

An Anecdote about Morality: A Personal Narrative Essay Prompt

Think about the Morality readings by Plato, Hobbes, Bacon, and Mann. Each philosopher elaborated on his theory using rhetoric and logic. In our Socratic Seminars, however, many of you supported your opinions about the readings with personal anecdotes. For this assignment, you will write a personal narrative that illustrates a topic from one of the morality readings

- Describe a time when you sought **revenge** against another, or someone sought **revenge** against you.
- Describe a moment when you realized **the importance of education** in your life.
- Describe a time you observed **the good/bad behavior of a person (and the ways it is revealed)**.
- Describe a personal story which details your understanding for **the need for government or rules**.

To brainstorm ideas, consider some controversial quotations from the readings:

- “The good person is no different from the bad person, for he is really as selfish as the bad man” (Plato).
- “Only fear of the law makes man good” (Plato).
- “Nature has made men roughly equal in body and mind. When everything is considered, the difference between one man and another is not very great” (Hobbes).
- “It is clear what men are like when there is no outside power to keep them all in fear” (Hobbes).
- “There is no safety or security except one’s own strength and trickery” (Hobbes).
- “Revenge is a savage sort of justice” (Bacon).
- “Whatever is in the past is gone and can’t be changed. Wise people know they have enough to do in the present and with whatever might happen in the future. They don’t spend time taking revenge” (Bacon).
- “We read that we are commanded to forgive our enemies. But we never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends” (de Medici).
- “Even with a conscience, evil often triumphs over good” (Mann).
- “All laws designed to repress injustice and crime give rise to new injustices and crimes to avoid the first” (Mann).

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Write a personal narrative that:

- Describes a sequence of events
- Communicates the significance of those events
- Develops a complete and real sense of setting
- Has a sophisticated plot that is developed through:
 - sensory details
 - characterization
 - conflict (internal and external)
 - dialogue (internal and external)
 - Figurative Language and Literary Devices
- Is based on a true story that happened to you (hence, *Personal Narrative*)
- Is 3-5 pages in length (MLA formatting, typed)
- Alludes (naturally) to at least one quote from one of the readings

Work with a peer-editing group to edit, revise, and publish your essay.

OBJECTIVES: CCS.W.9-10.3

- 9-10.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
- 9-10.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events
- 9-10.W. 4 Produce clear and coherent writing
- 9-10.L.1 Demonstrate a command of the conventions of standard English grammar when writing.
- 9-10.L.5 Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language.
- 9-10. SL. 1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (peer editing).