

English 1000 Essay Assignments

Essay One: Narration (100 Points)

Our primary text uses a combination of narration and research to inform its reader. For example, chapters focusing on Reggie or Terryl are mostly narrative. Taking these chapters as your model, tell a story from your childhood or teenage years that has been important to you in some way, after the fact. Your goal is to entertain your audience, and also help them understand how this story fits into the larger picture of your life, or your community (family, school, work, etc.). You might choose something that you find funny in retrospect, a moment that really changed who you are or the way your life looks to you, or an incident that exemplifies who you are, or what your community is like.

Keep in mind that a good Narrative Essay will use plenty of vivid details that appeal to your reader's senses, and will also have a controlled focus on just one person/event/memorable period in your life. Don't attempt to tell the WHOLE story of your childhood, since, unlike Richtel, you're not writing an entire book (yet).

Goals: Overall essay organization, focusing on a central theme. Awareness of audience. Use of appropriate details to illustrate a story. Correct grammar and accurate proofreading.

Length: 3-5 pages.

Due for peer review on 9/14.

Due to me for feedback on 9/16, both hard copy in class and via Safe Assign on Blackboard.

Essay Two: Close Reading and Response (100 Points)

Richtel's book uses a combination of narration (story-telling) and research to build a complex picture of the issue he's examining. For this essay, choose one of the chapters we've read so far titled "The Neuroscientists" and re-read it very closely. Do a double-entry notebook exercise and heavily annotate the chapter. Then, write an essay of three to five pages in which you summarize the chapter in your own words and then respond to it with your personal reactions. Is this information new to you? Was some of it difficult to understand? Did any of it seem like commonsense? Your essay should be no more than half summarizing, and at least half responding with your own thoughts and reactions. You will also begin to use direct quotes from the text to support your work.

Goals: Ability to summarize a text. Appropriate use of quotations. Ability to shape a coherent response to complex material. Useful paragraph organization. Correct grammar and accurate proofreading.

Length: 3-5 pages

Due for peer review on 10/10.

Due to me for feedback on 10/12. (remember—hard copy AND on Safe Assign).

Essay Three: In Class Essay (100 Points)

This essay is a research essay, but it is not an opinion essay. For this essay, you will choose a local ballot issue to research: a local school levy, a town council position, an elected Sherriff position, etc. With prior approval, you may also choose a state-wide issue that will be on the ballot in November. Your job for this essay will be to accurately summarize what is at stake, who supports each/every side or candidate, and why. You may also consider what the impact of different outcomes would be on your local community. For example, if a school levy vote passes or fails, what will be the impact on people with a fixed income who pay property taxes, or on students who attend the school?

Sources for this assignment will include local papers, interviews with local officials, and larger resources such as the League of Women Voters website.

You will be able to prepare—take notes, make an outline, etc. It will be a timed essay, but it will be open book and you will be allowed to work from your prepared outline, if you wish.

Goals: Ability to conduct self-directed research on a focused topic. Clear presentation of researched material to an appropriate audience. Beginning use of citations. Holistic organization in the service of that presentation. Correct grammar and accurate proofreading.

The essay will be done during class on **Wednesday, 11/2**. If you miss class that day, you will also miss the essay, unless you are absent for a documented illness.

Essay Four: Making an Argument (150 Points)

You've finished reading *A Deadly Wandering*. Congratulations! How do you feel about the book? Do you agree with the author's final conclusions? Write an essay, four to six pages in length, that attempts to persuade an audience of other college freshmen of your position on the topic of cell phones and driving.

Be careful to have a clear thesis statement, with specific reasons supporting it. Work to provide convincing evidence to support your reasons. Examples of evidence you could use include personal experience, friends and family, things you've learned from other courses, or logical reasoning, as well, of course, as any information or quotes from the book that you'd like to use. You may do additional research for this paper, if it is relevant and useful, but you **MUST** tell your reader where that information comes from, and use quotation marks when you use a source's words.

Goals: Ability to state a clear, argumentative thesis and keep an essay focused around that central thesis. Use of appropriate supporting evidence, including quotations and summaries of outside information. Beginning use of MLA citations and works cited page. Correct grammar and accurate proofreading.

English 1000 Essay Assignments

Length: 4-6 pages

Due for peer review on 11/28.

Due to me for feedback **only during conferences!** The final version of this paper will be turned in with your Final Portfolio. (Remember—hard copy AND on Safe Assign).

General Guidelines:

All of your essays (except the in class one) should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font, with standard formatting. That means double spacing, with no extra spaces between paragraphs, and one inch margins. You can look at the sample student paper at the end of the MLA section in your handbook for a visual example.

I will not give you your initial grade with my feedback unless you turn in your work on time. If you miss the due date on any essay, you may instead bring a copy of your draft to my office hours, where we can go over it together. Essays One and Two may all be revised for your Final Portfolio, for a completely new grade. Essay Three will only be written once. Essay Four may be revised with my in-person feedback during our final conference before being turned in with your Final Portfolio.

Please take some time to review the University's policy on plagiarism, available on the syllabus. If you are ever unsure about your own work, or are worried that you might be plagiarizing accidentally, please come talk to me about it right away—if you do, that's a learning opportunity. If you don't, that's a failing grade.

On Essays One and Two, I will give you written feedback to help direct your revision process. This feedback won't find every error or misspelled word on your paper and circle it in red. Instead, it will point out patterns in your work and make suggestions for improvement. If you would like more feedback, please feel free to come see me with your paper during my office hours, or visit a tutor in the Learning Center (or both!).