

## Assignment

For your first paper, you will write a personal essay about a moment in your journey through college so far. Although you don't have to write about an *academic* moment, a primary goal of this assignment is to prepare you for the retrospective writing you'll do in the next two assignments, which will be about your chosen major, English, and your work in college more generally. Above all, this paper is a chance to introduce yourself to your classmates and me.

The moment you choose need not be definitive, monumental, or dramatic – it doesn't even need to be a single, discrete event. The idea is to look back at the past few years of your life and reflect on some part or aspect of the educational journey you've taken, the path(s) you've chosen or found yourself on, finding some way as a writer to represent that journey for us in a brief essay. You don't need to tell us *everything* about your educational journey – choose a single moment that says something about you and your experience(s) here, that will reveal to us *something* about where you've been, where you are, and, perhaps, where you think you're heading. Don't dwell too much on finding the perfect moment – you'll quickly realize that, as with all writing of this sort, the *way* you represent that moment will turn out to be more important than what you're writing *about*. Amy Poehler's "[Take Your Licks](#)" (*The New Yorker*, Oct. 14, 2013) will serve as one model for us; there will be others.

Your final paper should be around 750-1,250 words (about 3-5 pages typed [double-sided copying is fine], with 1.5 or 2.0 line spacing, 12-point font, and one-inch margins) and will need to be revised substantially through at least two drafts. Generative writing will be assigned to help spur your ideas, and peer response will be used to help you hone the essay.

Please remember that much of your writing in this class will be "public" to varying degrees – I will read what you write in early drafts, and some of your classmates will as well. And through your e-portfolio, your final papers will be more broadly available. Talk to me if you're concerned about your or other people's privacy – I will also be on the lookout for issues connected to the "publicity" of your writing.

The key due dates for this assignment are

- M 2/12: initial draft of essay due (bring 2 copies to class)
- W 2/21: final, copyedited version of essay due.

See the syllabus for policies regarding attendance and due dates.