


LAFAYETTE CHORAL DEPARTMENT

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Choral Department Writing Assignment – Grades 9 and 10

Choose ONE of the following prompts to submit for your portfolio writing piece this semester. This assignment will be forwarded to your English teacher for inclusion in your portfolio. Please keep this in mind when preparing your assignment.

For each of the following, consider your audience, development of your ideas, organization, appropriate sentence structure, grammar, word choice, and punctuation. Please do more than one draft of this paper. We do not want to see “draft” quality work. Please refine this work prior to turning it in.

Each writing assignment must be turned in with the completed Portfolio Appropriate Writing Cover Sheet attached. (See attached)

This writing assignment is worth 100 points (a significant portion of your grade). Your writing will be scored based upon the Kentucky Holistic Scoring Guide. (See Attached).

Your writing assignment **MUST** be typed, double spaced, in a 12 point, traditional font. This assignment is due: _____.

Option 1:

Write an article for the Choral Department Newsletter advocacy section discussing the positive aspects of choral music education. Follow the example for Persuasive Essay. Include some sources in correct bibliographic format.

Option 2:

Discuss your most memorable/significant musical experience. Give details. Follow the example for personal Narrative. (Must be of significant length to warrant 100 points credit.)

Option 3:

Write a critical review of a classical music concert you have attended for the choral department newsletter. Include such details as performers, repertoire, venue, quality of performance, descriptor words, memorable moments of the performance. (Hint: You must go to this concert in order to write the review) (Include the printed program from the concert you went to).

Option 4:

Write an article for the choral department newsletter detailing a profession in the arts. Your article should include discussion of important aspects of the job, aptitudes one should have to succeed in this profession, training, salary, places one could become employed, is it competitive, etc? Include a personal reflective paragraph regarding whether you would be well-suited for this career. (Include at least 3 sources and be sure to list them. (In correct bibliographic format)

Good starting points are: <http://www.menc.org/information/infoserv/careersinmusic.htm>
<http://www.berklee.edu/careers/default.html>



Persuasive/Argument Essay

What is a persuasive/argument essay? Persuasive writing, also known as the argument essay, utilizes logic and reason to show that one idea is more legitimate than another idea. It attempts to persuade a reader to adopt a certain point of view or to take a particular action. The argument must always use sound reasoning and solid evidence by stating facts, giving logical reasons, using examples, and quoting experts.

When planning a persuasive essay, follow these steps

- 1. Choose your position.** Which side of the issue or problem are you going to write about, and what solution will you offer? Know the purpose of your essay.
- 2. Analyze your audience.** Decide if your audience agrees with you, is neutral, or disagrees with your position.
- 3. Research your topic.** A persuasive essay must provide specific and convincing evidence. Often it is necessary to go beyond your own knowledge and experience. You might need to go to the library or interview people who are experts on your topic.
- 4. Structure your essay.** Figure out what evidence you will include and in what order you will present the evidence. Remember to consider your purpose, your audience, and your topic.

The following criteria are essential to produce an effective argument:

- **Be well informed about your topic.** To add to your knowledge of a topic, read thoroughly about it, using legitimate sources. Take notes.
- **Test your thesis.** Your thesis, i.e., argument, must have two sides. It must be debatable. If you can write down a thesis statement directly opposing your own, you will ensure that your own argument is debatable.
- **Disprove the opposing argument.** Understand the opposite viewpoint of your position and then counter it by providing contrasting evidence or by finding mistakes and inconsistencies in the logic of the opposing argument.
- **Support your position with evidence.** Remember that your evidence must appeal to reason. The following are different ways to support your argument: Facts - A powerful means of convincing, facts can come from your reading, observation, or personal experience.

Note: Do not confuse facts with truths. A "truth" is an idea believed by many people, but it cannot be proven.

Statistics - These can provide excellent support. Be sure your statistics come from responsible sources. Always cite your sources.

