

Sample English 102 Assignment | Spontaneous Composing Log

Assignment Overview and Purpose

During the semester, you will be responsible for keeping a continuous log of your experiences as an observer and participant in the spaces and places you normally occupy—your favorite coffee house, your home, your favorite reading spot on campus, and so forth. You should write down your observations as you see or remember them happening, taking care to note as much detail as you can. You have the option of recording your observations in any form and medium you feel most comfortable working in, whether it is a written journal, tape recorder, Blog, or other form. The important thing to note is that you must compose regularly in your log—at least twice a week—so that you have ample material to work with when it comes time to do your visual/spatial analysis project at the end of the semester.

This assignment has several purposes and is meant to help you in different ways. First, because *writing well requires continual practice*, this assignment serves as a way for you to compose on a regular basis—to help you get better at expressing your ideas. Aside from practice, this assignment is meant to help you:

- Think about your everyday interactions with others and the connections you have to certain places
- Understand the role of physical spaces and places in shaping relationships and interactions between people
- Make connections between the ideas presented in the texts we read in class and the everyday social interactions that happen between people
- See the visual elements of society as texts to be read and analyzed

Audience

Because this log falls into the genre of personal writing and reflection, you are the primary audience for this assignment. Write for yourself, as if to capture enough detail that you could remember the event as it happened if you return to read it ten years from now. Because you are the primary audience for this assignment, you do not need to be as concerned with usage, spelling, or other grammatical features of your writing. Rather, you should concern yourself primarily with writing in as much detail as you can, freely and without restraint.

Grading Criteria

When I evaluate these logs, I will be looking to see that 1) you have regularly kept up with your log and 2) your entries provide a level of detail that shows thoughtful engagement with the observation.

Guiding Questions

To get you started on writing your first few entries, I have included the following list of guiding questions. Please note that these questions are meant to be guides, but are not requirements. That is, you do not need to answer each of these questions for every composition you complete. You should, however, date each entry and specify the location where your observation took place.

- Describe the setting (where the observation took place). What does it look like spatially? What kind of place is it?
- Who were the people involved and how were they positioned in this location? How were you positioned?
- Describe people's interactions in this place. How typical did these interactions seem to you? What was your role in this interaction?
- What sounds did you hear while this was going on? Describe these sounds.
- What other sensory experiences (smell, touch, taste) did you have during this observation?
- What did you find most intriguing/interesting/perplexing/confusing about this observation?
- What other emotional responses did you have to this observation?

Additional Guidelines and Resources

As noted earlier in the assignment sheet, you may use the medium of your choice to complete this assignment. If you choose to do a Blog, then you can do so on your Facebook page, or you can sign up with a free online Blog service such as Blogger.com or Wordpress. If you have any questions or concerns about the medium you want to use for this assignment, I encourage you to meet with me.

As a reminder, please note the following guidelines

- Date each entry and specify the location
- Complete at least two entries per week
- Include lots of detail!

As noted on the syllabus, I will review your log three times over the course of the semester, on February 9, March 30, and May 4.