

Walk to Nowhere: Writing as Exploration

Purpose

You are going to go for a walk.

This walk has emotional, psychological, and physical value (slowing down, getting out, breathing fresh air), but also is a way of practicing the physical act of writing as exploration and discovery.

Course Goal

1. Compose work in a variety of genres, including but not limited to thesis-driven, college-level essays that synthesize researched sources (3,500 words minimum of formal writing, total, excluding revisions) by using the writing process.

Module Goal

This week we are re-framing/re-vision/re-imaging the essay. An essay is not just one thing. It doesn't *have* to be 5 paragraphs. It doesn't *have* to be about demonstrating knowledge.

What if the essay is exploratory? Kind of weird? Playful?

Antiracist Goals

Strict adherence to a particular kind of writing, in a particular way has long been a white supremacist value. This form of gatekeeping has been used to vilify and "other" those who are writing/speaking/creating outside the dominant culture. This assignment challenges those values.

Task Instructions

Step One: Go for a Walk

1. Go for a walk. Bring something to write on and with--a piece of scrap paper and a pencil, a notebook and a pen, etc. If you can avoid using your phone, do so.
2. Wander around a park/your neighborhood/a building. Try to not have a particular destination in mind.
3. Let your mind wander. Notice the sights, smells, and/or sounds that you move around and through.

Note: Follow safe walking techniques--walk on lighted paths and/or in buildings that are lit and open. If you are more comfortable walking with a buddy, do so, although try not to talk too much. You don't have to walk far to make this work; sometimes just walking down the hallway can bring surprising discoveries.

Step Two: Record your Thoughts

After your walk or somewhere along the way, write about your walk or something else entirely. Let your thoughts wander on the page just as you wandered on your walk.

If you aren't sure where to start, here are some suggestions:

- Describe something you heard/smelled/saw on your walk in a really detailed way. Try to describe everything about it: color, shape, location, uses. You could even tell a story about it. How did it get there? What has this thing's life been like?
- Describe your walk itself. Where did you go? How did you decide what path to take? What did you leave behind at home?
- Describe your thoughts while walking. What did you think about when you first walked out your door? How did this change as your walk progressed?

Step Three: Submit to this Assignment

Submit what you wrote. Feel free to edit/revise/expand, but you aren't required to do so. Your submission doesn't have to be in a particular format or style.

Completion Criteria

Submit to complete this assignment.