

NOTE

This is due on the third week.

If you use this in your class, please acknowledge me as your source: Created by Michelle A Wolf.

My Invisible Identity

Include the info below on page 1 of your essay

Your Last, First name

301 Word count:

Word Count = 775-815 Count only the essay words, not the title, your name, word count, etc.

Essay Focus

As you know, this class is about ‘telling stories,’ and that’s exactly what you will do in the paper. Your main task is to develop an essay – a story about **you** – in which you explore *one* (and only one) important aspect of your identity that you believe is not visible to others when they look at you.

Choose something very personal that defines you in an important way. This might be something that you typically don’t discuss and/or write about, particularly in a college course.

Your choice **must** be something that:

- emerged by the time you were 16 years old,
- stays with you now ... in your mind, heart, feelings and actions.

Before you begin to write: Carefully review the grading sheet at the end of this assignment.

Essay Organization

Introduction/Preview. Begin with a very brief introduction (1/3 page or less) in which you:

1. Identify the one specific aspect of your identity you’ll explore,
2. Develop a very brief overarching thesis,
3. Close the introduction with two main points that you develop and very specifically support in the body of your essay (these are a ‘preview’ of the essay).

Intro EG from the example I gave in class – **Word count = 94**

I was smashed in the face with a baseball bat the day after I finished third grade. Although I don’t think other people can see any visible scars now, this experience profoundly affected me as I grew up, and continues to shape who I am today [thesis]. I was hurt all over again when I began to go outside as fourth grade approached. My parents said everything would be fine, but nothing was. Here I examine how living with a broken face affected me and [idea1] my relationships with people at school and [idea 2] my close friends. [again **wc = 94**]

Body of essay. Introduce and develop the **two main ideas** above to support your overarching thesis. Developing two (yes, only two) main ideas gives you more space for depth, detail and specific examples.

- Begin each paragraph with a clear topic sentence.
- Write in the **first person (I Me My)**.

- When you refer to other people, keep the focus on you, and how you experienced the interaction.
- Develop main points/paragraphs with **very specific (and personal) examples** [SEGs] **taken from your own real life** as support.

When you use specific examples you **‘show’** me your experiences (vs. tell me about them).
Read [Showing v. Telling sentences](#).

Specific (vs. general) **examples** (amplify statements). Following from the thesis above:

General – I spent a lot of time preparing myself for school because I hated my face.
[Telling: I’m stating this but not bringing it to life.]

Specific – I spent a lot of time preparing myself to begin fourth grade. In July I grew my bangs down to my nose. I wore an oversized brown hat that sunk over my face and I sat in the back row next to the door to hide even more and be ready to run outside. [Showing]

- **Active voice** is a key to showing (vs. telling) – Use **active** (vs. passive) **voice** as much as you can. Write so that you are the agent of the action. You perform the “action” expressed in the verb. This brings your writing to life. Think I-Me-My!

“In a sentence using **active voice**, the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb.” See Towson University [Active/Passive Voice](#).

- When you refer to other people, keep the focus on you. **Write about how you experienced the interaction.**

Conclusion

Close with a **brief conclusion** in which you extend your main idea/s. Do not simply restate the ideas, extend them to a ‘bigger’ conclusion.

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Note: The word count is firm at 760-800.

If you write under 760 words your paper will not be sufficiently developed and your grade will suffer.

Here’s the deduction by points for going over the word count. [Note: The word count is designed for parity; you all use approximately the same number words. You can’t ‘make’ your essay longer or shorter by playing with margins and font size.] The paper is worth 10 points.

- 820-840 -1 • 841-860 -1.5 • 861-880 -2 • 881-200 -2.5 • 201+ -3 or more

Important – If you don’t make an outline and focus (as directed), you will often want to write too much. Editing it down is a good writing exercise.

* A brief outline is very helpful and takes less time in the end. Include topic sentences and SEGs.

The grading page is on the next page. **Review it** carefully and **submit it at the end** of your paper **on a single page**. **Do not submit your work as a pdf file** (review the syllabus).

* To ensure that you read it, one point will be deducted if you do not include the grading page.

Responds to the prompt directions [8 points]

Specific focus on you-you-you (**I, me, my**).

Brief introduction.

Develops two main points that flow from thesis.

Supports ideas with very specific, concrete, focused, personal examples [SEGs]. – Shows vs. tells.

Conclusion. Brief. Extends ideas.

Writing [2 points]

Clear thesis, paragraph structure.

Clear topic sentences and support.

Construction: Spelling, grammar, style.

TOTAL /10

* Includes word count and grading page [-1 point each]