

# Crafting the Essay

Texts:

The Norton Books of Personal Essays, Joseph Epstein, editor

The Situation and the Story, Vivian Gornick

How Reading Changed my Life, Anna Quindlen

Ruined by Reading, Lynne Sharon Schwartz

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
Day 1 (Monday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess writing level</li> <li>2. Elicit student preconceptions/ prejudices regarding writing/reading</li> <li>3. Discuss the Honor Code/ establish the classroom atmosphere</li> <li>4. Establish expectations for the course and class rules, introduce the books</li> <li>5. Establish class rules</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write <b>ESSAY #1</b> – “Who do you consider a modern hero? Why?” Use the typical structure you would use if you were submitting this to your English teacher.</li> <li>2. Graffiti Wall – expressing thoughts about essays, what makes good writing, reading/imagination, what they hate about writing and reading – the kids will walk around to record their thoughts on each topic.</li> <li>3. Class discussion: Why did you choose the person you did? Make a class list of admirable qualities that make a person a hero. Segue into discussion of the HONOR CODE, highlighting the ways in which these qualities fit the code.</li> <li>4. Elicit the students’ expectations for the course; share ours’ – Why are each of us here? Then ask the students to describe the qualities/actions of a great teacher (list on one side of the board) and a great student (list on the other); choose the most important 4-5 as our commitment to each other, which will be posted above the board.</li> <li>5. Have students choose the most important qualities from the list to create the student/teacher commitment.</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Segue into the concept of the personal essay.</li> <li>2. Introduce the personal essay</li> <li>3. Prepare the students for independent reading</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss typical essay structure/ entries on the graffiti wall.</li> <li>2. Read/discuss “The Personal Essay: A Form of Discovery” (Norton introduction)</li> <li>3. Read/discuss “In the Waiting Room” (Elizabeth Bishop, handout) together, analyze to find the situation and the story in the poem.</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore a model essay</li> <li>2. Explore a model essay</li> <li>3. Synthesize the reading</li> <li>4. Explore a memoir thematically</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read “In Bed” (Didion, handout from Lopate)</li> <li>2. Read “Notes of a Native Son” (Baldwin, handout from Lopate)</li> <li>3. Analyze each essay, using the handout</li> <li>4. Quindlen, read p. 1-14; answer journal questions (see handout)</li> </ol>
Day 2 (Tuesday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Functional Fixedness</li> <li>2. Foster class relationships</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Molly and Ned,” <u>JH Handbook</u></li> <li>2. Play a name game with the students, their RAs</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide student feedback</li> <li>2. Assess student understanding of readings</li> <li>3. Prepare for reading</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> <li>5. Appropriately the model</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Return Essay #1, explaining editing notes</li> <li>2. Discuss Didion, Baldwin essays</li> <li>3. Journal – greatest impact your mother/father has had on you (predict what you might say in 20-30 years)</li> <li>4. Read “Mother Tongue” (Tan – <u>Norton</u> p. 462); discuss by listing the different Englishes she speaks, we speak</li> <li>5. <b>ESSAY #2</b> – Gornick p. 172 -3, #4</li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow students time to complete essay</li> <li>2. Read essay theory</li> <li>3. Explore a memoir thematically</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finish essay</li> <li>2. <u>The Situation and the Story</u> (Gornick), read p. 1-26, highlighting important points as they read</li> <li>3. Quindlen, read p. 51 -70; answer associated journal questions</li> </ol>
Day 3 (Wednesday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess student understanding</li> <li>2. Supplement theory</li> <li>3. Allow students to reflect upon their own writing style</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> <li>5. Discuss the topic of titles</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go over homework (Gornick)</li> <li>2. Go over personal essay handout from Lopate</li> <li>3. Letter #1: explain how you approach the writing process</li> <li>4. Read/discuss “Once More to the Lake” (White – <u>Norton</u> p.125)</li> <li>5. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, chapter 5</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore a model essay</li> <li>2. Assess self</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read/discuss “A Chance Meeting” (Cather – <u>Norton</u> p. 43), making a note of Cather’s methods for signifying attitude shifts</li> <li>2. Re-read draft, filling out writers’ response sheet</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore a model essay</li> <li>2. Prepare for “Throwing the Eraser”</li> <li>3. Analyze essay structure</li> <li>4. Read essay theory</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read “On Keeping a Notebook” (Didion – <u>Norton</u> p. 359); journal response – Gornick, p. 172, #3</li> <li>2. Read “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” (Pirsig, handout)</li> <li>3. Analyze the structure of “Once More to the Lake”: First, list in outline form the main point of each paragraph; then, write a paragraph explaining how E. B. White prepares us for the ending. (to be collected)</li> <li>4. Gornick, read pages 29-42, highlighting; answer #1, p. 169-70 (to be collected)</li> </ol>
