

ENGLISH 101

ASSIGNMENTS

OPTION A

ENGLISH 101
LITERACY & THE SELF
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Essay #1 Guidelines: **Observation**

Using the techniques outlined on pages 54-55 of the *Prentice Hall Guide for College Writers* as well as the collecting strategies outlined on pages 77-85, write a **three to four-page** observation essay. The essays of Mowat (“Observing Wolves”) and Scudder (“Take this Fish and Look at It”) can be used as models, especially as regards to the use of detail. Notice that both authors shun the vague and emphasize the specific in all sensory details (sight, sound, smell, hearing, taste) to bring their writing to life.

For your observation essay, select a subject that you find of interest: a group of people, a place you frequent (the student union, the front steps of the library, the gymnasium), a park or zoo, a person, or a family pet or other animal. Consider the behavior of the people or creatures as though you were an outsider and search for details that you would normally have overlooked. For instance, at what times do the most smokers gather outside the Liberal Arts building on campus? How do the athletes on the basketball court pick teams? What does the local fishing pond *sound* like? Why does that monkey keep wandering around the cage in the same pattern? Look beyond the obvious.

Once you have finished your observation you need to consider what you witnessed and develop a thesis statement. What were you able to conclude from your observation? Is it that life around a simple fishing pond is far more complicated than it seems at first glance, or that the fishing pond is a restful place to visit? Is it that human behavior on the steps outside the library has predictable patterns? Whatever your conclusion, build toward it with the use of demonstrated details so that you can convince the reader of your point over the course of your paper.

Length: 3-4 pages

Due Dates:

Drafts for Peer Review
Drafts for Instructor
Final Copy

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Essay #2 Guidelines: **Description**

Essay #2 asks that you build on one of the 10 topics you identified during in class writing as being something you possess a “special knowledge” of. In your essay, tell readers how you gained that knowledge and how the way you gained it has affected what you know. How is your knowledge different from that of others who may have learned it differently?

Plan to see this essay in three parts: #1. how you gained the knowledge, #2. how the way you gained it has affected what you know, and #3. how your knowledge is *different* from that of others who may have learned it, or something about it, *differently* than you. To achieve seeing the essay in three parts, you will not want focus too heavily on the narrative of how you (#1) gained the knowledge: you will need to be concise in “telling” or giving the narrative history of how the knowledge was gained. You will also need to be descriptive in (#2) showing how the way you gained it affected what you know. And finally, you will need to define how (#3) this knowledge is different from someone else who may have learned it another way (this may consist of using comparison/contrast to make your points clear regarding that final aspect).

The purpose and goal of this essay is to closely examine the value of a specific knowledge you possess. We often underestimate “the things we know” and why they are important, the ways in which “the things we know” affect our lives, and how others may also desire to possess such knowledge.

Analyze your knowledge of something. Often, the smallest or seemingly insignificant details (or the ones we take for granted) are the most important and defining keys to understanding the possession of such knowledge.

Length: 4-6 pages

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Essay #3 Guidelines: **Evaluations**

For this writing assignment, you will need to locate and choose a campus or community organization that provides a service to a particular audience. Through observation, field research, interviews with organization administrators and those who have accessed the service, you will gain and spread knowledge about available community services; to inform audience about quality of services. For this particular assignment, consider your audience as community members unaware of a particular service that is provided by the organization.

For example, you may want to write an evaluation of the Career Counseling center on campus. As part of your evaluation, you will need to visit the center and find out what services they offer. You will also want to network with other students who are at the center to gain their perspective on the center's overall effectiveness.

The first place to begin is to perhaps spend some time looking through USI's website or student handbook to find out what organizations or services are available on campus.

Length: 4-6 pages

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Essay #4 Guidelines: **Proposal**

For this group writing assignment, you should begin pre-writing by listing problems on campus that your group has identified and that could have realistic solutions. After narrowing down your list to two or three issues, discuss the issues and assess which issues could potentially be solved. Consider the university as your audience. Your group will then choose one particular problem and identify who you should address the problem with at the university.

Working as a team of six, you will each be responsible for doing the basic research, surveys, or interviews with your peers on campus to create a proposal to the university. Your proposal will identify the problem, provide evidence supporting the continuance of the problem, address counterarguments to the problem, suggest a viable solution to the problem, create a vision of what the outcome could be if the solution is adopted, and a conclusion which succinctly asks the appropriate audience for consideration.

Keep in mind that the proposal must be suited to the appropriate university department, board, or administrative office that oversees issue.

Length: 6-8 pages (each team member will be responsible for doing the footwork on the proposal, writing one major section of the proposal, and revisions.)

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Final Copy