Quotes - Direct quotes from leading experts that support your position are invaluable.

Examples - Examples enhance your meaning and make your ideas concrete. They are the proof.

<http://www.delmar.edu/engl/wrtctr/handouts/persuasive.htm>

The Personal Narrative:

Writing the Personal Narrative Paper

Everyone, from the two week-old newborn babies to the ninety year-old bums sitting on the side of the curb, has had many interesting experiences throughout their lives. It is human nature for human beings to express their lives' encounters by telling others. People convey their life stories through many different means; by word of mouth, forms of music, forms of art and forms of literature to name a few. When focusing on the writing aspect of story telling, one is dealing with the personal narrative style of an academic paper.

What is a Personal Narrative?

Personal narratives usually involve stories told in chronological order. All personal narratives have common elements known as “reporters’ questions” – the who, what, where, when , why and how questions reporters constantly ask themselves to make sure their reports of stories are complete:

- A. Characters (the who)
- B. Setting (the where and when)
- C. Plot/Conflict/Resolution (the what and how)
- D. Theme (the why)

A. Characters

- The characters are the people in the story. They are the people the story is about, the people involved in the conflict, and the people who bring the conflict to resolution.
- In the personal narrative, the main character is the author of the paper (written in the first person). Successful authors can give readers a sense of who they are through their voice (use of words within the narrative), actions, level of awareness, and description. The characters in a good personal narrative are both believable and interesting to the reader.

B. Setting

- The setting is the place and time period of the story.
- A descriptive image of the setting enhances the reader’s imagination and thus makes the story more realistic. As a writer, it is essential that everything about the setting, from the largest to the smallest details, is re-created. This includes the sights, sounds, smells, and physical sensations that allow the readers to experience the event themselves.

C. Plot/Conflict/Resolution

- The plot/conflict/resolution is the action of the story. This section should answer the following questions:
 1. What happened?
 2. How did it happen?
 3. In what order did the action happen?
- In the personal narrative events are ordered in a certain way. As a writer, an individual is able to decide which events are most essential and in what order to present them. In some cases, sequencing events in a chronological order is not essential for a good personal narrative.

- One of the best ways authors can expand on the plot is by discussing new insights or new experiences they've gained through the story they're explaining. Through this technique, authors further reveal to the reader who they really are.

D. Theme

- The theme of the story is the meaning that the writer is trying to convey. It is the "reason the author is telling the story in the first place.

How do you Compose a Good Personal Narrative?

The Focus of the Personal Narrative

- In the personal narrative, the thesis is the most important part of the paper. Authors prove their main point through the thesis.
- The main reason authors write a personal narrative is to reflect upon their experiences, why the experiences were important to them, and why they wanted to discuss them, rather than the story itself.

Choosing a subject

As authors, individuals sometimes have difficulties trying to decide what to write about in their personal narratives. When deciding, authors might ask themselves questions similar to the following:

- Was there any great event(s) in their life that transformed them in a dramatic way?
- Is there any person(s) in their life who has had a great influence on them?
- Have there been any obstacles, challenges, or decisions that have impacted their lives greatly?

The following are a few ideas for a personal narrative:

Winning or losing a major event

- What impact did this event have on the individual?
- How did the individual react to the victory or defeat?

Turning Points

- How did the event change the individual's personality, outlook on life, or emotional state?
- How has this helped or hurt the individual since the event occurred?

Uncomfortable situations

- How did the individual cope with the uncomfortable situation?
- Why was the individual placed in this situation and did they escape or remain trapped in it?

Common-Day Occurrences

- What common events happen on a daily basis in the individual's life?
- How do these regular occurrences reflect what type of person he or she is?

