

Sophomore Honors English  
Mr. McBride

## Reflective Essay Assignment

100 Points

Your final writing assignment to follow our reading of Tobias Wolff's memoir *This Boy's Life* is a reflective essay. In this essay of at least 1000 words, you will be recounting a memorable incident in your life that involves you and at least one other person, and then reflecting on its broader significance. The essay will have thus have two parts; the presentation of the incident, and the reflection on the incident. You will need to make a transition between the two parts of your essay, saying something like, "Now that I look back on this incident, I see that..." (But much less clichéd and obvious – do not just copy this example!)

Here is a rubric that you will use for writing for the assignment. Your grade will be based on my overall assessment of how successfully you have met the requirements stated below.

- I. Presentation of the incident
  - a. The incident is specific, focusing on a significant event that happened at a particular time and in a particular place
  - b. The incident is presented vividly to the reader using good narrative writing skills:
    - The details chosen are significant and help the reader visualize the setting of the incident. The details chosen also give the reader insight into your mindset at the time. For example, if the principal was scolding you, you might have noticed what kind of shoes he was wearing, if the principal was praising you, you might have noticed the look in his eye.
    - Good concrete description is used, including details that appeal to more than just the visual sense; what did things smell like, feel like, taste like, and sound like?
    - Good characterization is used to present the traits and personality of the other person(s) involved in the incident.
    - Figurative language is used to make the description more vivid; figurative language includes metaphors, similes, and hyperboles.
    - Dialogue is used to show interactions between people involved in the incident.

- II. Reflecting on the incident
  - a. Your reflection shows how you have been affected by the incident, what you learned about yourself, about other people, about society, etc.
  - b. Your reflection makes it clear to the reader why this incident is significant in your life and what its significance is.
  - c. The reflection gives a feeling of conclusion to the essay.
  
- III. Overall
  - a. Essay shows evidence of careful proof-reading – no obvious errors
  - b. Incident vividly written
  - c. Reflection shows insight and reveals significance of incident
  - d. Essay is not less than 1000 words