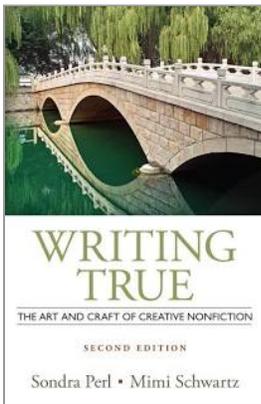


Summer Reading

Assignment Sheet

Email Ms. April Bacon at april.bacon@apps.stratford.org if you have any questions!



Text

Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction, **second edition**
(see cover at left). ISBN: 978-1133307433

Note: It is your responsibility to acquire this text. We will continue using it throughout the semester.

Important

1. Complete parts 2 and 3 in **a Google Document**. Share it with me at the above email address. When we begin school in the fall, you will also upload this Google Doc to Turnitin.com. As always, your work should be in MLA format and include your MLA header, including the running header.
2. Read this **entire** assignment sheet BEFORE you begin reading. It will save you a lot of time if you know what you are reading toward!
3. ALL parts of this assignment are **independent**. You may NOT work with another student – or anyone else – on them. You may NOT consult any outside sources, except where specifically noted for the vocabulary extension. All work must be *entirely* your own.

Part One: Reading and Annotation

Creative Nonfiction is a powerful genre because it pulls what is most potent from other genres: at times, it is deeply imaginative and expressive; at others, it is heavily research based and argumentative. Regardless of this breadth, *all* excellent works of creative nonfiction contain a unifying element: truth. There is an *art* to this truth, though, which requires seeing shape like a sculptor, understanding narrative like a storyteller, and listening for music like a songwriter. Lee Gutkind (via the motto of *Creative Nonfiction* magazine) defines the genre as “**True stories, well told.**” In this class, we will look at a number of “True stories, well told” that fit various sub-genres of Creative Nonfiction, beginning with the personal essay.

Read all of the essays from the **Personal Essay** section of the book (pages 208-255):

- “Being Brians,” by Brian Doyle
- “Mastering the Art of French Cooking,” by E.J. Levy**
- “Under the Influence,” by Scott Russell Sanders
- “Warring Memories,” by Kandi Tayebi
- “The Good Short Life,” by Dudley Clendinen
- “Book Marks,” by Rebecca McClanahan

****Complete the vocab extension in part three BEFORE reading Levy’s essay.**

Annotate as you read. There will be a **thorough annotation check** upon return to school.

As you read, consider:

- What are the lenses through which each essay tries to answer the question, “Who am I?” (For example, in “Being Brians,” Brian Doyle does this by connecting with other people who are also named “Brian Doyle”).
- How does each essay fit the description of a personal essay given on page 208?
- Where is the *artifice* in these essays? In other words, what makes them “well told” (things to notice: literary elements, including figurative language; presence of a narrative; unique structures (none of them are five paragraph essays!); and rhetorical approaches).

Part Two: Creative Emulation

When you are finished reading all of the essays, select ONE PART of ONE ESSAY to emulate in **350-600 words**. Note that you should NOT mimic subject matter but rather emulate approach, structure/form, and/or style (for example: does the writer report research that relates to themselves personally? Do they offer synonyms of a word to try and get at its connotations? Do they recall a memory in great detail? Do they allude and/or quote from another text? Do they describe something they see on TV vividly and with an important purpose?). To get started, simply find one part of an essay that you find inspiring or interesting. You may also find it useful to brainstorm about what lens you might look through for your personal essay by writing a list of all of the things that have made you who you are, so that you can then pick one to write about.

In your Google document, answer these questions:

1. What essay will you be emulating?
2. What section (include page numbers) in particular?
3. What ABOUT that section will you be emulating?

Then, underneath, complete your emulation. Use specific details and concrete language (i.e. imagery) to make your work come alive. Well-defined, vivid scenes are much more compelling than abstract statements (in other words: show, don’t tell). I encourage you to structure your personal essay in original ways—do **NOT** aim for a five paragraph structure—the structure just needs to be discernible to a careful reader. Although you are not writing an intro and conclusion, your opening and ending should nonetheless feel like an opening and a closing. Please keep in mind we will likely share (or share about) these emulations with the class.

Part Three. Vocabulary Extension

“My mother cooked with a vengeance in those years, or perhaps I should say she cooked for revenge. In her hands, cuisine became a martial art” (Levy 216)

Step One

In “Mastering the Art of French Cooking,” E.J. Levy employs a sophisticated vocabulary. Find definitions for each of the below words BEFORE you read.

1. Consult dictionary.com and copy/paste definitions; be sure to put them in quotation marks and include the part of speech (see the example provided for number one).
2. Cite your dictionary in a Works Cited at the bottom of this assignment.
3. Be sure you update formatting to meet all MLA requirements.
4. Be prepared for a vocabulary quiz upon return to school.

Step Two

When you are finished finding definitions, read and annotate the essay itself. Consider: what is the purpose of E. J. Levy’s sophisticated diction? How does it connect to themes in the essay? How does it impact the tone of the essay? What *is* the tone of the essay? **Note:** Words are listed in the order they appear in the essay, so that you may consult definitions as you read and enhance your understanding of this essay.

1. Hymnal (noun): “A book of hymns”
2. Self-effacement
3. Amalgam
4. Statuary
5. Suffused
6. Diffuse
7. Paramount
8. Permissive
9. Disillusioned
10. Gustatory
11. Proprietary
12. Territorial
13. Sublimate
14. Hubristic
15. Disdain
16. Sisyphean
17. Coterie
18. Retinue
19. Patronage

20. Condescension
21. Exploitation
22. Thwart
23. Gentility
24. Corollary
25. Simulacrum
26. Conspicuous
27. Admonition
28. Disaffection
29. Dislocation
30. Goulash
31. Amity
32. Abiding
33. Gentile
34. Gentility
35. Inflection
36. Codify
37. Eschew
38. Saporous
39. Secular
40. Ascetic
41. Cessation
42. Ballast
43. Aver
44. Credulity
45. Sartorial
46. Exhort
47. Anomaly
48. Sedate
49. Aplomb
50. Imperturbable