



Assignment: Literacy Narrative

College Composition • ENG 1030 • Fall 2024

1. BACKGROUND

This class relies on a shared flexible concept of literacy and the understanding that everyone possesses and uses multiple forms of literacy in any situation. To help you pay attention to the multiple literacies you navigate daily, you will create a personal text in which you explore an unexpected literacy you have developed in your past. Importantly, you should consider a nontraditional form of literacy. In other words, for this assignment, focus on a literacy you have that is *not* merely the ability to read or write.

College courses, and Kean's GE program especially, help to develop your multiliteracies, a key component of both academic and professional success. In each of your classes, you will develop literacy in discipline-specific ways of thinking. This assignment draws attention to that process by getting you to focus on your past experiences and real-world skills and demonstrate that you already possess and employ multiple literacies every day. The narrative you create will show how you developed a specific literacy and how it has changed what you have access to and/or the ability to do.

Additionally, literacy narratives are common—your instructor didn't invent the idea. Your work will join an extensive collection of these texts that already exists, on the [admittedly out-dated] Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives and elsewhere. Consider searching for examples as you plan your own document, but remember that others might have operated with slightly different specific requirements.

2. PROCEDURE

Before crafting your text, you need to select a non-traditional literacy you possess that you want to tell your colleagues about. To help brainstorm an appropriate literacy, consider the prompts below and think about an important time in your life when you engaged with or were aware of how a specific literacy helped you. We'll discuss various types of literacy in class, so you will need to identify and define the type of literacy you're discussing in your final text.

- Describe a situation when you struggled to communicate or behave appropriately for a certain circumstance or environment. How did you overcome that challenge to eventually feel like you belonged and/or understood? What strategies or steps do you plan to take in the future to make that process easier?
- Describe the type of "texts" (defined broadly) you "read" frequently. What makes them easy for you or challenging for others to read and interpret? What strategies do you use to ensure that you fully understand them or can apply them?
- Describe what kind of texts you think you will have to read or interpret in the future and where you will encounter these texts (i.e. future classes, your career, etc.). How do you think they might challenge you? What strategies will you use to overcome these difficulties?

For your topic, strive to expand your thinking beyond the classroom; literacy learning often takes place outside of school. While you're welcome to write about your experiences in school, brainstorm other areas in life in which you learned to read, write, speak, and communicate within a community. Your topic should be as specific as possible, yet still allow for you to share a robust story (or stories) about your learning moments. Once you have determined a non-traditional literacy you want to share about, you're ready to write.

For this assignment, compose an autobiographical narrative about how you developed a non-traditional form of literacy. This narrative should:

- name the literacy that you developed,
- tell the story of how/why you learned to use that form of literacy,
- explain how you know you are literate in that discourse,
- identify whether you have reached fluency in that discourse,
- illustrate the benefit(s) you have accrued by employing the literacy you select.

Your goal here is not merely to tell a story, but to explain what that story means for the development of your literacy and how it shaped your literacy in a specific arena of your life. In short, don't just focus on the who, what, when, and where, but also dive into the *why* and *how*.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


Significant portions of this document come from *First Year Composition* by Leslie Davis and Kiley Miller at Colorado State University. The text is licensed  and used here accordingly.

TABLE 1. Literacy Narrative Rubric

Exceptional	Connects the author's identity with the process of developing the specific literacy, using compelling examples to illustrate. Shows the effects of literacy development and implementation and addresses the extent of that development in light of fluency.
Successful	Uses storytelling to identify a specific non-traditional literacy and explains whether the author achieved fluency.
Falls Short	Story does not clarify author's relationship to a specific non-traditional literacy, does not discuss fluency, or omits discussion of benefits derived from the literacy.