Day 4 (Thursday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess student understanding</li> <li>2. Facilitate understanding</li> <li>3. Demonstrate the reader’s role in constructing meaning</li> <li>4. Discuss the topic of “word choice”</li> <li>5. Discuss the topic of “beginnings”</li> <li>6. Model student workshopping</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go over homework (Gornick)</li> <li>2. Reread “Zen”</li> <li>3. “Throwing the Eraser,” <u>JHU Handbook</u></li> <li>4. Have the students spend 5-10 minutes skimming over “Once More to the Lake,” highlighting any words that are particularly unexpected and yet perfect and so effective. A student scribe lists words on the board; the class then discusses why these words are so effective.</li> <li>5. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, Chapter 5</li> <li>6. <u>Evaluating Student Assignments</u>, <u>JHU Handbook</u> p. 55</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the topic of “revision”</li> <li>2. Practice revision</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highlight focus areas for this revision (beginning, arriving at a clear “story”, appropriateness of word choice)</li> <li>2. Students revise <b>ESSAY #2</b></li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow students time to complete essay</li> <li>2. Read essay theory</li> <li>3. Explore a memoir thematically</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finish essay</li> <li>2. Gornick, read p. 52-65; continue to highlight important facts</li> <li>3. Quindlen, read p. 15-31; answer associated journals</li> </ol>
Day 5 (Friday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus students</li> <li>2. Illustrate principles of description</li> <li>3. Practice description</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cameron, p. 43</li> <li>2. “A Study of Two Pears,” <u>JHU Handbook</u></li> <li>3. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, Postassignment #1, p. 33</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare for reading</li> <li>2. Explore a model essay</li> <li>3. Prepare for reading</li> <li>4. Provide an opportunity to share work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read a Latin passage aloud. Students write “translations” based on what they hear. Volunteers share their translations.</li> <li>2. Read/Discuss “Italian Without a Master” (Twain – <u>Norton</u> p. 25)</li> <li>3. Write “How to Eat an Ice-Cream Cone”</li> <li>4. Read “Ice-Cream” pieces</li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read essay theory</li> <li>2. Find the connections between activities</li> <li>3. Allow students to reflect upon their own writing style</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> <li>5. Prepare for reading</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gornick, read p. 74-85, continuing to highlight</li> <li>2. Journal- find the connection(s) between “Study of Two Pears” (activity and poem) and “A Chance Meeting”?</li> <li>3. Letter #2: explain how our reading of their essays is different/similar to that of their teachers</li> <li>4. Read “How to Eat an Ice -Cream Cone” (Hills – <u>Norton</u> p. 276)</li> <li>5. Generate a list of “100 Things I Hate”</li> </ol>
Day 6 (Monday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus students</li> <li>2. Assess student understanding</li> <li>3. Follow-up previous activities to reinforce the importance of word choice</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read “Hateful Things” (Sh---, handout from Lopate)</li> <li>2. Discuss homework: Gornick, journal, list of 100 hated things</li> <li>3. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, chapter 6 – exercises 2, 3, 4 (to <b>climb, eat, shout, talk, and walk</b>)</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore a model essay</li> <li>2. Demonstrate the importance of Point of View</li> <li>3. Practice POV</li> <li>4. Analyze POV</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read/discuss “Cops and Writers” (Hollander – <u>Norton</u> p. 300); ask what professions are stereotyped in our society</li> <li>2. Point of View activity – position a stack of books in a corner of the room. All students write a description of it; none may leave their seats. Have students read theirs, going in order around the room, ending with the only one who can see the dollar bill sticking out. *Point out that those who can’t see the dollar feel cheated.</li> <li>3. Rewrite “Cops and Writers”, using a different POV</li> <li>4. Volunteers read their rewrites aloud; class determines what is lost and gained</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read essay theory</li> <li>2. Explore a memoir thematically</li> <li>3. Practice word choice</li> <li>4. Follow-up previous activities to reinforce the importance of word choice</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gornick, read pages 89-101, taking notes</li> <li>2. Quindlen, read p. 71-82; answer associated journal questions</li> <li>3. "Exiting the Writing Class," <u>JHU Handbook</u>, Postassignment p. 65</li> <li>4. Students generate a list of 10 synonyms apiece for <b>sleep, think, command, run, and cry</b></li> </ol>
