

Fences Lessons 2-3 Writing Autobiographical/Biographical Narrative Assignment & Rubric

“Troy Maxson spins yarns, raps, tells stories to his family and friends in that wonderful environment of the pretelevision, pre-airconditioned era when the back porch and the backyard were the platform for some of the most exciting tales of that time. From this platform and through his behavior he passes on to his extended family principles for living, which members of his family accept or refute through the manner in which they choose to live their own lives.” (Lloyd Richards, Introduction to *Fences*)

Though we now live in the technological age of computers, DVDs, and satellite TV—and there are probably fewer places without air conditioning than not—story-telling is still a vital part of our lives and our culture. The medium through which we tell and “hear” stories may be different, but the act and art of storytelling remain the same. All good stories still have the same elements: interesting characters, tension-building conflicts, nail-biting climaxes, and that final head-nodding understanding.

Writing Assignment:

For this writing assignment, you will write a narrative, which is simply a story, either autobiographical (personal narrative) or biographical (biographical narrative). It should be 1-2 pages, double spaced.

Personal Narrative

- Try to choose something that happened to you over a few hours or in a single day. ([For an example, re-read Malcolm X's "Hair"](#))
- A time-limited incident has more intensity than one that extends over a long period.
- If you can't think of a topic, review some of the stories Troy tells in *Fences*, ask a fellow student for suggestions, or think over some of these possibilities: a triumph, a failure, a challenge, friends, bullies, a family story, love, loss, standing up for a cause.
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- Also, think of how you might incorporate TROPES (metaphors) throughout your story...perhaps the title of your story might introduce a TROPE or maybe include a meaningful EPIGRAPH for your story.

Biographical Narrative

- If you would rather write about someone close to you, a family member, close friend, or neighbor, you would have the same focus as set out in the Personal Narrative instructions—with the added component that you will need to interview your “subject,” record their story, write their narrative, and receive feedback on the narrative from the same “subject.”
- Also, think of how you might incorporate TROPES (metaphors) throughout your story...perhaps the title of your story might introduce a TROPE or maybe include a meaningful EPIGRAPH for your story.

You might also want to visit the following web site for hints for good interviewing techniques:

[Interviewing Techniques Form](#)