**Personal Essay: Why I Write**

**The Assignment**

After reading about why people write or value writing, choose a social media site that you enjoy using or that you use regularly. Write an essay that mimics the style of one of the readings, focused to fit your chosen social media site. You might title your piece “Why I Tweet,” “Why I Pin,” “Why I Facebook,” or “Why I YouTube.”

For **inspiration pieces**, read “Why I Write” essays, the *National Writing Project*, October 17, 2011, <https://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/3663>. Consider reading essays by Terry Tempest Williams, Gaetan Pappalardo, Jill Nash, or David Deutsch.

**Audience, purpose, nuts & bolts**

* Write to an audience of people who engage in social media enough to be familiar with how it works (so you don’t need to explain the basics).
* Your aim is to help your audience think about the social media site in new, more thoughtful ways, whether or not they are big users of the site beforehand.
* Use a format that feels comfortable to you. MLA format is not required for this first essay, though you should make sure your name is on it and you should give credit to the writer whose essay has inspired you.
* Aim for 1-2 pages, 300-400 words.

**Process guidelines**

1. Read about why professional writers write, noticing both their reasons and how they present their reasons for greatest impact. Read more about writing and hopes for writing in school and writing on the internet.
2. Choose a social media site where you enjoy composing/writing/participating. Your essay will focus on why you enjoy participating on this site.
3. Choose one of the pieces about writing that you can use as an inspiration for the form and style of your own essay. Make notes about the significant elements that are worth imitating.
4. List as many ideas as you can to answer the question, *why do you participate in this particular social media site?*
5. Put your ideas together in a draft, beginning to imitate the style of your inspiration piece.
6. Spiffy up your draft a bit, both in terms of content (*what* it says) and rhetoric (*how* it says it).
7. Use peer review to get feedback on how well your essay communicates your ideas to people who similarly enjoy the social media site and people who are less inclined to appreciate this form of social media participation.
8. Spend time revising your draft.
9. Use in-class proofreading and editing to check for common errors. Hand in! Be happy!

**What you can hope to learn**

This essay will help you

* practice the habit of reflecting on your writing
* practice using models of writing to shape your own writing
* think about the way style and content work together
* use sources to inspire your own writing
* use your interests to energize your writing
* use workshops and peer review to improve your writing
* write for a general audience that consists of you, the writer; people who enjoy participating in the social media site you’re writing about; and people who may not participate in that social media site at all (an audience that’s similar to the audiences of the professional writers whose work we read)

**Scoring Guide**

(40%) Content: The essay clearly focuses on a single social media site and the reasons why the writer participates in that site. The reasons for participation are thoughtful and specific. The ideas have been developed to go beyond the obvious.

(30%) Style (taken from inspiration piece):

Tone (serious, sarcastic, humorous, a mix?):

Paragraph style (many short paragraphs, one long paragraph, a mix, etc.):

Sentence style (any pattern in length or style?):

Diction (formal, informal, jargon?):

Organization:

Other stylistic elements worth imitating (if any):

(30%) Format & Correctness: The essay has been proofread to catch typos. The essay has been proofread so errors are minimal and do not distract from the content.