

Guidelines for Short Story and Values Assessment

The project includes two components: a short story and a value assessment.

Short Story

One thing that happens as we get older is we tend to forget who we are at our core. This is because the tastes of society, culture, and family overlap our individual preferences as we grow. For example, the impossibly slender girl is seen as attractive in our society, while a hundred years ago a more full-bodied figure was preferred. This is social conditioning and is just one example of how society's beliefs can alter our own innate preferences.

At our center, we all have different personal blueprints about what is important to us and what brings us joy. Some people find joy in reading, while others find bliss in sports. Even more specifically, some people find joy in reading spy novels, while others playing baseball. Our own distinct blueprint is our personal set of values, that when triggered, shoots happiness into us like a flowing river. Tapping into our values is available by looking at the few moments in our lives that resonate with a feeling of deep fulfillment. As children, it was easier to draw on because we lived in the present moment more than we do now.

Think of a moment in your life that oozes a feeling of deep satisfaction and write about it. This moment should comfort you and bring a sense of peace, one similar to a child playing with small waves as they wash ashore. The event in your life can be about anything. It can be a moment that just happened, like yesterday, or it can be a moment that occurred long ago when you were very young. The first thing that comes to your mind is probably the best place to start.

Short Story Grading Guidelines (5 Points):

- Length requirement of 400 – 800 words.
- Use correct grammar, syntax, and punctuation throughout.
- Story starts with a hook - a technique that captures the audience's attention.
- Focus on a very short period of time.
- Most importantly, storytelling is about using details.

Don't say: "We got into the car."

Do say: "I fell into the dusty passenger seat of my silver blue 1965 Chevy Impala."

Value Assessment

Once we take a step back and realize the importance of our personal blueprint then we can figure out what creates negative or positive emotions within us. After writing your story reread it and figure out the reasons behind the importance of your story. This includes looking at your story with two tools of analysis. You are assessing how that moment in your life holds value and fulfills a need. (1) What are the values within your experience that resonate with you (love, trust, loyalty, helpfulness, friendliness, family, excitement, nature, God, courteousness, kindness, obedience, cheerfulness, thrift, bravery, cleanliness, reverence, nature, relationship, commonality, etc.)? (2) What underlying need or needs is this moment fulfilling? The six human needs include certainty, uncertainty, significance, connection, growth, and contribution.

Value Assessment Grading Guidelines (5 Points):

- Length requirement of 300 – 600 words.
- Use correct grammar, syntax, and punctuation throughout.
- Both questions are answered as separate paragraphs with textual support (quote your story).
- Four short paragraphs total: introduction, values paragraph, needs paragraph, and conclusion.
- Use transitional and/or topic sentences that link all paragraphs together.

