

**English 1301**  
**Essay #1: Personal Narrative of Work and Class**

**Important Dates**

Thursday, January 30—discuss guidelines for Essay #1

Tuesday, February 4—conferences for Essay #1 (no class); bring draft or outline

Thursday, February 6, Tuesday, February 11—student draft review (for assigned students only)

Thursday, February 13—Writer’s Workshop (at least two typed pages due)/revision activity

Tuesday, February 18—final draft due (on Blackboard)

**Essay Prompt**

For your first assignment, you will be composing a personal narrative about your experiences with work and/or social class. For this essay, you will focus on a very specific event that represents an important moment in your life related to your work or class history. Do not try to narrate your entire life story. Instead, you should focus on a very specific moment or event when you realized something about your status as a worker or your social class. Perhaps you will write about your first job and how it was so different than your expectations. Maybe there was a moment, when you were growing up, that your class status became evident. Whatever you choose to write about, explore your memories and experiences, and try very hard to find a moment that, upon reflection, reveals something to you (and readers) about your life. In writing your narrative, keep these strategies in mind:

- **Tell a story:** Be specific. Ground your writing in the events of your life. Consider moments when your views of the world were formed, tested, or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*.
- **Be brief:** Your narrative should be brief—no more than two-to-three pages.
- **Focus on work and/or social class.** Remember this is not a narrative of your entire life; instead, it is a very specific story about an experience you had when your working life or social class status became evident or important.
- **Be personal:** Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. Try reading your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your experience and the way you speak. As Ballenger tells us in your textbook, try to find your voice. And since this is *your* story, you should use the first person.

**Criteria**

A successfully written essay will meet the following criteria:

- Length of the essay will be **two-to-three pages**;
- The writing should be **typed, double-spaced, with proper MLA formatting and heading**;
- As guidance, students should use **Chapter 3**, “Writing a Personal Narrative,” from their textbooks;
- Remember that personal narratives should include 1) **a well-told story**; and 2) **specific and vivid details and description**;
- All students must bring in a **two-page rough draft** of their essay on **Thursday, February 13**, for the Writer’s Workshop. Not having a draft on this day and not participating in the workshop will result in a full grade deduction on the final essay and missed lab credit;
- It should be clear that students have made **revisions** in each stage of their writing. In other words, the rough draft and final draft should not be the same exact paper;
- Please use **strong grammar, punctuation, and spelling**; and
- Students will turn in their final drafts through Blackboard and via e-mail by class time on **Tuesday, February 18**. Please retain all stages of writing (prewriting, rough drafts, final draft, etc.) in case I need to review it.