

Writing Assignment 3

For your third writing assignment, choose **one** of the following options from Bruce Ballenger's textbook, *The Curious Writer*:

(1) "Try this exercise: Think about things, ordinary objects, that you have held onto all these years because you simply can't throw them away. They *mean* something to you. They are reminders of another time, or a turning point in your life, or a particular moment of joy, or sadness, or perhaps fear. Consider a few of mine: a green plaster Buddha, handmade; a glow-in-the-dark crucifix; an old pair of 7 X 50 Nikon binoculars; a 1969 Martin D 28 guitar; a brown-handled flathead screwdriver with a touch of red nail polish on the handle; a homemade lamp made from a wooden wallpaper roller; a red dog's collar. While they are meaningless to you, naturally, to me each of these objects carries a charge; they remind me of a story, a moment, a feeling. The personal essay makes space for writers to explore the meanings of such ordinary things" (p. 75). **Pick one ordinary object and explain its meaning to you in a two- to four-page essay, using specific single-moment evidence and details to tell a story.**

(2) "[*This I Believe*] was begun in the 1950s by famed journalist Edward R. Murrow, who invited radio listeners and public figures to submit very brief essays that stated some core belief that guided their 'daily lives.' ... The program's website offers this advice to essayists: 1. Find a way to succinctly and clearly state your belief. 2. If possible, anchor it to stories. 3. Write in your own voice. 4. 'Be positive,' and avoid lecturing the listener" (p. 84). **Write a two- to four-page essay that follows the *This I Believe* radio program guidelines.**

Here are two things that are particularly important to this assignment:

- Do more than tell a story. There must be a *purpose* behind telling the story that speaks in some way to someone else. It should, ultimately, answer the *So what?* Question – why does this matter in a larger context, beyond your particular experience?
- Be richly detailed. Seize opportunities to *show* what you mean rather than simply explain it.

Purpose: To use an object or a belief to open your readers' eyes to something new.

Audience: Your choice, although it must be more than one person and appropriate to your purpose. Be sure to attach a **brief audience description** to your draft, using proper APA format for an Appendix.