

Ashland English 100 Essay #5

Advice of a veteran English teacher

Begin by reading “How to Say Nothing in 500 Words” by Paul McHenry Roberts (available through Blackboard).

Your Writing Task

Choose one (and only one!) of the following prompts:

1. In the Roberts essay, how did the imaginary student proceed with writing the essay on college football? Do you regard the author’s description of this hypothetical attempt as exaggerated, or does it strike you as true to life? How does it compare with your own attempts at writing essays?
2. Do you think the “D” allegedly earned by the essay on college football is overly harsh or is it deserved? Justify your answer.
3. Roberts advises that you list the arguments that come immediately to mind on a topic and then never use any of them. How do you think he would reply to the objection that a student might deeply believe in one of the clichéd arguments on the list?
4. Roberts has taken two risks. One is that students will misread this as an essay opposing football (it’s not). The other is that they will miss the humor. Write an essay in which you discuss how this essay is tailored to its target audience. (Of course, to do this, you will have to figure out who the target audience is and what kind of writing will appeal to them.)

Mechanical Details

Length: Minimum 1300 words not counting title, your name, etc. That’s about a four-page paper. There is no maximum, but try to keep it under 2000. Papers significantly under the minimum (90% or less) will not receive the best possible grade.

Format: Standard MLA format. (12-point Times Roman type, double-spaced, 1” margin all around, MLA header.)

Submitting the paper:

- The English Department wants electronic copies of all your essays this semester, so please upload the final product to the drop box in Blackboard. Some students (especially those who use Google Docs) have trouble figuring out how to do this, so ask if you are uncertain how to proceed!
- If you have any trouble getting the Blackboard upload to work, simply print a copy and put it in the instructor’s mailbox (in Bixler 217).

Due Dates

1. **Peer Editing:** Bring in two printed copies of your rough draft Monday, December 3, 2018.
2. **Final copy:** Friday, December 7, 2018. **Late papers will not be accepted!**

This essay is worth 100 points.