WR 115: Essay Instructions

ESSAY FORMAT:

All essays should have a heading, which includes your name, the class name (WR115) and hour, my name, the essay number and the date. This will ensure that your work gets to me and that I'll know which essay is which!

Essays are typed, double spaced. Side margins no more than 1.25 inches. Justify only the left margin. The first lines of all paragraphs should be indented. Do not skip extra lines between paragraphs: if you can't reach minimum page number, show me what you have, and I will help. Font size 12. Final drafts of essays will be turned in, in a folder, with all work done on the essay, including freewriting and all drafts.

We will do a warm up activity or activities in class to prepare you for each essay. Samples will be up on my instructor webpage, on our WR 115 page.

FIRST DRAFTS:

There will be a workshop on each essay approximately one week before the essay is due. Presence and thoughtful participation in the workshop gain you activity points each workshop. If you do not have your first, typed draft ready to share at each workshop, you will lose points for that workshop.

REWRITES:

When you revise an essay, always turn in the original essay with my comments. You revise for more points. I especially encourage rewrites for students who have received a B or lower on an essay. I reward revision (changes made for the better) with one or more additional points and will never lower a grade on a revised essay. I will never take points away.

I am always available to give you feedback on early drafts, even just ideas. Contact me!

ESSAY I  Personal Essay

This is the personal essay: the focus is you. Actually, the focus is on how you learned or discovered something. For instance, students in the past have written about how they learned to read, or a favorite place to go camping every summer, or the person who they feel influenced them the most, or a favorite object, or an important event like the birth of a child, death of a friend, end or beginning of a relationship.

Use vivid detail, careful explanation, description using as many of the five senses as possible. These are the ways you will engage a reader. With effort, you can learn to write a fun essay on even the most boring topic by using vivid description and detail. The key is to be specific. Also consider what you want your reader to understand about why this topic is important to you. Your essay should be 3-4 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced.
ESSAY II  Exposition Essay

This is the exposition essay, which simply means that you will explain something. Choose a topic that really interests you. Consider current events or past events that still affect us or may be connecting to things happening now (like how the Vietnam War might relate to today's war in Iraq/Afghanistan). Consider ongoing issues like steroids in sports, abortion, gay rights, technology, anything you feel is important.

Your reader will think your topic is important if you make clear to them why it should be. Use specific examples, careful explanation, vivid detail, real people or populations. You must use at least one outside source and cite it according to MLA style. We will practice this in class.

You can take a stance and explain why you are right and your opponent is wrong, you can offer a compromise solution to a controversial subject, you can persuade your audience to take action, you can analyze why something has happened or is happening. Again, focus on what is important to you. What message do you want to send to your reader? What do you want to teach them?

Your essay should be 3-4 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. Remember to be 100% accurate about any material you quote, paraphrase, or summarize.