

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 important to your family – 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; in other words, you will need to discuss the history behind this object – how it relates to objects like it that came before, and how it relates to your own family's story. **(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).

Part I – Speech: You will talk between 2-3 minutes about this object, explaining what the object is, how it connects to your family's history; and why this object has significance and value in your family. 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 importance for your family.

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. Also include the word count at the end of your writing. (Word count does *not* include your heading and title.) 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

Jennifer Davis

Mr. and Mrs. Davis

Humanities, Block 2/3

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Not Run of the Mill

Try to picture Santa, but without the beard, sitting in front of a brick barbecue and searing steaks. That's the image I have of my grandmother's third husband – she had five – as he sat on the patio of his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Every summer when we visited my grandmother, her husband Harold would cook some huge steaks for us. While cooking, he'd season the steaks with a huge, wooden pepper mill. As a little girl, I can remember having a tough time eating those steaks not only because they were cooked very rare, but also because they had so much pepper on them. Harold's pepper seemed so much more. . . well, peppery, than the pepper we shook out of a little tin can at my home.

The pepper mill, or pepper grinder, stands eleven inches tall and is made of teak wood and metal. With an hour-glass shape, it has a hand crank at the top for grinding the pepper corns that go in the top. I don't think it's ever been cleaned. The diameter of the base, where the pepper comes out, is three and a half inches. That's a lot of pepper coverage. The manufacturer is George S. Thompson Corporation, based in Monterey Park here in California. According to the company's website, the company started in 1944 when Mr. Thompson decided to get more Americans to use pepper mills. He had lived in Europe where the pepper mill is more popular, and he realized that food just tastes better with pepper freshly ground from a mill. In fact, the bottom of the mill has the quote "For finer flavor, grind it fresh!"

When Harold died in 1976, the pepper mill made its way to our home. I was frankly a little afraid of the mill: I was sort of freaked out by Harold's passing, and I had unpleasant memories of those pepper-encrusted steaks which practically squirted with blood when poked with a knife. My family, though, viewed the pepper mill as an integral part of our kitchen and proudly displayed it next to the stove.

"Oooh, I really feel like a chef now," my dad would say as he turned the handle to grind the pepper. Dad often made breakfast and his fried eggs were a morning specialty. He put a plate of eggs practically swimming in freshly ground pepper in front of me and say "Eat up, kid!" The pepper mill brought a certain culinary classiness to our kitchen. Perhaps we thought that if guests saw the pepper mill, they might think we really used our kitchen to whip up some gourmet meals.

Just last night, my daughter used the pepper mill to season the alfredo sauce she was making to accompany our salmon and pasta. Marveling at how much pepper came out, she exclaimed, "I love this thing!" As we all dug into our food, we all agreed the sauce was seasoned perfectly. Harold would be proud. (496 words)

