

# Essay #1: Personal Narrative

## Summary of assignment

**Task:** Narrate an event or describe your interactions with a person you have encountered in your past work or community experiences.

**Length:** 800-1200 words

**Format:** APA

**Sources:** none required

## Outcomes you should achieve by completing this assignment

This essay gives you an opportunity to reflect on and write about your engagement with your work or community. As you complete the tasks required for this assignment, you will be working towards several of the course outcomes:

- Choose a topic of appropriate scope (Course outcome 1)
- Organize information clearly in narration of an event or description a person (Course outcomes 1 and 2)
- Use an introduction paragraph with a thesis statement and a concluding paragraph to frame an essay (Course outcomes 1 and 2)
- Demonstrate accurate grammar and mechanics in writing (Course outcome 3)
- Participate in the process of receiving feedback and revising your writing (Course outcome 1)

## Choosing a topic

When choosing a topic for this essay, think about a person or event in your work or community life that was important to you. Is there a person who taught you something, through words or actions, perhaps by setting either a good example or a bad one? Is there an event that challenged you or marked a turning point for you?

If you choose an event, make sure it is a well-defined event and not one that is too broad. For example, a confrontation with a coworker could make a good topic; it is a well-defined event that takes place over a short period of time. On the other hand, a job you held for a year is not a well-defined event and covers too large of a time period. Many events happened to you in the course of that job, so try to identify one that was particularly meaningful.

You might consider these possibilities in selecting a topic:

- A situation you encountered at work or in your community that involved a failure

- A situation you encountered at work or in your community that involved an important victory
- A person (a supervisor or co-worker) who has been a mentor and/or contributed to your growth as a professional
- A person or event that represented a negative example of professionalism
- Your first day on a particular job and what you learned from that first day
- A situation in which you had to make an ethical choice at work or in your community

## Organizing your essay

Organize your essay into several paragraphs, including the following:

- an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement
- body paragraphs that support the thesis statement
- a concluding paragraph

## Point of view

For this essay, feel free to use “I” and “me” (first person point of view) in describing your experience. While you may have been discouraged from using first-person point of view in previous classes, please note that this essay is one that lends itself to first-person point of view.

However, you should not write “to the reader” by using the pronoun “you” (second person point of view) in referring to the reader. You also should not use “you” to refer to various people. For example, instead of “At this job, you had to pay attention to detail,” you would write, “At this job, I had to pay attention to detail” or “At this job, employees had to pay attention to detail.”

## Formatting your essay

Use APA style to format your essay, including the following guidelines:

- Use one-inch margins.
- Double space.
- Use size 12 Times New Roman font.
- Include a running head.
- Include page numbers.
- Include a title page.

**Note:** An abstract is *not* required.

Step-by-step instructions for setting up your paper according to APA style can be found in the Effective Writing Center's [APA Manuscript Style video](#), also found in Week 1 of the course content.

## **Revising your essay**

You will submit at least two drafts of your essay. Your instructor will provide feedback on the first draft, and then you will revise and resubmit it. Your instructor may suggest more than two drafts.