

Directed Learning Activity
Introductions: Reading as a Writer**



Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

EWRT Instructor: _____

Date Completed: _____

**The idea of "Reading as a Writer" comes from the book *Habits of the Creative Mind* by Richard E. Miller & Ann Jurecic

Introduction Organization:

- Write a hook. Think about how you can bring in your reader to your topic (stay away from cliches and broad generalizations).
- For the beginning of your paper, you should first summarize the important aspect of the assigned reading(s) and any general information you want your reader to know about your topic.
- Then set up the context for your point of view (aka your thesis statement).
- Then, the paper should include a thesis statement that is your own ideas on these topics (See "Creating Dynamic Thesis Statements" DLA for more information).
 - Questions to consider when writing your thesis statement:
 - Argue for the impact of this idea on the systems in this culture; and why this matters; why should we be talking about this? What might the future look like if, as a whole culture, we utilize this concept? What might the ramifications be (positive or negative) on future generations?
 - NOTE: You don't need to write about all of this, but what do you think is most important to focus on, what can a reader who hasn't read these texts relate to in a more general way?

Directions:

- Read the writer's intro to the essay in the following excerpt. (Neil Gaiman)
- Then answer the questions.

Neil Gaiman "Learning to Read"

Neil Gaiman, a well-known author and thinker, strongly persuades his readers to consider how we interact with others and our ideas. Through his speeches and novels, he asks us to give weight to what others' have said and not be so focused on only gravitating towards others who have the same ideas as us. Though I agree with Gaiman's argument, in practice I have found that I am not always able to act in this way. Topics that deal with women's rights and how women are treated has always been sensitive for me to discuss with men; especially those who are more conservative in their beliefs. If I'm being completely honest, I try to ignore or rip apart the credibility of these men. I ask myself: How could they know my experience? I think: What they are saying is SO wrong, they must be uneducated and unaware of the experiences of others. However, if I am to follow the insight of Gaiman, I must pause and consider if I am willing to listen to these ideas that are so outside of my own and actually very painful to give value to.

David Foster Wallace, another well known writer, also asks us to consider a similar idea. In contrast to Gaiman though, his ideas are easier for me to connect to because I think his presentation leaves more opportunity for interpretation. When he speaks of the "Democratic Spirit," he emphasizes that the world isn't black and white and how we make decisions and see the world should be based on each situation's context. In placing Gaiman and Wallace side by side, I can acknowledge the value in listening to others' stories, especially those that challenge me and push me out of my comfort zone. On the other hand, I must be able to be in dialogue about the situation and question and be respected for my own life experiences and beliefs. Only then do I believe that this is possible for me in practice. I don't think I am alone in thinking this. If we as a culture, could create a situation in which each person feels heard and valued and we don't accept ideas without curiosity and careful consideration, I can imagine a more free world. A world in which progress is more possible.

- What does the writer do in order to introduce the reader to their topic; how do they establish a clear "road map" to where the essay will go?
- How much info do they give about their topic (%)?

- How much is their own opinion (%)?

- Why did they begin their essay in this way?

- What is their thesis? How does it connect to the larger culture and why we as readers should care?

- Based on the rubric below, what grade would you give the introductory paragraph? State your reasons.

EWRT1A Final Portfolio Rubric

Note: an essay that is far below college level in one or more areas will not pass even if it is good in other ways.

	F=Below College	D=Weak	C=Passing	B=Strong	A=Ideal
Ideas and Support (50%)	No distinctive point of view is present in the essay. The essay is off topic.	The subject of the essay is dealt with superficially. The thesis is unclear or unrelated to the rest of the essay. The central point is not an idea that can sustain an essay. Ideas produced are merely descriptive rather than insightful, or ideas presented are unsupported opinions rather than analytical ideas.	The essay has a thesis that relates to the topic and goes beyond summary. The essay sticks to an overall point and supports its assertions with some examples. Most paragraphs develop a point that relates to the topic. The writer connects ideas from the reading to his or her own observations and attempts analysis. Sources are generally cited correctly.	The essay provides a clear thesis and an appropriately limited subject. Ample, apt, and specific evidence supports, illustrates, clarifies the author's thesis. The essay makes clear supporting points to focus the body paragraphs, helping readers see how the body of the paper develops the overall point of the thesis. The essay is written for an educated reader who has not read the book.	The essay includes a clear and worthwhile overall point in response to the essay topic. The thesis makes a claim about a connection between the topic the writer analyzes in depth and a larger framework of interpretation (such as issues or attitudes in the larger culture). Each body paragraph includes vivid and insightful evidence or experience that substantiates the writer's thesis. When appropriate, the writer gracefully juggles evidence from multiple sources, citing them skillfully. The writer provides counterpoints to the thesis and perhaps even creates a "new" or more nuanced thesis towards the end of the paper.
Organization (25%)	The introduction is confusing or incomplete. Body paragraphs jump from one idea to the next without apparent connection. Paragraph breaks, if any, do not correspond to topic changes. A conclusion is missing, confusing, or unrelated to the essay.	The essay has an introduction, but it fails to provide adequate framing. Very few paragraphs articulate a focus. The topic sequences are disorganized logically and sequentially. The conclusion is incomplete or does not provide useful closure.	The introduction frames the essay but may be under-developed or uninspired. Most body paragraphs develop a clear topic and connect logically to the overall point. Topic sequence is usually logical. The conclusion is functional but may not offer more than summary.	The introduction orients the reader to the topic and offers useful and appropriate framing. The writer organizes the essay through a non-formulaic logical sequence. The writer uses a clear pattern of paragraph topics, and it limits the focus of each paragraph. The writer provides an ending that is more than summary.	The beginning paragraph(s) orients the reader to the topic and establishes a clear idea or "road map" as to where exactly the writer will take the reader. The paper has a strategic and consistent logical sequence, which is not simply formulaic. The writer artfully cues the reader when he or she shifts to another sub-point; he or she creates flow not only on the sentence-level but also in transitioning from paragraph to paragraph. The ending provides thoughtful conclusion that does not simply summarize points already made.
Language Use (25%)	Errors in grammar, spelling, or misused vocabulary seriously impede comprehension.	Sentences are very simple, showing little to no variation in structure. The essay contains serious grammatical errors, making the essay difficult to understand at times. Word choices are very repetitious or frequently inaccurate.	Sentences show mostly accurate vocabulary. This essay may contain minor problems in grammar, punctuation, or word choice, which distract the reader but do not get in the way of ideas. Sentences show some variation of structure and style.	Clear sentences and accurate vocabulary engage the readers in the topic. The essay includes a variety of sentence structures. Sentences have only a couple of major grammatical errors and no pervasive pattern of error. The essay may include some punctuation problems or typographical errors.	The writer conveys interest, passion and engagement to the reader. The writer uses precise, expressive language, which may include wit, humor, or figurative language. Vivid vocabulary and a compelling voice energize the topic. The essay includes a variety of sophisticated sentence structures. Sentences are free from major grammatical errors. There are no major punctuation problems and few to no typographical errors.