

Writing a Personal Essay

Assignment

Your assignment is to write a multi-paragraph reflective essay about a significant personal experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals, being sure to describe the experience and your immediate response to it, as well as to reflect on the significance of the experience.

Planning and Prewriting: Brainstorm an event, select the best choice, and plan your structure.

- How will you brainstorm and select an experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals (list several and evaluate, discuss possible experiences with a peer, etc.)?
 - How will you organize the elements of your experience so there is a clear progression from event to response to reflection?
 - What can you “borrow” from examples that you’ve read in this unit to help you plan your writing?

Drafting: Determine how to include the elements of a successful essay.

- How can you provide descriptive details that capture the event and your feelings during that time?
 - What techniques from this unit can you use, such as introductory epigraphs, dialogue, and action?
 - Does your reflective commentary reveal that you gained some insight from the experience?

Evaluating and Revising Your Draft: Review and improve your work.

- How will you review your pre-writing to ensure that your draft's structure follows your plan?
 - How clearly does your experience connect to the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals?
 - What kind of feedback from others, such as peers, will help you to know what needs to be added, removed, or changed?

Checking and Editing for Publication: Confirm that your final draft is ready.

- How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy?
 - How can you use the Scoring Guide to confirm that you are ready to publish the essay?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:

- What sort of creative steps did you take to shape your experience to the structure of a narrative essay? (Experience, Response, Reflection)
 - How did connecting your own experience to a larger theme like the pursuit of happiness help you to see it in a new way?

My Notes

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SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> details a significant personal experience about the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals presents an explicit description of how the author felt at the time, using carefully chosen words to convey those emotions shows a mature and insightful understanding of the significance of the experience to the author. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes an experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals describes clearly how the author felt at the time of the experience reveals the significance of the experience to the author. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes an experience, but the connection to the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals may be unclear may describe how the author felt at the time of the experience, but the description may be on the surface level attempts to convey the significance of the experience to the author. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes an experience, but there is no connection to the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals does not describe how the author felt at the time of the experience struggles to convey the significance of the experience to the author.
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flows in a logical fashion; the reader can easily identify the experience, the author's reaction, and the reflection is unified effectively and provides a feeling of satisfaction in the end. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is organized in such a way that the reader can identify the description of the experience, the author's reaction, and the reflection connects all elements into a cohesive whole and a clear ending. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is confusing so that the reader may not be able to identify the significant experience, the author's reaction, and the reflection struggles to tie all the pieces together, and may end abruptly. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lacks organization, description of a significant experience, the author's reaction, or the reflection does not tie all the pieces together or provide an ending.
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices that are notable and appropriate for the subject, purpose, and audience contains few errors in standard writing conventions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices that are appropriate for the subject, purpose, and audience contains errors in standard writing conventions that are minor and do not interfere with meaning. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices less effectively for the subject, purpose, and audience contains errors in standard writing conventions that interfere with meaning. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices simplistically for the subject, purpose, and audience contains errors in standard writing conventions that seriously interfere with meaning.