Essay #1: An imagining/visioning paper

Your textbook, *They Say I Say*, focuses on the idea that we all enter many types of “conversations” during our life; we listen to others, and, in turn, “put in our oar” and respond to what others say. This term you will read and reflect on many essays that I have posted in Moodle and a few in your textbook. One essay in your book, “The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream” by Barbara Ehrenreich, offers a rather sober look at the American Dream. Other authors are more optimistic, and we’ll explore all points of view.

Imagine your life around ten years from now. Where will you be and what will you be doing? What will be meaningful in your life? What is your “American Dream”? In order to achieve that American Dream, you will probably need some kind of advanced training or education. Will the classes you are taking at LBCC right now help you meet this goal? How so?

**The assignment:** Write an essay (about 900-1000 words, but you may exceed that number) reflecting on what has taken you to this point in your life, what describes your “American Dream,” and, finally, how you will achieve this dream. Parts of this paper, then, will need to include the following: a brief description of events leading up to the present, what you are currently doing to make this dream possible, what further steps you need to take to achieve your dream. *Make sure that your essay also includes reflection on why you will make these choices:* What values and beliefs will guide your decisions? How will these values and beliefs reflect your own “American Dream”? Use the guidelines below to make sure that you structure and format your paper correctly.

**Guidelines:**

- Organize your essay in a way that is clear and easy for readers to follow. Here is a suggested approach:
  - **Create an introduction** that lets readers know specifically how you envision your American dream at this moment in your life. What job or vocation are you aiming for? (1 to 2 paragraphs max) How can you engage readers at this point to make them want to keep reading?
  - **Then devote several paragraphs to helping readers understand how you have arrived at your decision to head in this direction.** You might, for example, put readers in touch with a situation from your childhood that influenced your interest in the career that you will be discussing. The primary rhetorical strategy for this section of the paper will be narrative/descriptive
  - **From there you should discuss the turning point moment,** or influential person, that led you to your current path. (This will be a paragraph in which you discuss what happened to take you from not focusing to focusing. Look at the sample essays in Moodle. Can you spot this moment in these essays?)
  - **Spend some time reflecting at this point in your paper.** *Analyze* how your life experiences have led you to consider a career in your chosen field. What values and beliefs do you hold that influenced your choice of a career?
Next, describe the nature of the vocation/career you have chosen and why you are well-suited to this career. Do some research online. What are the job responsibilities for this career? What qualities does a person need to be successful in this career? What qualities do you have that fit well with this career and what qualities might you still need to develop?

Include a reference to at least one article about your chosen field from our library databases or from a Google search. When you cite any outside information, be sure to attribute your source. In other words, tell us who said what and include an in-text citation next to that information (We will practice that some in class.) Follow the MLA guidelines outlined in the MLA section of Rules for Writers.

Next describe specifically what steps you will need to take to reach this goal. It will be helpful to include specific examples from your chosen field that will allow readers to understand why these are the right steps. (Again—see sample essays. You will use many rhetorical strategies for this section, among them: informative, process analysis, compare/contrast, descriptive, cause/effect, definition.)

Finally, craft an ending that provides readers with a satisfying sense of resolution. Did you come to any new understandings as you reflected on your past and your future? What is the most important point or insight you would like readers to gain from reading this paper?

- Edit carefully for unity, coherence, and grammar.

- Format your paper according to the guidelines outlined in your syllabus (note font requirements, heading, page numbers, etc.)

Checklist for final folder (Please include this checklist in your final folder):

- 1. Down draft (due Mon., Apr. 4, Wk 2)
- 2. Informal outline or prewriting (due Wed., Apr. 6, Wk 2)
- 3. First full typed draft (due Fri., Apr. 8, Wk 2)
- 4. Peer response (due Mon., Apr. 11, Wk 3)
- 5. Final draft (due Fri., Apr. 15, Wk 3)
- 6. Upload your final draft into the Turnitin link in Moodle (due Fri., Apr. 15, Wk 3)
- 7. Writer’s reflection: In about one page, double-spaced, respond to the following questions:
  1. What was your overall goal when writing/revising this essay?
  2. Explain what you have changed (from the first draft to the final draft) and why you made these changes.
  3. Explain what you have not changed. Why did you not change those parts?
  4. What feedback (from Writing Desk, peer reviews, family members, friends, conferences with me, etc) influenced your revisions?
  5. How did class activities or multiple drafting influence your writing and revision?
  6. What do you think is especially good about this essay?
  7. What might be one thing you would want to change about this essay?
  8. What did you ultimately learn from writing/revising this essay?