

Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health
Narrative Essay

Write a five-page narrative essay focused on an event, individual, or image that profoundly influenced your thoughts about medicine or about health issues. By the time you begin writing this essay, you will have many examples to consider. Review the essays and stories that we have read for the last three classes. Perhaps one of them will provide a model for the essay you wish to write. Whatever strategy you choose, your central idea or insight should emerge naturally from your narrative. While some of you may wish to explore your central idea more directly, you should keep in mind that your readers will respond more readily to being shown your thought process than to being told how to think.

Remember that most of your fellow students know little about the circumstances of your childhood and adolescence. Draw upon concrete details as you reconstruct the experience that intrigues you. Concentrate initially on bringing your story to life. Let us in on the thoughts and feelings of that time. Eventually, you can explore the larger meaning of the experience, but do so with a light touch. Do not paste a neat moral onto your story.

You may find it useful to think of yourself as a storyteller sitting with a group of MIT friends late at night, summoning up a world that these new friends can know only through you.

Take advantage of the advice provided by Carolyn Ross in “Rhetoric: Writing about Personal Experience.”

First version of completed essay (due Session 5).

- **Bring four copies to class.**
- **Include a brief status report that will help your workshop partners provide useful comments.**

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21W.034 Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health
Fall 2016

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