

Personal Narrative Assignment

Our first essay consists of a personal narrative based on your own experiences or an event in the life of somebody you know. In completing this assignment, follow the steps below:

1. Think about what kind of personal narrative you'd like to write. In doing this, please consider the categories of stories Jack M. Bickman describes in *Writing the Short Story*, which we discussed together in class. Below are Bickman's main categories:
 - **Conflict Stories:** In the story of conflict, the central character selects some specific story goal, the attainment of which will, he thinks, make him happy. But someone else in the story opposes his quest, and so there is a struggle. In the end, the two major opposing characters have an ultimate face-off of some kind, and someone wins... and someone loses.
 - **Decision Stories:** In this type of story, the central character has a problem that must be fixed or need that must be fulfilled if he is to be happy again. Solving the problem or fulfilling the need requires the character to make a decision. But often he is not at all clear what the exact dimensions of the decision might be. He is befuddled and confused. In the end, having perhaps made several small decisions during the course of the story, he must take some action – make some major decision that may be life-changing.
 - **Discovery Stories:** In the story of discovery, the major character is adrift or puzzled or without clear story goals – or any combination thereof. Finally, he comes to some major discovery that has the potential to change his life forever.
2. In addition to the categories above, you may draw some inspiration from The New York Times' 550 Prompts for Narrative Writing. This is not required, but you may find it helpful. The link is below:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/04/learning/550-prompts-for-narrative-and-personal-writing.html>

3. Write your draft. Your draft should be a minimum of 1-2 pages long. You may refer to the videos we watched in class as well as our book, *Focus on Writing* for guidance (Chapter 15b, pages 246-254). The link to the video is below:

<https://youtu.be/IQAjlxFuS9c>

Remember that the due date for your draft is **Friday, February 26 (11:59PM)**.

4. On Tuesday, March 2, we will discuss your drafts and you will receive feedback. Make sure you make an appointment to work with a tutor in revising your essay.
5. The final copy of your personal narrative essay is due by **Friday, March 12 (11:59PM)**. Your essay should be 4-6 pages long and it should follow MLA formatting rules (the Basic MLA Formatting rules handout).