

Telling YOUR Stories



Everyone has important stories to tell. *Sharing the stories of our lives can help us discover who we are and what's important to us.*

In The House on Mango Street, you will read about a young girl's reflections of her childhood—the people who have influenced her, the events that affected her, and the hardships she encountered. Using the short, but vivid, story-telling style used in The House on Mango Street, you will come up with creative, imaginative ways to tell the different stories of your life.

You will **create a collection of 4 vignettes (short biographical essays)**. Each story must have an original title, be told from your point of view, and illustrate aspects of your life. Collectively these stories should paint a picture of you and what's important to you.

Your collection will reflect the types of stories that are included in The House on Mango Street and should include one of the following types of essays/stories:

1. Identity: A definition piece about you.
2. Friendship, Neighborhood, Home: A descriptive piece about a friend, your neighborhood, or your favorite place in your home.
3. An Important Event: A narrative piece about an important event in your life.
4. Open Topic: A narrative, descriptive, or definition piece about any topic that says something about you and the type of person you are.

REQUIREMENTS

Each vignette must:

- Present a **distinct story with specific details**.
- Use effective, original **similes and/or metaphors**.
- Showcase your own **original voice and writing style**.
- Have an original and creative **title**.
- Be **at least one-page** (typed & double-spaced) in length (final drafts only).

Your collection must:

- Have an **original, visually attractive cover** as well as an **overall title**.
- Have a **neat and organized presentation**.

Due dates:

Odd day - Monday, 05/07

Even day - Tuesday, 05/08

Definition Essays:

Definition essays attempt to give a definition of a word in order to explore the true meaning of the word. Definition essays usually include:

- **Literal Definition of the word:** What is the definition or literal meaning of the word?
- **Origins and Causes:** Where did the word/subject come from? What is the background information? What is the history of the subject?
- **Analysis:** How does the word compare to the definition in your experience?
- **Comparisons:** A short story and/or metaphors, similes, and comparison can also be used to “get at” the true definition of the word/topic.

Narrative Essays:

Narrative essays tell a story or discuss an event. Narrative essays:

- are generally written in the first person singular, i.e., *I*.
- rely on concrete, specific details to make their point.
- are like stories. They should include a plot (so tell your readers what is happening), including setting and characters; a climax (a peak experience often leading to the thesis, the important realization); and an ending (explaining how the incident resolved itself, also alluding to how the narrative's thesis comes to its full realization).
- are told in chronological order.

Descriptive Essay:

Descriptive essays help readers visualize your topic.

- Describe your topic in great detail.
- Use precise, strong verbs that create images in your reader's mind. (For example, use “ran” instead of “went;” “grabbed” instead of “took,” “rambled” instead of “talked.”)
- Use specific adjectives. Avoid adjectives such as “big,” “pretty,” “good,” “bad.” Be as specific as you can!
- Include comparisons (metaphors, similes, direct comparisons) that link some thoughts in your paper to concrete objects that your reader might know. (Example: My best friend's voice is as strong and piercing as a car horn.)
- Use a good deal of imagery. Imagery helps your reader visualize and experience your topic first hand. Remember, imagery refers to words or phrases that appeal to the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing).