

Summer Writing Assignment

English Department
For incoming Seniors

This summer, instead of doing the same Daily Writing assignment you have done the last few years, you will continue to generate and develop some personal narratives.

You need to bring THREE fully developed personal stories, typed and printed, to your first day of Senior English. This will count as half of your summer reading grade.

During the first few weeks of senior year, you will get feedback on these pieces from your teachers and your peers. Then the English Department, along with our college counselor, will help you further develop one of them into a college essay. DO NOT, however, think about the restrictions, format, or audience of a college essay while you are writing this summer. Instead, just focus on writing three compelling stories from your life.

For inspiration, Google “Personal Narrative Prompts” and poke around. Try writing a first draft without stopping. Then when you go back to read it again, think about how best to “develop” it:

1. Write a new draft where you either finish the piece or make big changes. This is the phase where you should experiment. Here are a few ideas if you feel stuck:
 - a. Try a different tone
 - b. Add a “missing scene”
 - c. Focus on one part of the story and give a lot of details (five senses!)
 - d. Make a connection between your story and something outside of your life.
2. Show your work to someone you trust—friends or family—to give you feedback.
3. Make a new draft: again, don’t be afraid to make big changes.
4. Be honest, be open, and have fun with this!

Here are some things to think about:

POINT OF VIEW: Obviously the story will be from your point of view, but how much do you want to highlight the fact that you are looking back, or point out what you knew then vs. what you know now?

REFLECTION: How are you balancing good storytelling with reflection? How much of each do you want to include? Another way to think about this is there should be parts of your piece that are very concrete and some parts that are more abstract.

INTEREST LEVEL: What tools are you using to draw in your reader? Metaphors and similes? Vivid imagery? Dialogue? Humor?

CONNECTION: what can others relate to? What are you sharing that is personal or vulnerable? What range of emotions are you sharing? Any unexpected emotions?