

Creative Essay

Your first major assignment for this class will be a creative essay. This essay is worth **20 points** or 20% of your final grade.

- Your creative essay must be a minimum of **3 full pages**. The pages should be in 12 point font (Times New Roman or equivalent) and should be double spaced.
- Your essay can be either fiction (a short story) or non-fiction (an autobiographical essay). You should clearly label whether your story is fiction or non-fiction. If you chose non-fiction, your essay must focus on one event (and only one event) from your life.
- Your essay should pay close attention to the important parts of creative writing: The Narrative Arc, Showing Not Telling, and Dialog.

For this essay, you will need to do three drafts:

- The first draft of your essay will be due on **Wednesday, October 1st** (Mon/Wed Class) or **Thursday, October 2nd** (Tues/Thursday Class) for peer review.
- The second draft of your essay will be due on **Wednesday, October 8th** (Mon/Wed Class) or **Thursday, October 9th** (Tues/Thurs Class) for instructor evaluation.
- The final draft of your essay will be due on **Monday, October 20th** (Mon/Wed Class) or **Tuesday, October 21st** (Tues/Thurs Class) for grading.

Late or incomplete drafts:

- All drafts must be complete, including the first draft. If a draft is incomplete, it will lose up to 5 points.
- All drafts must be turned in on time. Late drafts will lose one point per day (up to 5 points). Late drafts begin losing points at the **beginning** of class on the due date. If you do not have the draft at that time, it's late. Drafts more than 5 days late will not be accepted.
- Second and final drafts must include all previous drafts. The second draft must include the first draft, and the final draft must include the first and second draft. If you do not turn in previous drafts, you will lose up to 5 points.
- Second and final drafts must be changed and improved for the next draft. If a draft is turned in unchanged, you will lose up to 5 points.

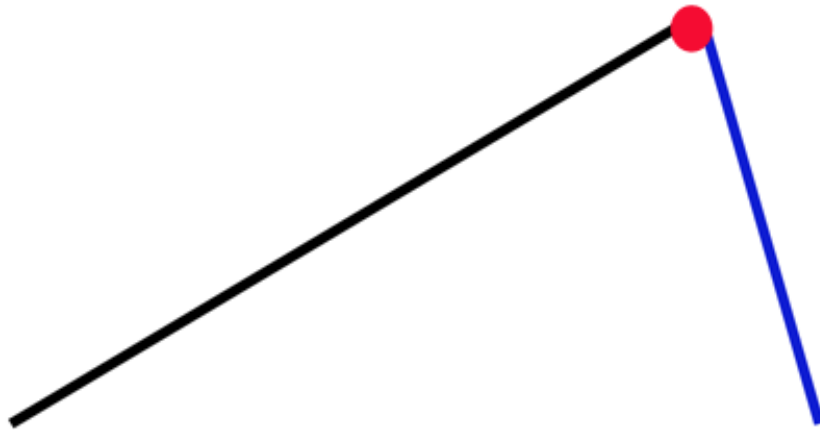
Your final drafts will be graded on the following:

- Do you follow the assignment, including format and page length?
- Do you have a clear narrative arc, including rising action, climax, and falling action?
- Do you attempt to “show not tell”?
- Do you use correct dialog?
- Is your essay clear and easy to understand?
- Are spelling, grammar, and word choice correct?
- Does the paper improve between drafts? Are the second and final drafts better than the first?

Narrative Arc

An important part of any story, fiction or non-fiction, is the narrative arc:

The Narrative Arc



A narrative arc generally has three pieces:

- The rising action, which above is represented by the black line.
- The climax, which above is represented by the red circle.
- The falling action, which above is represented by the blue line.

Rising Action

As you can see from the picture, the rising action is usually the longest part of the story. In a three-page story like ours, the rising action might be two pages or more. The rising action does many things:

- It introduces characters and situations in the story.
- It introduces a problem.
- It builds up to the climax.

In an essay like ours, there are two major kinds of problems, internal and external:

- Internal problems are something that is happening inside of a character. For example:
 - The character is sick.
 - The character is crazy.
 - The character doesn't know what to do.
 - The character is confused.
 - The character is angry.

- External problems are something that is happening outside of a character. For example:
 - The character is in danger from nature.
 - The character is in danger from another person.
 - The character is in danger a societal problem.
 - The character is fighting.
 - The character is arguing.

Many stories have both internal and external problems.

Climax

The climax is often a very short part of the story, but it's the most important part of the story. During a climax, some sort of change must happen. For example:

- The problem or problems from the rising action are solved.
- The problem or problems from the rising action become worse.
- Something the character was expecting does or doesn't happen.
- The character thinks about his or her situation in a new way.

Because the climax is the most important part of the story, everything in the rising action must "build" toward the climax. This means:

- Characters introduced in the rising action should be involved in the climax (at least loosely).
- Events mentioned in the rising action must be important to the climax.
- Nothing and no one should be mentioned that has nothing to do with the climax.

Falling Action

The falling action is usually the simplest part of the story. This part concludes your story and tells what happens next. Depending on your type of story and your type of problem, this might be one page or it might only be one sentence (such as, "And they lived happily ever after). Use the falling action to explain anything that wasn't clear yet, but make sure you don't put too much. Most readers can easily guess what will happen next.