

Object Speech and Writing

Background

This assignment asks you to share something about yourself both in oral form and in writing. Don't be afraid. Yes, it is rather daunting to stand up in front of 70 of your fellow sophomores, but you can do this! And once you have done this you will feel highly accomplished, especially if you have practiced and prepared. Now, read on to learn about the details of this assignment. We will also demonstrate the oral presentation, and you can read our writing samples here as well.

Assignment Details/Scoring

Choose an object that is yours or your family's, one that has significance to your family's history. This object should also be part of a larger history beyond just your family's connection to it. (**Some requirements: no items of jewelry, no items that will make you cry when you discuss them.**) Bring to class this object to show to the class (using the document camera if it is a small object). Do not bring a photo/image of the object; you **MUST** bring the actual object to class. You will give a brief speech about this object as well as turn in an essay about it (see descriptions of these below). You will also do a brief writing about this object.

Part I – Speech: You will talk between 2-3 minutes about this object, explaining what the object is, how it connects to your history and/or your family's history; and why this object has significance and value to you. As a "talk," this is **not** a memorized speech. It is **not** your written essay. You should prepare by practicing, but the speech should **not** sound robotic.

Required speech components:

- Begin with a story about you and this object.
- Explain what the object is and how it connects to a larger history of that object.
- Explain how this object came into your family.
- End by discussing why this object has value to you.

Speaking skill requirements:

- Make eye contact with all areas of the room (where there are students).
- Make effective use of the microphone.
- Make appropriate hand gestures (no hands in pockets). Have good posture.

Oral Presentation Scoring

√+ (10 points)

- Presentation is about two-three minutes
- Strong speaking skills and enthusiasm
- Preparation is excellent
- Meets all requirements listed above

√ (8 points)

- Presentation may be short/long
- Decent speaking skills with some enthusiasm
- Preparation is evident
- Meets all/most requirements

√- (6 points)

- Presentation is really short/long
- Speaking skills are poor
- Preparation is minimal, if at all
- Meets some/few requirements

Part II – Writing: In a 400- 500-word essay, write about your object. Use the model writing at the end of this assignment to help you determine how to format and write this short essay. You may wish to follow the speech outline above or you may wish to write this in a different order. Do make sure that you touch on all required speech components. Attach to the end of your essay – or embed at the end of your essay – an image of the object you discuss. Turn in a paper copy on the day that it is due, and make sure you submit the writing to Turnitin.com by the end of the week when your work is due. Your grade will be substantially lowered if you fail to submit the writing by this due date.

Writing Scoring

√+ (10 points)

Writing is MLA, meets word count, and is on time

Written work emulates sample, *i.e.* is written in first person, uses distinct voice and high-school level vocabulary

Written work shows exceptional care in writing

Typed work is uploaded to turnitin.com on time

√ (8 points)

Writing is MLA, meets word count, and is on time

Written work emulates most aspects of the sample, though may be less successful with some elements

Written work shows care

Typed work may be uploaded on time

√- (6 points)

Writing has errors in format, doesn't meet word count, or may not be on time.

Written work shows little effort to emulate the sample writing

Written work may not show care

Typed work may not be uploaded

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Mr. and Mrs. Davis

Humanities, Block 2

12 September 2016

The Stare of the Steer

“Wow! Where did you get that neckerchief slide,” a younger Scout asks my son, Alex. “It was my dad’s dad’s slide,” he says with about as much pride as one can expect for a piece of carved wood worn around a Boy Scout uniform neckerchief.

The slide in question holds my son’s blue neckerchief and is unique in his troop where nearly all Scouts opt for the metal slide that comes standard with the uniform. Painted black, this 2-inch long slide portrays a steer’s head. Staring out from eye sockets are two circular red stickers. It’s a rather menacing-looking slide, especially when lined up against less threatening slides one could carve in a summer Boy Scout camp: a hiking boot, a soaring eagle, or a gentle turtle.

I remember my dad wearing this steer slide during the years I was in Scouts, and while I never wore the slide when I was a young Scout, I somehow ended up with this memento from my father’s Scouting days. Some call these slides “Woogles,” which is their technical name, but that name really is supposed to be applied to a slide which uses a Turk’s head knot (a knot consisting of multiple interwoven loops).

These “Woggles” form an integral part of the Boy Scout Uniform. When Scouting began in the United States in 1910, uniforms featured brown jackets with metal buttons, large pockets, and stiff collars — but no neckerchiefs with slides. Scouts in the 1910s and ’20s also wore rather striking breeches that flared out at the thighs and long socks that turned down at the knee. Wide-brimmed hats with Scout ranks were also worn at this time. After a few years, these high-collared shirts were traded for the low-collared shirts of today, and neckerchiefs were added to complement the total look.

In truth, I care little about Scouting's sartorial history, but this angry-steer slide that gets my son attention today serves as a reminder of the time I spent in Scouts with my own father in the 1970s and early '80s. I wasn't particularly fond of the experience then — the Friday-night meetings especially needled me. But part of my character was formed through this experience. I gained confidence in my ability to achieve challenging goals (hiking 50 miles in the Sierras helped me with that), I learned skills I would use for several years in my summer job as a lifeguard, and I also made a few good friends along the way.

Perhaps my son will gain something of equal value to him through his Scouting experience as he navigates what may be a more challenging world than the one in which I grew up. If nothing else, he will have that red-eyed steer to help guide him through his Scouting life. Better than some wooden turtle, I'd say.

