

Multimodal Language and Literacy Narrative

We are what we say and do. The way we speak and are spoken to help shape us into the people we become. Through words and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us. That world addresses us to produce the different identities we carry forward in life. —Ira Shor

As people tell literacy stories, they also formulate their own sense of self; with each telling, this self changes slightly according to a constellation of social and cultural factors, personal aspirations and understandings, the audiences being addressed, and the rhetorical circumstances of the telling itself, among many other factors. —Cynthia Selfe

Our perspectives on language and literacy don't arise out of thin air. How and why we learned and presently "do" speaking, reading, and writing depends on our individual backgrounds, experiences, and motivations (e.g., where and how we grew up and what we want out of life, language, and literacy), and it depends on societal realities (including dominant beliefs that deem some language "good" and others not). We never speak, read, or write in isolation—there is always some history, issue, person, structure, institution, standard, or belief system affecting our language and literacy practices. One way to reflect on the reading, writing, and language experiences that shape a part of who we are today is to narrate these experiences. For this assignment, you will compose two separate yet interconnected language and literacy narratives, one delivered in **writing** and the other delivered **orally**.

You're asked in this assignment to zoom into a particular moment from your life. What moments stand out to you when it comes to how you use language and literacy? Can you recall any family, cultural, or social events related to reading or writing that you found enlightening, encouraging, awkward, challenging, or unjust? A key language or literacy moment when positive or negative emotions soared, where you struggled or triumphed? An object or artifact that serves as a memory of a place, activity, or person connected to your language and literacy development? The **moment** you write about forms the basis of your literacy narrative, so it should be a subject matter that you are comfortable sharing. Just as important as the moment you select, however, are the **reflections** you include in your narrative or cover letter to help readers make sense of the moment's significance and implications. You'll also want to carefully consider your **tone** and **language choices**. Carefully craft and personalize the delivery

of your written and spoken narratives as you see fit. You're welcome to draw on your "native," "home," or "other" languages, literacies, and ways of being as you so choose.

Written Literacy Narrative (WLN)

Your written narrative should be **2.5-3-pages** and should contain

1. a carefully crafted and revised story of a specific moment, event, or experience;
2. vivid details that draw your readers into the scene;
3. 3+ materials and media to support your narrative, such as pictures of artifacts, images, links, video clips, quotes, sound bites, etc. (As all of your major assignments will be placed on a Wordpress site you develop, creating multimodal texts is important.)
4. your interpretations of the larger social significance of the event chosen. (After all, our individual narratives reflect larger trends in society, history, where you grew up, and identities like gender, race, culture, linguistic background, and ability. (Your interpretations may be explicitly included in your narrative or implied. But if left implied, be sure to be explicit about these connections in your Cover Letter.)

Spoken Language and Literacy Narrative (SLLN)

You will present some version of your language and literacy narrative to the class. The purpose is for you to practice getting comfortable speaking to a group and for everyone to get to know each other a little better. The presentation can take one of many forms but should be no longer than **3 minutes**. You can read your favorite lines from your written narrative and explain the significance; or, you might decide to write an entirely new narrative, reenact a moment from your literacy past, or read lyrics that you or someone else wrote that captures something about your literacy identity. Whatever you do, be sure to **include the use of 1+ multimodal aide(s)** like photos/ objects, text, music, or PowerPoint slides. Your SLLN can be delivered "live" in class or you can choose to show a pre-recorded video (just please email video to your instructor 24 hours in advance of class). Remember who your audience is (your classmates and instructors) and tailor your presentation to fit the audience and context of the assignment.

Cover Letter

Your Written L&L Narrative should be preceded by a Cover Letter when you submit the final version. Refer to the Cover Letter assignment sheet in our course materials.

Due dates:

- A first full draft of your WLLN is due for peer review on **DAY, MONTH DATE**
- A first full draft of your SLLN essay is due for peer review on **DAY, MONTH DATE.**
- The final draft of the SLLN is due on **DAY, MONTH DATE.**
- The final draft of the WLLN (with cover letter) is due on **DAY, MONTH DATE.**

Assessment Rubric for the Language & Literacy Narrative Assignment

Assignment Criteria

1. Appropriate Focus and Rhetorical Effectiveness of the Language and Literacy Narrative. How effectively does the language and literacy narrative provide 1-2 concrete examples and specific details of the writer's language/literacy experiences? How effectively does the language and literacy narrative attend to description to appeal to audiences?

2. Explicit Commentary on Significance and Implications. How effectively does the narrative highlight some central idea about a larger social significance? That is, how well does the narrative implicitly or explicitly comment on the larger implications of the narrative, signaling connections to national trends or to the writer's life, family, generation, gender, race, culture, linguistic background, ability, and/or geographic location?

3. Appropriate Focus and Rhetorical Effectiveness of the Spoken Language and Literacy Narrative. How effectively does the SLLN presentation draw audiences into the writer's language/literacy experiences? How effectively are the 3 minutes utilized?

4. Use of Multimedia. How effectively does the WLLN and SLLN integrate multiples modes (not just speech vs. writing but also the use of pictures, images, objects, links, and music)?

5. General Requirements. Were all requirements for length and due date met?