

Essay 2—A Presentation of an Event

Write a one to two page (250-600 words) essay in classic style that narrates and presents the significance of an event from your life.

Focus your essay on a single story or event; you may, if necessary, include *brief* references to earlier or peripheral incidents as well. Make a specific, explicit point about the significance of the event you present. In other words, tell your story and present it in a way that affects how your readers think about the particular problem or issue you raise in telling it.

A good story depends on a conflict that brings about change. Autobiographical narratives typically include either a conflict of self, or a conflict of perception, or a conflict of values. In conflicts of self, the writer changes as a result of some transforming event. In conflicts of perception, the writer's understanding of a person or situation changes because of a revealing moment. In conflicts of values, the writer confronts a person or situation that challenges or disrupts his world view. Identifying which type of conflict your story contains will help you present it more effectively.

Give your essay a thesis and a clear, logical organization. Do not simply list events in chronological order. You might, for example, structure your essay this way:

- Describe a vivid opening scene.
- Introduce the characters, background, and setting.
- Build the conflict through a series of scenes or incidents.
- Present the climax or pivotal moment when the conflict comes to a head.
- Reflect on the events and their significance.

The five autobiographical essays we will read (“Shooting an Elephant,” “University Days,” “Once More to the Lake,” “Salvation,” and “Coming Home Again”) can provide you with models of how professional writers have presented events in their own lives.

Write your essay in classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging.

Make every word count.

Initial Draft Due: October 10

(Bring THREE copies of your essay to class.)

Revised Draft Due: October 20

(Bring your Revised Draft, your Initial Draft with my comments on it, and all the Peer Critiques you received to class in a folder.)