Day 7 (Tuesday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus students</li> <li>2. Discuss "Brainstorming techniques"</li> <li>3. Practice brainstorming</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss verb exercise</li> <li>2. Gauge student experience with generating ideas; elicit successful techniques from students; model different diagrams</li> <li>3. <u>Writing With Power</u>, Peter Elbow – chapter 8: Loop writing (steps 1, 4, 6, 10, 13 and fears)</li> <li>4. Read/Discuss "Leslie Stephen" (Woolf – <u>Norton</u> p. 77), identifying the organizational strategy, character description through discussion of a salient feature</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appropriate the model</li> <li>2. Provide feedback on homework</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>ESSAY #3</b> - character study of someone close to you</li> <li>2. Discuss verb activity; read "Exiting the class"</li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a safe environment in which to workshop essays</li> <li>2. Practice offering peer critiques</li> <li>3. Read essay theory</li> <li>4. Allow students to reflect on their own learning style</li> <li>5. Explore a model essay</li> <li>6. Explore a memoir thematically</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss boundaries for workshopping</li> <li>2. Peer-workshop essays</li> <li>3. Gornick, read p. 108-117, taking notes</li> <li>4. Letter #3: talk about study hall – is there too much work? Not enough?</li> <li>5. Read "Shooting an Elephant" (Orwell, handout)</li> <li>6. Begin reading Schwartz, answering journal questions as you go along</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
Day 8 (Wednesday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss sentence structure</li> <li>2. Practice sentence structure</li> <li>3. Discuss “endings/ conclusions”</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, chapter 7</li> <li>2. Sentence exercise</li> <li>3. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, chapter 10</li> <li>4. Read “The Inheritance of Tools” Sanders – <u>Norton</u> p. 427); discuss the effectiveness of the ending; discuss the end of Orwell</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus the students</li> <li>2. Practice revision</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read “Insert a Carrot” (Fadiman, handout)</li> <li>2. Students revise <b>ESSAY #3</b></li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read essay theory</li> <li>2. Explore a model essay</li> <li>3. Explore a memoir thematically</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> <li>5. Explore an author’s style</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gornick, read p.128-135; answer #4, p. 170 (to be collected)</li> <li>2. Read “Nacirema” (handout)</li> <li>3. Continue reading Schwartz, answering journal questions as you go along</li> <li>4. Read “Transfiguration” (Dillard, handout from Cooley); answer questions (#1, 5, 11) in preparation for class discussion</li> <li>5. Read “Living like Weasels” (Dillard – <u>Norton</u> p. 422); list similar characteristics between Dillard’s two pieces</li> </ol>
Day 9 (Thursday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess understanding</li> <li>2. Practice functional unfixeness</li> <li>3. Practice recording observations</li> <li>4. Practice functional unfixeness</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss “Nacirema,” create class descriptions of current beauty practices</li> <li>2. Walk through cemetery, sit for a while and observe</li> <li>3. Write a description of what was seen</li> <li>4. Write a description of an unknown artifact</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appropriate the model</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>ESSAY #4</b> – <u>JHU Handbook</u> Postassignment p. 20</li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice peer editing</li> <li>2. Explore a memoir thematically</li> <li>3. Explore a model essay</li> <li>4. Provide time to finish work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peer workshop essay #4</li> <li>2. Continue reading Schwartz, answering journal questions as you go along</li> <li>3. Finish reading Dillard</li> <li>4. Finish cemetery piece</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
Day 10 (Friday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus the students</li> <li>2. Assess student understanding</li> <li>3. Assess student understanding</li> <li>4. Discuss the importance of “figures of speech”</li> <li>5. Explore the creative process of crafting an essay</li> <li>6. Assess student understanding</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cameron, p.51</li> <li>2. Discuss Dillard’s traits</li> <li>3. Students write a paragraph about her traits</li> <li>4. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, chapter 9</li> <li>5. Read “How I came to write the Moth essay” (Dillard, handout from Cooley)</li> <li>6. Discuss “Transfiguration” and the effectiveness of the metaphor</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice revision</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revise <b>ESSAY #4</b></li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice analogies</li> <li>2. Explore a memoir thematically</li> <li>3. Foster student collaboration</li> <li>4. Allow students to share work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write a paragraph-long analogy that explains a portion of the writing process</li> <li>2. Finish reading Schwartz, answering journal questions as you go along</li> <li>3. Progressive story</li> <li>4. Share progressive stories</li> </ol>
