

### Personal Narratives

*When I look back, I am so impressed again  
with the life-giving power of literature.  
If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of  
myself in the world, I would do that again by reading,  
just as I did when I was young.  
~ Maya Angelou ~*

#### Assignment:

One way to know that you are reading a great piece of literature is when you continually think about your own life. Maya Angelou suggests in the quote above that you can gain a sense of yourself in the world through reading. At first glance, you would not think that you would have a lot in common with a poor shepherd from Andalusia, but as you have noticed during your reading, Santiago's story has many connections to our own time and place. For this assignment, you will plan, draft, and finalize a personal narrative that has been influenced or inspired by your reading. Like all effective stories, your narrative should have a strong opening, concrete details, a clear organizational structure, and a conclusion that makes the point of your story clear and relates it with a brief explanation, with a quotation or two, of how your story connects to what you have read.

#### Steps:

1. Gather all of the narrative writing that you have been doing so far in this unit and look back at the creative work we have been doing. With this material, brainstorm a list of significant events in your life that have a connection to what you have read. Talk with a peer about your list and try to narrow down to one possible topic. You will know you have a topic when you are able to complete the following sentence: "The point I will be trying to make in my story is . . . ., which relates to what I read because . . . ."
2. If you have not already done so for this event, create a Story Map by identifying the key parts of the story, the conflicts, and the other people involved. Begin writing a draft of your piece.
3. Working with a partner, return to the Narrative Elements handout and identify the elements you have used effectively and what elements do not yet appear in your piece. Be sure to write an explanation about the inspiration of this story, by using quotations from the text.
4. Finalize and type your narrative and be sure to ask a peer or an adult to take one last look through the piece for any spelling or grammar issues that might interfere with readability.

#### Dates:

**Tuesday, February 14:** Assignment Overview and Narrative Elements

**Wednesday and Thursday, February 15 and 16:** Writing and Peer Review Time

**Friday, February 16:** Typed and Printed narratives due in class to share in small groups