

Identity Essay Guidelines

Discovery of who you are is one of the joys of writing and learning. For this first essay you must write an analytical descriptive narrative in which you relate the story of who you are. Who are you? What makes you tick? What has made you who you are today? What does the future hold? Who will you be ten years from now?

We have been working on the central pieces during class time. You have already written mini-essays on your name, your family, and on how you identify. Along with one of your reader responses, these mini-essays will form the body of your paper.

Outline

Section 1: Introduction

- a. Begin with a general overview of the topic.
 - i. Relate background information, tell a story, propose a question, define a key term, present an example, or draw an analogy.
- b. The final sentence must be the thesis statement.

Section 2: My Name, My Family, My Identity, Reader Response

- a. These four mini-essay make up the body of your paper.
- b. They may go in any order.
- c. You may add sections, paragraphs, sentences as needed.
- d. Before and after each mini-essay, you will need to add transitions linking the mini-essays together.
- e. Transitions must also mention and reflect the thesis.

Section 3: Conclusion

- a. These are your final words on the topic. What do you want the reader to remember?
 - i. Echo the strategy used in the introduction or choose a new one: Relate background information, tell a story, propose a question, define a key term, present an example, or draw an analogy.
 - ii. But for this essay in particular it might be interesting to conclude your essay by looking to the future. Who will you be ten years from now?
- b. Do not, I repeat, do not state, “In conclusion, . . .”
- c. Do not summarize your paper with phrases such as, “In this paper, I’ve shown . . .,” or “My paper has been about”

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement prepares the reader for what is to come. It is the main idea of your essay, and incorporates the range of information that your essay will discuss. A strong thesis statement states the essay's subject, an assertion about the subject, and is clearly written.

Thesis Statement Checklist

1. Does your thesis state the essay's main idea?
2. Does it indicate a focus and assert a particular point of view? In other words, why is the main idea important?
3. Is it written in specific language?

Putting It All Together: Transitions

1. Transitions link one section of your essay to another, and they also serve the purpose of reminding the reader of your thesis.
 - a. Restate the main point of what you've just written, and mention how that point leads to your next idea.
 - b. Try to echo the language used in your thesis.
2. The length and placement of transitions depends upon your particular essay.
 - a. Transitions may be one sentence at the end of a paragraph.
 - b. Transitions may be two to three sentences at the end of a paragraph.
 - c. Transitions may be one to three sentences at the end of a paragraph and one to three sentences at the beginning of the next paragraph.
 - d. Transitions may be at the beginning of the next paragraph.
 - e. Transitions may consist of one complete separate paragraph.

Paper Requirements

1. 3-8 pages in length. Typed and stapled. Use 12 pt Times New Roman.
2. The paper includes three sections:
 - a. An introduction with a thesis statement.
 - b. The body of the essay includes writings about your name, family, identity, and one reading journal entry.
 - c. Conclusion.
3. Turn in all drafts and the final version in a manila folder. Check the "Required Assignments Checklist" for the number drafts required and the specific due date.

In-Class Writing Assignments: Essay One

“My Name”

What does your name mean to you? Is there a story about why your parents gave you your particular name? Has your name been a source of strong feelings? If so, what feelings and how did they arise? Is there a childhood story associated with your name? Our names are central to how we view ourselves in society. Think about your name. What does it mean to you? What does it say about you? What is the history of your name? Answer one, all or none of the above questions. Write for fifteen minutes, non-stop.

“My Family”

Look at your family picture and describe what you see. Who is in the picture? What is their relationship to you? Why did you choose this picture? Have the people changed since the picture was taken? Have you changed since the picture was taken? How would you describe your relationship with the people in the photo? What emotions do the people in the photo make you feel? Think about your family. What do they mean to you? How has your family made you who you are? What is your family history? Answer, one, all, or none of the above questions. Write for fifteen minutes, non-stop.

“My Identity”

There are numerous ways to identify who we are. Who are you? How do you identify yourself to others? Who are you to your friends, to your family, to strangers? Who are you at school, work, or other locations such as church or the gym? What about race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ableness? Are any of these categories important to how you view yourself? If so, which ones and why? If not, why not? Think about your identity. How would you describe yourself? What does this description say about you? What is the history of your identity? Have you changed? Have you always been the same? Answer one, all, or none of the above questions. Write for fifteen minutes, non-stop.