

Writing 121: Essay 1 Assignment Sheet

The first essay will be a personal essay that focuses on your own experience.

Directions:

Write a thoughtful, thorough essay in which you answer the following question: **What are you doing in college?**

You may choose to tell the story of how you came to college (did someone suggest you enroll? Have you come here after a change in career? Are you exploring options? Did you get lost on the way to 7-11?). You may choose to talk about what you hope to gain from a college degree, certificate, or experience. You may choose to do some combination of both of these things.

However, you must also create an essay that is well organized, detailed, and builds on the skills and themes we talk about in class. To this end, your first essay should either start or end with the following sentences:

They say not everyone should go to college. But I belong here because....

The requirements for this essay are as follows:

Development: The essay is well-developed, using appropriate detail, evidence, and description to tell a story and to describe your experiences. When drawing on another source (like one of our readings), the writer gives credit appropriately. It is clear from the piece whose opinions and thoughts belong to whom.

Organization: The essay is well organized, with a clear introduction and conclusion. Transition words lead a reader from point to point within the story. When using narrative, the writer uses time transitions to keep the reader aware of the passage of time. Information appears at sensible times and places. Paragraphs are broken up logically and have clear introductions/topic sentences and concluding statements as needed.

Unity: The essay is organized around a single main thought (a thesis) and doesn't stray.

Mechanics: The paper should be free from distracting errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Word choice should reflect a college-level vocabulary and a story being told in an academic classroom. Sentences should vary in length and complexity. A title must be present.

Format & Length: Use MLA formatting for this paper. Your handbook includes a section on MLA format with a sample paper. This paper must be at least three pages in length when double-spaced and with a four-line header plus a title on the first page only. The draft you turn in for peer review must already reach the third page, even if it's just a few lines on to it, to receive credit. The final draft should be at least three full pages long.