**Personal Experience Essay**

A personal experience essay is a narrative essay that shares and explains an experience from your life. You should focus on one specific event and tell the story…and remember, since it happened to you, you know the details better than anyone! Keep the details in **chronological order**- in the order in which the events actually happened.Your approach may be humorous or serious- or somewhere in between.

As you write, remember that vivid descriptions and imagery will make your story come to life! Also, try to build suspense in your story to add to the story-telling!

The outline of a personal experience essay follows the common structure for all essays:

1. Introduction—1 paragraph. Grabs reader’s attention

2. Main body—3 paragraphs. Includes details and the events and descriptions

3. Conclusion—1 paragraph. Wraps up event and explains what this experience meant to you

Begin you essay by choosing the experience you would like to write about. Whatever experience you decide to write about, remember that your goal is to convey the significance of the event to your audience. Your narration should give a deep insight into the details of the event, and the audience must gain some insight into why this experience is so remarkable to you and how it changed you.

Your essay should be 2-3 pages in length.

**Personal Experience Essay Rubric**

Content

\_\_\_\_ / 5 Attention-grabbing introduction

\_\_\_\_ / 5 Descriptions and use of imagery

\_\_\_\_ / 5 Explains why the event(s) were significant/meaningful to author

\_\_\_\_ / 10 Body of the essay explains events in chronological order

\_\_\_\_ / 5 Conclusion logically sums up experience

**\_\_\_\_/ 30 Total Content**

Mechanics

\_\_\_\_ /5 Proper MLA format, heading, title placement, page numbering, 1” margins, length

\_\_\_\_ /10 Spelling/Punctuation/Grammar

\_\_\_\_ /5 One point of view (first person)

**\_\_\_\_ / 20 Total Mechanics**

**\_\_\_\_ /50 points total**

Comments:

**Your outline and topic is due on Friday, September 28, 12**

**Your essay is due on Wednesday, October 3.**

**Topic Suggestions**

1. We have all had experiences that have changed the directions of our lives. Such experiences may be momentous, such as moving from one part of the country to another or losing a family member or close friend. On the other hand, they may be experiences that did not appear particularly significant at the time but have since proved to be important. Recall such a turning point in your life, and present it so as to give the reader a sense of what your life was like before the event and how it changed afterward.
2. Write an account of a memorable journey, important either because of the physical, emotional, or psychological experience of travel, or because of the phenomenon of leaving somewhere for an unknown experience.
3. Other ideas: write about a school day, sporting event, birthday, family trip, basketball practice, soocer game, a practical joke you pulled (or that got pulled on you!), concert, or other memorable event from your life that had a significant impact on you.

**Personal experience essay example:**

**(but…yours should be with MLA formatting!)**

The sky was pitch black, the house was creaking, and I still had four hours until my parents got home. Locked in my parents’ room, I turned on the TV full blast so I wouldn’t hear the creaking house.

I barely heard the phone ring. I picked it up and said, “Hello … hello …?” but there was no response. I knew someone was on the other end. Finally, I hung up. A minute later, the phone rang again; still no one was there. I became more frightened as time passed; the same ­person called five more times.

At this point I didn’t bother picking up, but the ringing continued. To get my mind off this prank caller, I called my friend. She told me not to worry and to turn the phone off. As we talked, I heard someone pull into the driveway. When I peeked out the window, I saw an unfamiliar car.

Thirty minutes passed and the car was still in my driveway. It drove up and down the drive as if aware I was watching. My friend told me to call the cops, but I refused.

Soon the phone calls started again. I heard noises in the background, but I couldn’t tell what they were. I really didn’t want that person to get out of the car and start toward the house. If they did, I didn’t know what I’d do. None of the doors were locked, and I would have no way of protecting myself. The only thing I could do was hide, which wasn’t a very good plan.

At this point I was considering calling the cops, but my friend offered to drive by. “Maybe if they see me pull in, they will leave,” she suggested. By the time she arrived, the car had left. The phone rang again and I picked up, thinking it might be my friend. Someone on the other end said “Bye-bye.”

At that point I wasn’t as scared as curious. Since then, I have not stayed home alone and I probably never will.