

Creating a Photo Essay

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Free Writing, Self-Editing/Peer Editing, Sketching, Sharing and Responding, Graphic Organizer

Assignment

Your assignment is to create and present a photo essay revealing your perspective (position) about an issue or topic of importance to you.

Steps

1. Select a topic of interest to you, and then free write and loop to explore your position on the issue. If necessary, conduct research to deepen your knowledge of the issue. As you plan your photo essay, consider how you might use it as a proposal to solicit action on the issue or as support for a college application.
2. Generate a working thesis that clearly identifies the issue and your position. Use peer response to refine your thesis into a concise statement.
3. Use the graphic organizer on page 41 to plan the evidence you will use to assert and support your thesis before presenting your position on the issue.
 - ▶ Generate ideas to support the thesis.
 - ▶ Sketch your proposed photo images (at least ten).
 - ▶ Include notes about film techniques (shots, angles, *mise en scène*) you want to use in your photos.
 - ▶ Write a rationale to explain the connection between each proposed photograph and your thesis. Format your thesis and rationales with headings related to each photo. You will include the final document as part of your photo essay.
4. Work collaboratively to plan the layout and format of the photo essay so that it advances your argument visually. Anticipate potential misunderstandings or problems your readers or viewers may have, and include headings or relevant questions that engage readers/viewers and address their potential misunderstandings or problems.
5. Plan the process you will use to create appropriate photos for your essay. Before you take the photographs, identify the following:
 - ▶ The format of the photos.
 - ▶ Any resources you will need—equipment, staging, scene development, etc.
 - ▶ The process for film or digital prints as needed.
 - ▶ A schedule for creating the photos and the essay.

Creating a Photo Essay

6. Once you have your photos in hand, review your original organizational plan. Select and organize your photos to introduce your thesis, provide supporting evidence and details, and provide a conclusion. When citing technical evidence and details to support your position, remember to present them accurately and in language that is accessible and appropriate for your audience.
7. Share the draft layout of your photo essay with your peers and make necessary revisions to ensure clarity of ideas, a clear focus on the thesis, and the support of that thesis. If needed, add brief captions to clarify your argument for your viewers.
8. Next, generate a list of potential titles; select the one that best captures the essence of your photo essay.
9. Assemble your final photo essay. Be sure to include these elements:
 - ▶ A captivating title.
 - ▶ A numbered arrangement of photos that corresponds to the numbers on the graphic organizer.
 - ▶ Your graphic organizer with thesis, description of supporting evidence, and rationale attached to the back of your photo essay.
10. Review the Scoring Guide on page 43. Use that guide to review your photo essay and make sure you have created a strong presentation.
11. On the day of the presentation, you will participate in a gallery walk during which you will use sticky notes to evaluate other photo essays. As you evaluate the essays created by other students, you should attempt to identify the unstated thesis represented in each essay.
12. After your presentation, write a reflection in which you consider the reactions of your classmates in relation to your original intent. Consider the elements of Reader Response Criticism and include any insights you have about how these elements might affect your classmates' responses. Finally, discuss any changes you would make if you were to do this project again.

Planning Your Photo Essay

Use this graphic organizer to develop a plan for your photo essay. First, write the thesis that you refined in Step 2. Then list the supporting ideas you have generated. For each supporting idea, write a description or draw a sketch of the image you think would communicate or represent that idea. Write a rationale explaining how each image helps support the thesis. You must have at least 10 photos.

Thesis Statement:		
Supporting Idea	Description/Sketch	Rationale

Supporting Idea	Description/Sketch	Rationale
Conclusion		

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Ideas	At least 10 photo images expertly convey and support the essay's thesis. Titles and captions creatively convey a clear perspective on the issue. The thesis and rationale graphic organizer is thorough.	At least 10 photo images convey the essay's thesis. Titles and captions communicate a clear perspective on the issue. The thesis and rationale graphic organizer is complete.	Fewer than 10 photo images attempt to convey the essay's thesis. At times the thesis may be unclear. If used, titles and captions do little to provide a clear perspective on the issue. The thesis and rationale graphic organizer is incomplete.
Organization	The layout and design of the essay serve to expertly advance the argument and reflect thoughtful planning.	The layout and design of the essay are appropriate for the argument and reflect adequate planning.	The layout and design of the essay attempts, but does little, to enhance the argument and/or reflect advance thought or planning.
Cinematic Techniques	The photographs skillfully use a variety of media production elements that vividly reveal the image's purpose in connection to the argument.	The photographs adequately use a variety of media production elements that help to reveal the image's purpose in connection to the argument.	The photographs attempt to use a variety of media production elements; however, the purpose of the image in connection to the argument is unclear at times.
Reflection	The reflective text demonstrates a thorough and detailed analysis of the audience's reactions to the photo essay in relation to its original intent and Reader Response Criticism. The reflection includes insightful commentary on potential revisions.	The reflective text demonstrates an adequate analysis of the audience's reactions to the photo essay in relation to its original intent and Reader Response Criticism. The reflection includes clear commentary on potential revisions.	The reflective text demonstrates an inadequate analysis of the audience's reactions to the photo essay in relation to its original intent and in relation to Reader Response Criticism. Commentary on potential revisions is weak or missing.
Additional Criteria			

Comments: