

English Composition 41160-02

Assignment 2

Rough Draft Media or Initiation Narrative Essay (750+ words)

Due Thursday, September 18, 2003

Narrative Writing: According to *Simon & Schuster*, "Narrative writing is a rhetorical strategy that tells a story" (95). Usually written in chronological sequence, *narration* tells about events that are happening or have happened in the past. Narrative writing resembles storytelling, and like in that genre establishes time and place (setting and location) for the reader. Narrative writing also describes events (using RENNS) in the order that they transpire. In addition, it often contains observed events (sight) and dialogue (sound).

Structure of a Narrative Essay: The opening paragraph usually establishes time and place and introduces the main characters who move within the ensuing chronology. Once you've created the initial "frame" of the essay you can move backwards and forwards in time relative to it. In order to do so you will need to use transitional expressions to guide you between sentences or from paragraph to paragraph. See *Simon & Schuster*, page 84, box 26 for a list of these words and phrases, such as "first," "second," "then," "next," "afterwards," and "eventually."

Assignment: Write a narrative essay using memory, description, observation, and personal knowledge to support a claim about an experience concerning or initiation into a particular mass medium (e.g., television, film, radio, electronic communication, etc.) mass phenomenon (e.g., sports, schooling, work, travel, etc.), or other specialized activity. According to *Webster's*, "initiate" means "to bring into practice or use; to introduce by first doing or using; to start." You may wish to describe how you first became engaged by a particular mass-media genre, or elaborate upon your diagnostic essay or descriptive paragraphs. As a model for narrative writing, consider Kwame Dawes' "Prologue" to *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius*, which describes his early encounters with and initiation into the reggae music genre, particularly Marley's music. Notice how Dawes establishes setting and introduces characters in the opening paragraphs of the essay. Consider the details he chooses to support his claim that Bob Marley's music is a vital, important contribution to our culture as a whole.

Free Write: Start with the prompt "I remember the day," and write everything you can think of—sights, sounds, smell, taste, touch, dialogue—about your first day or a significant day using or interacting with a particular medium or experiencing a mass phenomenon or specialized activity. You may want to describe in story form a particular moment in time or momentous occasion. Ken Macrorie, author of *Telling Writing*, recommends that you start with the word "Once," and then describe an event or set of circumstances from a particular day in your life.

Draft: Once you have concrete details and ideas about your initiation or experience begin to draft a narrative essay in which you tell about events as if they are happening (using present tense) or that have already happened (using past tense). Consider what you want to claim in the essay. What do you want readers to learn from the circumstances, experiences, or events that your essay narrates and describes? What does the story you are telling say about media and society, or about how media or mass phenomena shapes cultural identity or outlook, also called "ontology."