**ENG095: Narrative Essay Project**

*"Out of shared telling and remembering grow identity, connection, and pride, binding people to a place and to one another." Tom Rankin, Folklorist*

**Part 1:**

**Cultural Marker** **Exercise** (WNB 1-2, 1-3): This is an excellent exercise to get you thinking about your own cultural heritage and to gain respect and understanding for the cultural identity and heritage of others. **Purpose**: To identify and report on an item (object, photo) that serves an important role in your own cultural (ethnic, family, regional) identity.

**Assignment**: *Choose an object* that you feel helps define who you are and/or where you are from. *Write at least one page* (WNB 1-2) about the item’s significance. (For instance, consider a family heirloom —an old tool used by your father, a piece of lace from a wedding gown, a trinket in your aunt’s collection — that speaks to your family’s roots.) How does this item help explain your life and culture?

*Prepare a three-minute oral story-telling about this item.* Plan to bring the item to class if possible, or take a photograph of it on your phone. Take three minutes to present your cultural marker to the class. Then break into pairs and take turns interviewing one another, using the cultural markers as points of discussion. *Record the information you collected from your interview* (WNB 1-3).

**Part 2:**

**Narrative Essay:** Write an effective narrative essay about an **influential event** in your life that has impacted, influenced, or inspired you. A quality narrative consists of these characteristic features:

* A clear event (think smaller rather than bigger) (what?)
* A clear setting (where and when?)
* Vivid details (how?)
* A consistent point of view (whose story is this?)
* A clear point (so what?)

Here are the assignment specifics:

* **Paper Length:** approximately 500-750 words. **Include the word count in your paper**.
* Include a **photo** in your paper.
* **Participate in peer review.**
* **Revise** using your peer comments and other feedback you receive.
* **Submit** final copy along with your WNB and drafts.
* Staple your work in this order: Revised essay [with word count] on top, narrative scoring guide, narrative project rubric, and drafts with feedback. Tuck inside the cover of your WNB.
* Follow MLA requirements and specific formatting instructions from me. Disregard MLA rules on captions for pictures.

**Writer’s Notebook Requirements for Unit 1: Narrative Essay**

WNB 1-1 Think about the everyday narratives of your life. Consider the stories that are told in songs you listen to, videos you watch, sermons you hear, and that your grandma tells. Make a list of all the stories you hear, read, see, or tell in one day. Make a T-chart that list the source and the topic. By doing this, you will begin to see how narratives are such an important part of how we communicate.

WNB 1-2 Cultural Marker: Choose an object that you feel helps define who you are and/or where you are from. Write at least one page about the item’s significance. For instance, consider a family heirloom—an old tool used by your father, a piece of lace from a wedding gown, a trinket in your aunt’s collection—that speaks to your family’s roots. How does this item help explain your life and culture?

WNB 1-3 After the group activity, interview your partner making the cultural markers the center of your conversation. Respond to at least 3 of the questions on the attached list.

WNB 1-4 Go to the Story Corp website (<https://storycorps.org>) and find a story that interests you. **Listen** to the story AND **read** the transcript. Consider these 5 characteristics of a narrative:

* A clearly identified event: What happened? Who was involved?
* A clearly described setting: Where and when did the event happen?
* Vivid, descriptive details: What makes the story come alive?
* A consistent point of view: Who is telling the story?
* A clear point: why does the story matter?

Annotate the essay to point out the features. Then look at your annotations and evaluate how well the story illustrates the 5 characteristics. What are its strengths and weaknesses? At the top of your WNB entry, write the title of the story.

WNB 1-5 Carefully read the section related to “This Isn’t the Last Dance” in *Joining the Conversation* on pp. 124-127. Respond to questions 1, 3, and 4 on p. 127.

WNB 1-6 Brainstorm possible topics or “conversations” you might write about for your narrative essay. Respond to the questions on pp. 128-129, under “Explore Your Experiences” in *JC.*

WNB 1-7 Summarize your narrative. How are the 5 main characteristics of a narrative that you used for WNB 1-4 above being fulfilled in your narrative? Write a short paragraph about each of the characteristics. Use specific details.

WNB 1-8 Write an analysis of the rhetorical situation of your narrative essay. Use the SOAPStone analysis (speaker, occasion, audience, purpose, subject, tone) to examine the rhetorical situation.