Ms. Postema’s 9th Grade Lit Class

*Blood Don’t Lie* Flash Fiction

**Unit**

This assignment would be given at the end of our fiction genre unit. The unit would be sectioned into sub units focusing on story structure and narrative devices (dialogue, characters, plots, etc.), novels (where we would begin *Blood Don’t Lie),* and end with short stories/flash fiction. Throughout the unit students would be gaining skills in each of these units through short exercises in their journals, in and outside of class readings, and class discussions. The overarching Fiction unit would end with a discussion and analysis of *Blood Don’t Lie* which would then lead into this assignment.

**My thoughts**

My aim for this assignment is to have student practice creative writing in several forms. I want them to experience the act of writing a story first hand and branching off of *Blood Don’t Lie* provides a fantastic tie into the hero’s journey, power of personal writing, and how the effects of the world can be channeled into writing. I ask students to create six pieces in this assignment. The first four are emotional and personal pieces. The object of these 4 journal entries is to awaken the student creative energy, and tap into their personal histories for inspiration. These pieces may contain details that are troubling for everyone involved which is why I ask students to write 4 entries and to pick one that they are comfortable sharing with the entire class and is appropriate for the classroom. I make this stipulation because I want students be mindful of oversharing. Once their words are spoken they cannot be taken back and may develop lives of their own. Rough drafts are created from these chosen moments and students then work in collaboration with their small writing groups to polish and perfect their pieces. I also give students a chance to schedule a meeting with me for further help. Regardless of whether they schedule extra time, I will be checking in on each during this portion of the project. The final product of this project is a piece of flash fiction ranging from 500-1000 words inspired by their initial journal entry. Students should demonstrate an understanding of narrative and literary devices that we are studying in this final piece. It will be graded but my intention is for it to grade it gently and as a whole.

**Overview**

*Blood Don’t Lie* is the story of Larry Ratner, a young Jewish boy who has just become a man. We followed Larry through his journey and saw that it was not an easy one. He lost friends, was bullied, his family nearly fell apart, yet somehow Larry found his way in the end. Throughout the novel, Larry writes letters to Sarah about his life. It’s the honest truth about how Larry feels and what he is experiencing as he navigates the difficult transition from boyhood to adulthood. Larry captures each pivotal moment of his journey in a letter.

You will choose four moments in your life that you believe are critical in creating the person you are at this moment. These moments can be positive or negative, but they should that they be moments you are willing to share with the class and are appropriate for the classroom. Once spoken, words can often have unintended consequences. Write 100 words on each, exploring your emotions during these moments. Use your own experience of how it feels to be in conflict with yourself, with your parents or with your society to fuel your memory. Pick one to share in the Feather Circle on Friday, Month Date.

For your second draft, use the moment you chose for the FC to inspire a new narrative piece. Just like the author of *Blood Don’t Lie* used his personal writing to inspire his novel, we will explore flash fiction by using our Moment Letters as springboards. I would like you to step back from your moment and write a flash fiction of 1000 words. Change the names, add any little tweaks that you think that you need to before our Feather Circle at the end of the week. Have a rough draft of this piece ready to share with your Small Group on Tuesday, Month Date.

Your final draft of your Moment Flash Fiction should be a piece of quality narrative fiction that develops your experience into a well-structured sequence of events. You should utilize the narrative techniques that we have studied in *Blood Don’t Lie,* such as: dialogue, descriptions, sensory details, and foreshadowing to create and interesting and compelling piece of short fiction. Keep in mind the short fiction that we have studied in class: *The Cask of Amontillado*, six word stories, Lydia Davis). Keep your writing small and focused for the best effect. It may or may not be recognizable from that first journal entry. Let your first drafts inspire your finished product and try to be true to the emotions of your pivotal moment, if not the events.

**Assignment Timeline**

1. Write 4, 100 word Moments Letters in your *Writing Journal*. Pick one to share with the class in Friday’s Feather Circle.
2. Write a flash fiction of 500-1000 words that is inspired by your chosen Moment Letter.
3. Meet with Small Group on Tuesday and share your rough drafts of your flash fictions. Bring enough copies of your piece for your whole group.
4. Optional: Schedule a meeting with me to review your piece before the final draft is due on Friday.
5. Bring a copy of your final draft Moment Flash Fiction and your rough draft to turn in after our Feather Circle on Friday, Month Date.

**Rubric**

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|  | **Ideas** | **Voice** | **Conventions** |
| **100%** | **5**  The Narrative shows an unforgettable experience. The details make the story truly memorable. | **5**  The writer’s voice creates an unforgettable experience for the reader. | **5**  Punctuation and grammar are correct. The writing is free from spelling errors. |
| **90%** | **4**  The writer shows an interesting experience. Details help create the interest. | **4**  The writer’s personal voice creates interest in the story. Dialogue is used. | **4**  The narrative has a few minor errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar. |
| **80%** | **3**  The writer tells an interesting narrative. More details are needed. | **3**  The writer’s voice creates interest in the story. More dialogue is needed. | **3**  The writing has several errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar. |
| **70%** | **2**  The writer on one plotline. Some details do not relate. | **2**  The writer’s voice is clouded can usually be heard. More dialogue is needed. | **2**  Some errors confuse the reader. |
| **60%** | **1**  The writer needs to focus on one experience. Details are needed. | **1**  The voice is weak. Dialogue is needed. | **1**  Many errors make the writing confusing and hard to read. |

**Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/)  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/a/)  
Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/b/)  
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/c/)  
Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/d/)  
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.E](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/e/)  
Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.