

Instructions:

First, have one of the members of your pair/triad sign into google drive (drive.google.com) and make a copy of this document; then share it with all members of the group and tmi@tmiiclass.com.

Each of you needs to choose one open letter from the links at the bottom of the document (all of you should choose a different one) and read it. You should delete the links to the open letters you DON'T choose and put your name next to the one you read. As you read, answer these questions (on this document - each person should answer them below the link to the open letter they read):

1. What is the purpose of this essay?
2. What elements of a narrative does it have? Here is the narrative toolkit:
 - relatable to reader and to "real life"
 - emotional impact is in the content, not the tone/style
 - descriptive, vivid imagery, and unique metaphor and similes
 - tone becomes emotional when reflecting on the significance of the event and reactions to the event
 - balance between fact and emotion
 - leaves the reader with a clear impression, often of hope, possibility for change, or a greater appreciation of life
 - the impression the reader gets is the one the author intended (you feel what the author wants you to feel)
 - clear stance on an issue that is balanced and rational
 - there is an underlying/deeper message, but it is subtle and/or does not have a clear/right answer
3. How does the author use the style of the piece to deal with such a serious topic? What emotions do you think the author wants you to feel when you read?

After you have each read/answered the questions, come together and answer these questions as a group (on this document):

1. What is the common purpose of the open letters you read?
2. What patterns do you see in the way the authors write about and deal with tragedy?
3. What about the style is unique to McSweeney's (where they were all published)?

When you finish, you can move on to the last assignment on the playlist (the ESSAY)

Open Letter Choices:

Taxes and one woman's response

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-jim-at-the-oregon-department-of-revenue>

Facing down sickness and death

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-my-inoperable-brain-tumor>

Dealing with heartbreak by blaming inanimate objects

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-the-inanimate-objects-in-my-apartment-th-at-just-sat-there-while-i-was-heartbroken>

One man understands the true meaning of 9/11...10 years too late

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-new-yorkers-on-the-10th-anniversary-of-9-11>

Dealing with the disappointment of not being asked on a 2nd date

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-the-guy-who-will-probably-never-call-me>

Quantifying loss after a wedding is called off

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-everyone-who-when-my-fiance-left-me-to-l-d-me-it-was-his-loss>

Remembering first love through a mix tape (my favourite)

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-open-letter-to-the-mix-tape-made-for-me-by-my-college-boyfriend-now-deceased>