Found-Object Sculpture Writing Assignment

Background

Throughout the semester, we will experience writing in several different genres. In addition to focusing on different genres, each assignment will also focus on a different technique for improving your writing. In this writing assignment, you are asked to write a narrative essay and focus on using the active voice.

Narrative Essays

(Taken from a “Narrative Writing Tutorial” @ http://www.iss.k12.nc.us/writing)

A narrative tells a story. Telling a story aloud is very different from writing a story down on paper. When a story is told out loud, we tend to "hop around", leave out important details, and forget to explain characters. In a sense all of that is okay, our gestures, expressions, and tones of voice can carry a lot of information. The reader of a written narrative expects more and needs more.

The story cannot be simply "talk" written down. All of the important events and details must be organized, clear, and descriptive. A fully developed narrative story involves a main idea, which is introduced in the beginning, more detailed and eventful in the middle, and wraps up in the end. For more information on narrative essays including sample essays and helpful hints, check out Imaginative Narrative.

In this assignment, you are asked to write an “imaginative narrative,” in other words, makeup a story.

Active vs. Passive Voice

When we speak of “voice” in the context of grammar, we characterize the manner in which the verb operates in the sentence. If the sentence’s subject performs the action or shows the condition described by the verb, we say the writer has used the active voice. In contrast, if the sentence’s subject receives the action of the verb, then we say the writer has used the passive voice. This distinction is illustrated in the following two sentences:

**Active voice:** The pitcher threw the ball to the catcher.

**Passive voice:** The ball was thrown by the pitcher to the catcher.

Although the passive voice maybe useful at times, it tends to rob your writing of energy. By its very structure, it makes your sentences wordy. Because the subject of the sentence is “acted on” in the passive voice, it makes the characters of your story less active and thereby less interesting.
In this assignment, you are asked to pay particular attention to using the active voice in your writing.

**The Writing Prompt**

Write a one to two page narrative essay in which your found-object sculpture plays a central role. This prompt allows a great deal of creative freedom in the role played by your sculpture. For example, it could be an artifact from a past civilization in a story set in the future, or perhaps it’s a magical object similar to Aladdin’s lamp. Whatever role your found-object sculpture plays in your story, remember that you must present a complete narrative. And, as stated above, a narrative story involves a main idea, which is introduced in the beginning, detailed in the middle, and wrapped up in the end. Also remember that you are writing in the active voice.

Your essay should be double spaced and written in 12 pt font. And last but not least, proof read your essay a day after you have written it.

**Due Date**

Your essay should be submitted electronically to Moodle. It may be in any one of five file formats: Microsoft Word 2007 or earlier, Open Office (.odt), PDF, RTF, or plain text (.txt). Your essay is due no later than Monday, Sept 20 at mid-night.

**Grading**

To get a C+ or higher your essay must meet the following criteria:

1. The narrative essay has a main idea or purpose and that idea is defined in the opening paragraph.
2. The essay responds to the writing prompt.
3. The essay is written in the active voice.
4. All sentences are complete sentences.
5. The paper is free from basic grammatical errors.

To get a B or an A your essay must meet the following additional requirements:

1. The essay responds to the prompt in a complete and interesting way. It has an appropriate degree of complexity in its plot and characters.
2. It is a well organized essay with a beginning middle and end. All of the details relate to the main point that you are attempting to make.
3. Every paragraph contains a clear topic sentence or there is another kind of organization principle at work.
4. The writing style is interesting and efficient, not wordy or unclear.
5. It is a thoughtful and original paper.
6. I hear a lively, intelligent, and interesting human speaking through the text of the essay.