Remembered Event Writing Assignment: Creative Non-Fiction

Your assignment: Your assignment is to compose a 1 ½-2 page essay about a personal, memorable, 20-minute event. At least half of the essay must take place within those 20 minutes. The essay should be written in the past tense since it occurred in the past.

Restrictions: You may NOT write about your graduation, your wedding, your first kiss, the birth of a child, a sporting event of ANY kind, or any other major event that happens to everyone. This must be an event that is UNIQUE TO YOU, ie: not something that happens to 90% of the population at some point in their lives.

Goals: All of the writing we do builds on what we have already learned. In additional to concrete imagery, sensory details, tone, mood and frame, this essay will, create tension by sticking to KEY EVENTS and foreshadowing what’s going to happen.

Grammar Goals: No fragments of run-ons. Keep a consistent and appropriate verb tense. Write in active voice. Avoid commonly misused words.

We tell stories everyday. We tell them to vent our frustration, to entertain, to inform, to warn, to share good things that happened in our day. Think about the stories you tell everyday. They are more likely to work effectively for this paper than big events. Remember, the event cannot take more than 20 minutes.

You might write about a funny event from your childhood, a bad bicycle accident, the time you pulled a prank that went bad. All of these stories have tension. They make us worry about the character a little, make us want to know how things are going to turn out. Because of this tension, when the story resolves, we are, in some small way, changed by these events.

Avoid telling a moral at the end of the story.
When you tell your best friend about a rotten day you had, do you end with, “and from this experience, I learned never to park in a fire lane again?” No, we don’t talk like that, and we don’t learn like that. You might have learned to think twice about it, or to feel guilty about it, but we do not learn “never to do _________” again.

If you find yourself telling a moral at the end, cut that whole paragraph. Begin and end with image. Use frames to show change. (We will be redefining frame in this unit.) You might end with an image of you driving past the fire-lane and watching all the shivering students walk to class. This is more effective.

Turning In Final Drafts: You paper will be turned in as a complete according to thei guidelines on the syllabus. You must e-mail the final draft of your paper to Composition1010@yahoo.com BEFORE class on the day it’s due. Papers that are not e-mailed will be considered late.

LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTABLE: Any paper turned in more than two calendar days after the due date will receive a zero. Points will be deducted from any work not turned in when it’s due.
Event Writing Rubric:

**Topic Proposal:**
- Does the topic fit the guidelines?
- Has it been filled out in detail using the elements learned in class?
- Was it turned in on time?

**Workshop Reflection Paragraphs**

**Topic Selection/Content:**
- Does the subject fit the assignment guidelines and is it 20 minutes or less?
- Is the subject presented in a unique and compelling way?
- Is the subject presented with tension, build, and foreshadowing?
- Is it interesting?

**Organization:**
- Is there a clear frame?
- Does the frame illuminate the subject being presented?
- Is each paragraph limited to a single controlling idea?
- Is each idea fully explored?
- Do the paragraphs transition into each other well?
- Is the verb tense consistent?

**Voice:**
- Does the voice of the piece illuminate the relationship between the subject and author?
- Are the readers given a unique insight into both the subject and the author through the style?
- Is there a clear tone being presented?

**Word Choice:**
- Is there vivid figurative language and concrete detail?
- Does the figurative language flow naturally and avoid being awkward or overdramatic?
- Does the author push towards interesting nouns and verbs instead of relying on everyday words and adjectives?
- Does the author avoid clichés?
- Does the author avoid words from the cut list?

**Conventions:**
- Does the author avoid fragments and run-ons?
- Is dialogue punctuated correctly?
- Is the grammar correct?
- Is the paper correctly punctuated?

Total __________/175

**Workshop:** In order to receive full credit for the essay, workshops must be attended and participated in both as a writer and a peer reviewer. Failure to participate or come to workshop will cost you 15 points (10%) of your final paper grade.

Have the students who peer reviewed your paper print their names on the lines below. If you also reviewed their paper, put a check mark in the box by their name.

1. _________________________________
2. _________________________________
3. _________________________________
4. _________________________________
Choose a unique event from your life, something that doesn’t happen to everyone else, a story that only you can tell. **It must be an event that took 20 minutes or less from start to finish.** Do not push this rule as you will be forced to choose a new topic.

**Topic**

You get one paragraph of background information: information outside of day itself that is necessary for your reader to understand the event and which can create tension. What background info do we need?

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_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  
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_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  

Where does the event begin? IE: at what point do we know something is going to go wrong? Use your descriptive skills to create an image of that moment. (Begin your essay with this image.)

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_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  
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Use imagery and sensory detail to create a tone for the day of the event. Where are you? What is happening? What can you smell? Hear? Taste?

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_________________________________________________________________________
Within your 20 minute event, make a list of “Key Events” that lead up to the turning point. These are all of the little details that foreshadow….IT. Use imagery to show these key points.

1. ______________________________________________________________________________
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   ______________________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________________
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3. ______________________________________________________________________________
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4. ______________________________________________________________________________
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5. ______________________________________________________________________________
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6. ______________________________________________________________________________
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What is the turning point/climax of the event, the point at which we find out what is going to happen? Use your descriptive skills to create an image of it.

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__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

How did you feel at the conclusion of the event? List all of those emotions here:****

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Now create an image that shows you and what you looked like as you felt all of those emotions.

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__________________________________________________________________________________
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****You may not use any of these words in the writing of your essay as they are abstract. Replace them with images of you and the other people in the event.