Influential People

- Has there been anyone that has had a dramatic effect on the individual's life?
- How has this influential person helped or hindered the person's life?

http://www.users.muohio.edu/kramertm/Mueng111/personal_narrative.html

How to Write A Concert Review

A Student's Guide to Writing a Concert Review

courtesy of Middle Tennessee State University <http://www.mtsu.edu/~sshearon/161crg.html>

The following is an outline of information and writing style that is usually part of a standard concert review:

1. Basic Information

Who, What, Where, and When (and Why, if applicable). Who was performing? What was the event, and (especially) What were the performing media? When and Where was the event held? Why was the event held (any special reason)?

2. Critical Narrative

The review should deal with aspects of the concert that are considered most important or striking. Be sure--always--to concentrate on musical matters, although brief discussions of other aspects of the concert may be included. In the process, talk about the works performed, how they were presented, how well the performers presented the music, and what made the performances effective or ineffective.

The use of first-person narrative is fine. When writing about events that occurred at the concert, use the past tense. (Example: "Although the trombonist was quite good, I thought that she was far too loud to blend well with the others in her section.")

But when writing about a particular musical composition or work of art, use the present tense. (Example: "In Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the fourth movement in C Major seems to serve as a triumphal conclusion to the struggle of the preceding three movements in C Minor.")

Finally, Be Objective! Comparisons of pieces and performers should be avoided unless it is to make an argument regarding Music History or Analysis. Reviews are most effective when they are honest and show that you seriously engaged the music and performance.

3. Style

Compose your review on scrap paper. Feel free to take notes during the performance. The final version should be done on a computer.

4. Length

At least one full page in length, 12 point font, double spaced.

Prepared by Frank Horvat, ORMTA Central Toronto Branch Member.

For more information, please contact us at info@ormtatoronto.org

Newspaper Articles

Newspaper articles fall into several categories, including (1) news articles, (2) feature articles, (3) columns, and (4) op-eds.

1. **News articles** generally follow an "inverted pyramid" structure for conveying information about a current event, incident, or issue of public interest. The first sentence of the article, or lead, gives the most important facts (who, what, when, where), and the following paragraphs present, in descending order of importance, the details of the event, incident, or issue (how, why). A news article should strive to remain objective and should use neutral language while presenting a diversity of opinions, voices, and perspectives of the event, incident, or issue under discussion. You should quote sources knowledgeable about the topic of the article, and most of your research will involve interviewing people rather than reading through written sources.
2. **Feature articles** are less time-sensitive than news articles, and may describe people, places, or events of general interest to the public. They also tend to be longer than news articles. Feature articles often begin with a "hook" that is meant to catch the reader's attention, and go on to describe interesting aspects of the topic under consideration without necessarily following the "inverted pyramid" structure. As in news articles, you should quote sources knowledgeable about the topic, and most of your research will involve personal interviews.
3. **Columns** give the opinion of the writer on a topic of his or her interest and may range from stories about private or public individuals to statements of the writer's position on an issue of public concern. The writer, or columnist, writes these articles as a regular feature of his/her newspaper, and they appear in the same place in every issue of the newspaper, usually filling one entire column of text (hence the name).

http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/support/studentsupport/academic/genres_newspaper.htm

PORTFOLIO-APPROPRIATE WRITING

(Please have students complete this form and attach it to any portfolio-appropriate writing. Then collect the pieces and deliver them to the students' English teachers. The English teachers will keep the work on file in the students' working folders. All pieces submitted for this purpose should have been evaluated by the content area teacher as part of the students' grades for that course.)

Date _____

Student's Name _____

English Teacher _____

Content Area Class in which this piece was written _____ **Chorus** _____

Content Area Teacher _____ **Marsh/Graham** _____

Title of Piece _____

Type of Writing (Check One.)

_____ Personal Expressive (Personal narrative, personal essay, memoir)

_____ Literary (Short story, Poem, Play)

_____ Transactive (Various authentic genres)

Audience for this writing (specify) _____

Purpose for this writing (specify) _____

_____ This assignment was not turned in to the content area teacher.

(If a student does not submit the assignment, please check this space and send this sheet to the students' English teacher to be kept on file)