**Personal Narrative Assignment – Creative Writing 110**

For this essay you will need to write about one specific experience that changed how you acted, thought, or felt. Use your experience as a spring board for reflection. Your purpose is not to merely tell an interesting story but to **show** your readers the importance and influence the experience has had on you.

Good stories occur everywhere and can be told about anything. They are as likely to occur in your own neighborhood as in some exotic locale. Potential stories happen daily; what makes potential stories actual stories is putting them into language, recounting them, orally or in writing. Good stories are entertaining, informative, lively, and believable; they will mean something to those who write then as well as to those who read them.

All stories account for something that happened-an event or series of events, after which something or somebody is changed. As in a fictive story, your personal essay will contain the similar elements: a character (who?) to whom something happens (what?), in some place (where?), at some time (when?), for some reason (why?), told from a particular perspective (how?).

**Narratives provides human interest, spark our curiosity, and draw us close to the storyteller. In addition, narratives can do the following:**

· Create a sense of shared history, linking people together.

· Provide entertainment. Most people enjoy a thrilling movie or an intriguing book.

· Provide psychological healing. Reading or listening to the narrative of someone who faced a life crisis similar to one you are experiencing can help you through the crisis. They can also help the writer deal with the crisis.

· Provide insight. Narratives can help you discover values, explore options, and examine motives.

**[Characteristics of a narrative:](http://www.cod.edu/people/faculty/bobtam/website/personal_narrative_assignment_de.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22characteristics%20of%20narrative)**
· Narratives make a point
· Narratives convey action and details
· Narratives present a conflict and create tension
· Narratives sequence events
· Narratives use dialogue
· Narratives are told from a point of view

**For this paper, you will need to have the following:**
· **Characters**: In the personal essay, your main character is yourself, so try to give your readers a sense of who you are through your voice, actions, level of awareness, and description. The characters in a good story are believable and interesting; they come alive for the readers.
· **Voice:** Language reveals who you are; chose your words to reflect your theme as well as yourself.
· **Actions**: Readers learn something about the kind of person you are through your actions.
· **Showing Details**: Describe yourself and other participants in your story in such a way that the details and facts help tell your story. A showing detail or fact is one that advances your characterization of someone without your having to render an obvious opinion.
· **Setting**: Experiences happen in some place at some time, and good essays describe these setting. To describe a believable physical setting, you need to re-create on paper the sights, sounds, smells, and physical sensations that allow readers to experience it for themselves. In addition to telling the details that support your plot and/or character development, try to include evocative details, colorful details of setting and characters. The telling details of a setting can reveal something essential about your essay without your explaining them. After all, you can let your reader to do a little work.
· **Sequence of Events:** In every narrative, events are ordered in some way. While you cannot alter the events that happened in your experience, as a writer, you need to decide which events to portray and in what order to present them. Remember, sequencing of events need not be chronological.

**[Choosing a Subject:](http://www.cod.edu/people/faculty/bobtam/website/personal_narrative_assignment_de.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22possible%20topics)**
Writers write about their personal experiences to get to know and understand themselves better, to inform and entertain others, and to leave permanent records of their lives. Subjects for good essays have no limits. You already have a lifetime of experiences from which to choose, and each experience is a potential story to help explain who you are, what you believe, and how you act today. When beginning, you might want to ask yourself:

· Did you ever have a long-held belief or assumption shattered? Can you trace the change to one event or a series of events?
· Is there a particular experience that you observed that has had a profound influence on your life?
· Is there a person that who has greatly influenced you?
· Is there a decision that you had to make, or a challenge or an obstacle that you faced?
· Was there ever a moment in your life when you decided to reform, to adopt a whole new outlook?
· How would you characterize your attempt? (Successful? Unsuccessful? Laughable? Painful?)

Expected length:

 2 -3 pages, however please remember that quality is more important than quantity.

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_