



Step 1: Turn in your paper

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Memoir Essay Assignment

🕒 Starts Feb 4, 2019 12:00 AM Ends Feb 24, 2019 11:59 PM

Memoir Essay Assignment Sheet



In class we talked about the memoir essay by reading "*Shitty First Drafts*", "*My Ex Went to Prison for Sex Crimes*" and "*Big Boy*". We learned that the memoir re-counts an important event in the life of an author and tells a story, usually because a lesson was learned from it.

It tells about one single event and the impact of it rather than an entire life.

A memoir essay is descriptive with details enhancing the narrative. It uses figurative language and dialogue with purpose. It's not about the number of descriptions but the quality of the descriptions.

It's also not a list of events but how important those events were and your reactions or feelings about them.

We also learned the impact that memory can have in the first two episodes of *Serial*.

Assignment: Write about an incorrect memory that has impacted your life. Maybe someone remembered something wrong and you reacted because of it. Maybe you didn't remember something and it impacted someone else's life positively or negatively.

(No essays about relationship break ups or make ups please. In fact, no essays about romantic relationships, period.)

Pay particular attention to the characteristics of a memoir essay that was discussed in class. Word choice and grammar and mechanics will also be taken into account when grading this essay. Write it in the first person, please. (Using I)

In other words, tell me a story.

To help jog your memory: [Memoir Essay Lesson](#)

What I don't want to read: I don't want to read the history of your life. If the event happened last year, don't tell me what happened two years before. Remember this is about a moment in your life, not an entire life. Recall what you read in *On Writing Well*.

I also don't want to read essays that being like this:

It all began that day.

Or

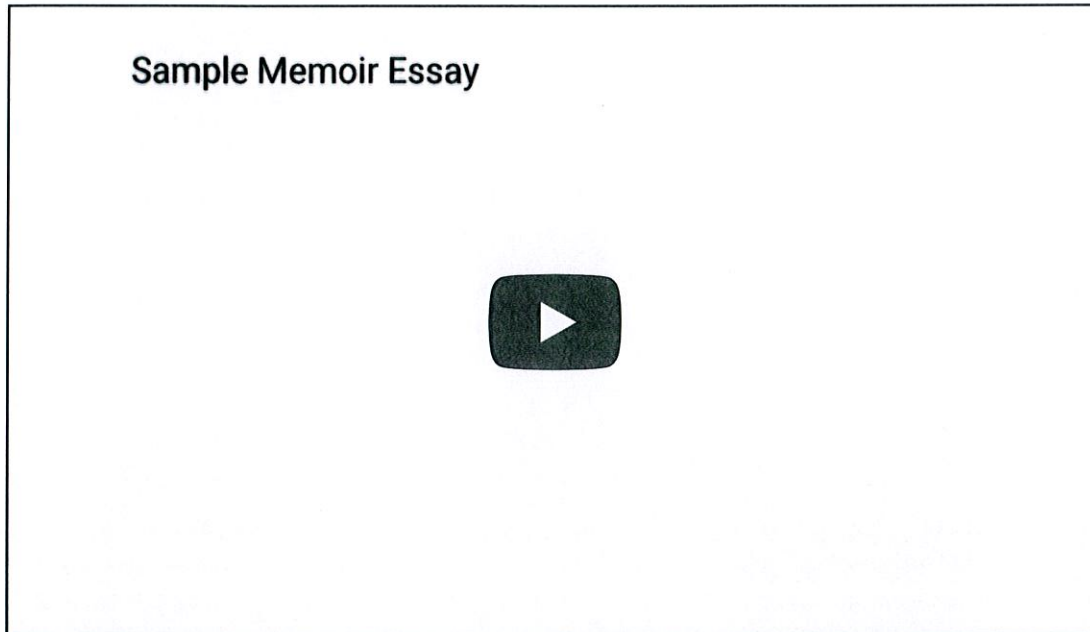
I didn't know that it would turn out this way.

Or

It wasn't supposed to be that way.

Please, just get to the point of your story in the first paragraph.

Here's some thoughts on the Memoir Essay



Length: 500-700 words, no more than 800 words.

Due: Refer to the Checklist

Format: [Microsoft Word: How to Set Up an MLA Format Essay \(2017\)](#)

How will it be graded: [Essay Rubric](#)

[Things not to do in your memoir essay](#)

1. Don't start with a date. Don't say it happened on May 1st. That really doesn't tell me anything, But saying something like – I was 15 when I found out the meaning of life – that's a much better opening and it does give me a time element.
2. Don't say it was a thing that changed your life forever. It's overdramatic. The assignment is about a first that impacted your life. OF COURSE, IT CHANGED IT FOREVER.
3. Don't explain the thing before you get to the story of the memoir. Just start it. For example, don't say, It was an event that changed my family forever. We have always thought we were strong but we got stronger

after it happened. --- Nope. Just start. Don't give me that at the beginning. Remember how the student papers in *Why did this make an A* began. They started right at the story.

4. Don't use the words very, a lot, and get. That's sloppy writing. Use your words to be more accurate in what you're trying to say.
5. NO SEMICOLONS EVER. Nope. Never. We're still learning how to write clear and declarative sentences. I'd rather us work on that first.
6. Watch the details. Remember, you're not giving me a huge story. You're giving me enough details to tell me a story. Just like you did with your videos. Meanwhile, give me a great title. Don't give me "Memoir Essay" as the title.
7. Don't turn in your first draft. Turn in your third draft. Work on the essay little by little. Don't wait until Sunday night and then write the essay. Please don't do that.
8. Use the writing lab. Please, use the writing lab! They are fantastic and can help you get a great grade.
9. If you have your previous paper (most of you do), look at what I have marked on it. All papers have comments and have been marked.
10. Don't be late. Remember, D2L is not kind to procrastinators! Watch the clock and turn it in!