Day 11 (Monday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster student collaboration</li> <li>2. Practice persuasive writing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group Story, <u>JHU Handbook</u></li> <li>2. Letter to the Editor, <u>JHU Handbook</u> p. 42</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide feedback</li> <li>2. Explore a model essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read all 13 letters, providing immunity to the 3 most persuasive ones *Perhaps visitors can judge?</li> <li>2. Read/discuss “A Modest Proposal” (Swift, handout from Cooley) especially satire</li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore a memoir thematically</li> <li>2. Explore a model essay</li> <li>3. Explore model essays</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have students prepare comments about Schwartz, Quindlen, et al., for a discussion regarding their conception of childhood and the images of it which they present **use journals as the basis for this</li> <li>2. Read “The Lost Childhood” (Greene – <u>Norton</u> p. 180) – assess: how much do you agree with Greene?</li> <li>3. Read “Street Haunting” (Woolf, handout from Lopate) and “Going Out For a Walk” (Beerbohm, handout from Lopate)</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
Day 12 (Tuesday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus the students</li> <li>2. Practice functional unfixeness</li> <li>3. Practice recording observations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss Woolf and Beerbohm essays</li> <li>2. Walk around historic St. Mary's, watching for details</li> <li>3. Write a description of the walk in the model of one of the essays from last night</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus the students</li> <li>2. Practice brain-storming</li> <li>3. Explore a model essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Journal: What part of your current life will you have to give up when you grow up? Refer students to Gornick, p. 112</li> <li>2. Talk about the images of childhood in Quindlen, Schwartz</li> <li>3. Read "How should one read a Book?" (Woolf, handout)</li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide opportunity for students to draw connections</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>ESSAY #5</b> – Discuss the importance of reading and writing in your life</li> </ol>
Day 13 (Wednesday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice peer editing</li> <li>2. Focus the students</li> <li>3. Explore a model essay</li> <li>4. Discuss "Paragraphing"</li> <li>5. Prepare students for subsequent reading</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Workshop essays</li> <li>2. Journal: analyze the Gornick quote, page 46 ("In other words, if you don't leave home, you suffocate, if you go too far you loose oxygen."); discuss</li> <li>3. Read/discuss "What Are You Doing in My Dreams?" (Powell – <u>Norton</u> p. 118); note its connections to the Gornick quote</li> <li>4. <u>JHU Handbook</u>, chapter 8</li> <li>5. Create definitions for 6 difficult words</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore a model essay</li> <li>2. Practice revision</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read "The Joy of Sesquipedalians" (Fadiman, handout); compare created definitions with real ones</li> <li>2. Revise <b>ESSAY #5</b></li> </ol>
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide publishing opportunity</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Type favorite piece(s)</li> </ol>
Day 14 (Thursday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus the students</li> <li>2. Explore a model essay</li> <li>3. Prepare to read an essay</li> <li>4. Explore a model essay</li> <li>5. Share peers' work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write an "Ode to the Comma"</li> <li>2. Read "Notes on Punctuation" (Thomas – <u>Norton</u> p. 228); discuss: does the experimental nature work?</li> <li>3. Write an imitative piece, exploring self roots</li> <li>4. Read/discuss "Split at the Root" (Rich, handout from Lopate)</li> <li>5. Read progressive stories</li> </ol>
	Afternoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrate the students' achievements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student reading in Cole Cinema</li> </ol>

		WHAT (skill goals/ knowledge goals/ concepts/ readings)	HOW (activities)
	Study Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow students to reflect on their experience</li> <li>2. Allow students to provide feedback</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SPEs</li> <li>2. Course evaluation</li> </ol>
Day 15 (Friday)	Morning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus the students</li> <li>2. Assess student perceptions</li> <li>3. Apply theory</li> <li>4. Practice theory</li> <li>5. Practice theory</li> <li>6. Allow students to reflect on their own learning style</li> <li>7. Celebrate student achievements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write the “Ode to St. Mary’s”</li> <li>2. Revisit the graffiti wall – what has changed?</li> <li>3. Examine <u>texts</u>, including introductions, to determine the methodology behind creating an essay anthology</li> <li>4. Write introductions for own anthology</li> <li>5. Write acknowledgments page</li> <li>6. Letter to self of what you want to remember</li> <li>7. Assemble books and make covers</li> </ol>

Supplemental Texts:

The Right to Write, Julia Cameron

Confessions of a Common Reader, Anne Fadiman

The Art of the Personal Essay, Philip Lopate (editor)

The Norton Sampler, Thomas Cooley (editor)