

# LITERACY NARRATIVE FINAL WORKSHOP

ENGL 108 / SEC. H & I / SUMMER LEAP 2009 / OLDHAM & RUBASKY / CHANG & LEE



You have now produced several pieces of writing that all address or reflect on your literacy narrative. Each assignment, process journal, exercise, and draft all add up to the raw materials for your major paper. Here is a list of what you have written this week:

- Literacy Narrative Brainstorming exercise
- Summary Of King
- One Main Point paragraph exercise
- Process Journals & Freewrites

Today's workshop is designed to help you to think about these various pieces of writing and begin to develop a coherent, detailed, and polished, four-page Literacy Narrative. This is a three-in-one workshop. The topics covered here are creating a writing plan, introductions and conclusions, and details and support through textual analysis and argument.

## Part A: Mapping the Future

This exercise is designed to help you to determine what the body of your final literacy narrative will look like.

- Read everything you have written this week. Identify what writing might be useful to your final paper. List them here. Then, highlight or flag the ideas, passages, main points that you want to include in your final literacy narrative.
- How do all of these various passages or ideas relate to each other? Write some notes about how you will connect these different parts (i.e. My definition of literacy connects to Douglass's definition).
- Create either an outline in which you detail how the paper will be organized and in what order.
- Start a "To Do" list of all the things you have to do to complete the final paper. You will want to continue adding to this list as you work on the various parts of this workshop.

## Part B: Introductions and Conclusions

The beginning and end of your essay are crucial elements to making a paper work. These two elements of a paper do so much to communicate the purpose of your writing and to persuade the reader that you know what you are talking about.

### Introductions

Your introduction to your paper should draw readers into your paper and “convince” them that it is interesting and worth reading (note: this is hard to do if you do not believe it yourself!) Make sure that the points you raise in your introduction relate directly to the subject of your paper. This is not the place to make broad generalizations about society, the world, human beings, etc.

Think of your introduction as the road map to your paper. It is the place where you tell your reader where you are going and how you will get there. Do not think of the introduction as a broad, overarching “umbrella” even if this is what you may have learned in high school.

Your introduction can be more than one paragraph (though the one paragraph model keeps it simple). Make sure that your introduction includes a reference to the main point of your essay. This should be a clearly articulated statement outlining the specific argument that the rest of your paper will develop.

### Conclusions

Unfortunately, there is no easy formula for writing an effective conclusion; it can be one of the hardest parts of writing a paper.

Your conclusion should not say exactly the same thing as your introduction (if it does, you haven’t gotten very far!) By the end of your essay, you should have worked through ideas enough so that your reader understands what you have argued and is ready to hear the larger point (i.e. the answer to my “So What?” question). Your conclusion should create a sense of development or movement to a more complex understanding of the subject of your paper.

This is the place where you want to bring together all of the points that you have addressed throughout the paper.

Avoid bringing up totally new points, making any new claims, or unsupported arguments in the conclusion.

Vivid, careful, concrete language is as important here as it is elsewhere – perhaps more essential, since the conclusion determines the reader’s final impression of your essay.

### What to Workshop

Use the above criteria for introductions and conclusions to a) assess what you already have, b) brainstorm what might improve, clarify, or strengthen your intro and conclusion, and d) begin to draft a new and improved introduction and conclusion.

## Part C: Details & Support: Critical Analysis and Argument

This week we have focused on developing our skills as critical readers and thinkers. We've used various reading strategies to look for patterns and connections in the works of Douglass, Alexie, King, and Tan both to deepen our understanding of their narratives and to question what they have to say to us. You are being asked to use those same tools of analysis when composing your literacy narrative, for what you are doing when you reflect on past experiences with literacy is actually a critical "reading" of that experience. You are in fact analyzing that experience in detail and, based on that detailed analysis, making an argument about the meaning and importance of your experience for you and for your readers. This component of the workshop is designed to help you evaluate whether you have enough details and support to your main ideas and to help you extend your critical analysis and argument through the organization of these details and ideas.

### Connecting to the Readings

1. Which of the readings we have done this week are most related to your own literacy narrative. Describe these connections.
  
2. Do you talk about these connections anywhere in your writing? If so, mark places in your writings from this week where you address these connections. If not, take a few minutes to expand your ideas about these connections,
  
3. How can you expand your discussion of the texts in your literacy narrative? What more can you say?

### Details & Support

4. What kinds of details do you use to support your main points? Mark places where you provide detail. Mark places where more details would be useful. Remember that as a writer you need to show specific, concrete details to back up your impressions or conclusions.
  
5. Mark the places in the text where you tell a personal story or provide an anecdote about your own experiences with reading and writing. Do you provide enough detail to fully support these parts of your writing? Do you analyze and think critically about your experience?