

21W.732  
Spring 2010

**Assignment #1:**  
**A personal narrative essay**  
3-4 pages  
Due: Tues., 2/9

I would like to begin this class by having you write about yourself. A personal narrative essay will help me to get to know you and it will also allow you to write about a subject that's very familiar to you. This first assignment will also allow you more choice and creativity in the structure, style, and tone of the piece than some of the writing you'll be doing later in the course. So, let's get started!

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In her essay *Getting Caught*, Annie Dillard describes a thrilling experience she had as a child—thrilling because it was an experience in which she thoroughly, fearlessly, and single-mindedly devoted herself to a challenge. We will be discussing this essay in class.

Does Annie Dillard's experience remind you of an experience in your own life? Have you felt a sense of exhilaration from completely and enthusiastically devoting yourself to a challenge—from giving something "your all"? What was that like? Did you achieve what you set out to do—or not? Did it matter? (Did it matter to Annie Dillard?) Do you think this kind of experience is unique to—or more characteristic of—children?

Annie Dillard's essay is also about doing something she knew was wrong. Do you have a vivid childhood memory of doing something you knew was wrong? What happened? What led you to do it? Were you caught? How is your adult perspective on that experience different?

Choose one of these themes to write on. Assume that you are writing for an audience of your peers. Make sure that your essay not only has a clear topic, but a clear central point. It should be around 3 pages. It should be double-spaced and include a title.

Discussion

-raise qu for interesting discussion