

Exploratory Essay

As you know from our [reading](#) last week, an exploratory essay is “a short work of nonfiction in which a writer works through a problem or examines an idea or experience, without necessarily attempting to back up a claim or support a thesis.” This last part is quite different than most undergraduate writing assignments, where students are asked to carry out research and use that research to prove their point.

However you may find that this project may benefit from some research to inspire you, or for you to bounce ideas off of; you may find another non-fiction essay on your topic and may enter into a sort of discussion with that essay’s author.



For our essay, we will discuss in class (Jan 31) if you have your own ideas for a problem, idea, or personal experience, or if you would like to be given an idea to explore. We will do a series of brainstorming exercises in class that day that should help no matter what direction we choose for topics. We will also discuss what elements of storytelling we can see in the assigned example exploratory essays.

Your polished draft should be around 1,000 words minimum. This is a guideline only! You will be able to revise your essay after it is graded.

Tentative timeline:

Jan. 31 – determine topic, conduct brainstorming exercises.

Week’s work:

Read Chapter 2 in *Craft of Research* and Chapter 3 in *Storycraft*; begin draft of your exploratory essay; post to this week’s discussion board.

Feb. 7 – we won’t meet as a class today; use this time to continue work on your essay draft.

Week’s work: complete draft of essay.

Feb. 9 – upload your essay draft by tonight at 11:59 p.m. Canvas will assign peer review partners at this time. This is a rough draft – it does not have to have all the parts or be close to the suggested word count. It’s much more important for you to turn in something, anything, on time. Your draft grade comes from the feedback you give your peers.

Feb. 14 – discuss drafts and revision timetable.

Polished draft of exploratory essay will be due Week 6.