**Personal Narrative**

**Creative Non-Fiction**

In a personal narrative such as “Salvation” or “Let It Snow,” describe an experience, place, person, or job that is or was important to you and helped shape who you are, what you believe or value, or provided clarity, enlightenment, or understanding.

Stay away from the obvious “big” events (birthdays, deaths, births, graduations, divorces, marriages, etc.). Choose something that may not have seemed particularly important at the time but that, as you have matured and reflected upon it, has surfaced as a pivotal or meaningful moment.

Essay should be two-to-four pages, MLA formatted.

When we read the essay, we should be able to “see” the place or experience concretely and understand what you’ve taken from the experience or how it has affected your views, beliefs, focus, or general state of being.

\*\*Use the strategies given in chapters 10 and 12 to plan, draft, and revise your essay. As you draft, keep checking in or taking stock of these items to make sure you’re drafting effectively.

Before you begin, read chapters 10 and 12 carefully. Determine which familiar, tried and true strategies you will use (planning, drafting, revising) and which new, unfamiliar, interesting-sounding strategies you will try for this paper. The goal is to help you assess what you’re already good at, introduce you to some new techniques, and give you a chance to try them out. Hopefully, you will come away with a few new items in your repertoire for use on other assignments both in English and across the writing curriculum. This assignment will also help you make conscious choices, preparing you to complete the final assessment effectively.

**On a separate piece of paper to be turned in, record the following:**

1. State the **experience** you will describe.
2. Articulate what the **point or purpose** will be in retelling this particular experience.
3. Provide a tentative **thesis.**
4. Write the overall **tone or emotional effect** you want to convey.
5. Based on the comments you received on your first assignments (letters, interview summary), choose **two punctuation, usage, or stylistic elements** you will focus on in this paper (correct comma usage, eliminate vague pronouns, vary sentence structure, strong verbs, etc.).
6. Write down **two drafting strategies** you’ve used and know are effective that you will use to compose this essay.
7. Write down **two new drafting strategies** the text suggests that you will try in this essay.

**Concentrate on the following items:**

1. Interesting introduction: “That fall, before it was discovered that the soles of both my shoes were worn clear through, I still went to Sunday school.” OR “I knew in the 10th grade that I would become a shoprat.”
2. Tell the story or describe the situation in specific details.
   1. Use sensory words
   2. Employ dialogue where appropriate
   3. Include interesting details
   4. Draw complete word pictures (show, don’t tell)
3. Use specific names to give people personality
4. Choose strong, interesting, motion-packed verbs
5. Omit trite phrases and words (really, pretty, a lot, so, thing, etc.)
6. Proofread for comma errors--FANBOYS and subordinating conjunction errors, specifically.
7. There should be a feeling of closure at the end, but stay away from drawing moral conclusions, stating the moral of the story, or stating a “thus we see” teaching moment.
8. Make sure you have properly addressed the four rhetorical elements.
9. Check that the essay conveys the overall emotional tone you intend.
10. Include an appropriate, interesting title.