should consider both positive and negative experiences you have had with reading and writing. Embarrassing or frustrating moments can be just as interesting to your audience as academic triumphs.

**Content**: Your literacy narrative must be both reflective and analytical. As a narrative, your essay must map out your experiences with reading and writing through specific events, people, and details. Simply making a bunch of general statements about loving/hating reading and writing will NOT be sufficient. You do not have to cover your ENTIRE history with reading and writing; choose a select number of events, individuals, or texts that have influenced your perspective on literacy.

**Detail**: In part, being “analytical” means being attentive to important details; after all, if you want a comprehensive understanding of a story or issue, you need to have detailed knowledge of it. Your story does not have to be a literary masterpiece by any stretch; however, if you want to engage your audience, you should focus on specifics and then use those specifics to explore more general issues—in this case—literacy.

**Significance**: Strong narratives do more than simply entertain (though entertainment is an important and essential feature of storytelling). Since this assignment is a literacy narrative, your story should say something about your experience with language, reading, or writing. In other words, your story should answer the all important question: “So what?” If everyone understands the significance/relevance of what you have said, you have surpassed expectations. If no one understands, then you either need more content or your story really is not relevant.

**Coherence**: Your narrative should be clearly written, logically organized, and easily understandable with language suitable for an academic audience (the audience is the class – you will be reading these essays to the class). Your narrative should also flow as a story, with each event or experience clearly related to the last one. You should also demonstrate an ability to write simple, compound, and complex sentences without losing your reader in a jumble of words.

**The Plan**: In order to create a five (5) page paper from your experiences with reading and writing, you will be placed in a group to discuss your experiences at different phases of your life. I will provide leading questions to spark your memory, but, I suggest, you also talk to family members about your early experiences. After four class periods of thinking about your experiences in various ways, you will begin to write.

**The Presentation:** Upon completion of this essay, you will read it aloud to the class. You do not need to memorize it but read the essay with fluency.

**Literacy Narrative – Pre-Writing 1**

**Early Experiences at Home (prior to 1st grade)**

What are your earliest memories of reading and writing? Did you read cereal boxes, baseball cards, etc?

Who read to you when you were very young? Where did they read to you? What did they read to you? How did you feel being read to?

What were your favorite childhood books? What kind of books were in your home? Where were they—in your room, in a play room, in the living room, all over the place?

Did you read magazines or comic books?

What texts did people in your house talk about (newspapers, novels, song lyrics, etc)?

Why did you read? For pleasure, out of boredom, because you were forced to?

What are your first memories of writing—your name, the alphabet?

Did you keep a diary? Did you write poems or stories on your own? What was your motivation for writing these things?

Did you have a library card as a young child? Did you visit your local library or attend library programs (reading time)? What are your memories from the local library?

Did you ever “publish” your writing? Did you show it to a family member or friend, mail it to someone, post it on the refrigerator, perform it, enter it in contests, tuck in into a drawer and read it again later?

Who did you see reading when you were a child? What adults or other kids did you think of as “good readers” and what made you think that about them?

Where did you do your independent reading? Under the bedcovers with a flashlight? At the kitchen table? In a beanbag chair? At the library?

Did you ever write letters? Did you ever have a pen pal?

What negative experiences did you have with reading or writing? What positive experiences did you have with reading or writing?

**Literacy Narrative – Pre-Writing 2**

**Experiences during your Early School Years (Grades 1-6)**

Did you get placed in a reading group at school? What was that experience like?

Did you participate in reading and/or writing contests at school?

What topics do you remember writing about in elementary school? Did you have a favorite?

What stories do you remember reading in elementary school? Did you have a favorite?

Do you remember visiting the school library? What books did you like to check out of the school library?

Do you remember the Book Fairs in elementary school? Did you attend those? Did you buy books? Do you remember what books you bought? Do you still have them?

Do you remember the monthly book order forms (Scholastic)? Were you excited to get those? Did you order books? What books do you remember ordering? Do you still have them?

What do you remember reading on the walls of your elementary classrooms? The helper of the day? The lunch menu? The daily schedule? Posters?

Did you create class books? What do you remember creating? Did you bring them home to share with your parents?

Did you write journals in class?

Tell any story about reading or writing events in elementary school.

**Literacy Narrative – Pre-Writing 3**

**Middle School and High School Experiences**

Think about both written and reading assignments and projects you have had in middle school and high school. Do you remember any particular stories, poems, novels, essays, plays, etc? Do you remember any particular writings, essays, journals, stories, etc?

Tell a story about reading and /or writing in your 7th grade English class.

Tell a story about reading and /or writing in your 8th grade English class.

Tell a story about reading and /or writing in your 9th grade English class.

Tell a story about reading and /or writing in your 10th grade English class.

Tell a story about reading and /or writing in your 11th grade English class.

How did your reading experiences change from elementary to middle school and high school?

How did your writing experiences change from elementary to middle school and high school?

Where are you today in terms of your reading and writing abilities? Are you where you think you should be? Are you advanced? Are you behind? What most concerns you about your abilities? What abilities make you most proud?

**Literacy Narrative Pre-Writing 4**

**Technological Experiences**

What is your earliest memory of using a computer? Did you play computer games that aided in your reading/writing?

What websites did you/do you like to visit and read?

Do you use websites for writing?

Did you/do you maintain accounts on Facebook, Twitter, etc? Do you contribute writings to these accounts?

Do you email or message others? For what purpose?

Do you use technology more for reading or writing?

Do you text on your phone?

Do you read books, magazines, newspapers on a phone, Kindle, iPad, etc? Has this made you a better reader? Is this a better way to read?

Does technology help or hinder your reading and writing skills?

Tell about any experiences you have had with technology in regards to reading.

Tell about any experiences you have had with technology in regards to writing.