Writing assignments for *Greenwich Village 1913* game

1. **Your personal character sketch (Due 8/22)**

In this class you will play two games; each time you will be assigned the role of a real or composite character. You will be given a role sheet explaining your character’s identity, background, and agenda. You’ll have to stay in character every time you speak, think, and write in this game. Some of the assignments are individualized to the character; writing assignments specific to your character are in your role sheet.

First, though, in class today, before you become your Greenwich Village character, you’ll write about your *own* character and identity.

Objectives for this assignment are:

- To introduce yourself – AS yourself – to the class.
- To reflect on your *own* background and how it influences your dreams, desires, and goals . . . before you assume a completely different identity.
- To practice writing a concise, clear, descriptive narrative in an appropriately formal but personal tone.
- To practice analyzing that narrative and drawing some conclusions about it.
- To start thinking about argumentation and how you may utilize it, not just in this course, but also in your personal life, education and eventual career.

Your personal character sketch begins with your name, age, and other crucial aspects of your identity: perhaps your hometown, ethnicity, religion, academic major, and so on.

Use ‘I’ since you are writing about yourself.

What is your most important goal or dream? What cause or issue are you most passionate about? Why? If you had to persuade a classmate to agree with you about that issue, what would you say?

2. **Character sketch of your game role: written version and spoken version (both due 8/29)**

**Overview and instructions:** To play your role effectively, you must abandon your own identity and immerse yourself in the character. Excellent details about him or her are found in the role sheet for your character. CAREFULLY read and re-read this role sheet; then write an introduction about your character in your character’s voice. You’ll post it on a forum in the course Discussion Board. Then you’ll edit it down to a shorter version to deliver aloud at the next class.

Use ‘I’ since you are writing about ‘yourself’ (as your character).
**Written version of character sketch**

Objectives for the written version of this assignment are:

- To begin to immerse yourself in your role, remembering that everything you say and do must be historically accurate/appropriate for your character.
- To introduce your character to the rest of the players in the game, using your character’s voice, not your own.
- To share only the relevant portions of your character’s background, without giving away any crucial opinions, agendas, and goals that need to be kept secret for awhile.
- To start thinking about your audience. Read the descriptions of the other characters so you know to whom you are speaking. Awareness of audience should help shape, not just what you say, but how you say it. What does your audience already know or believe about the issues of interest to your character?
- To introduce and begin to argue, briefly, relevant aspects of your position. You’ve got the attention of the other characters – don’t waste this opportunity. Remember, though, that some parts of your agenda must be kept secret for now.
- To write a short, focused, clear, correct, cohesive, persuasive description of your character. You’ll be graded on all these aspects of your posting. Write, re-write, edit, and proofread carefully before you post.

Length: 250-500 words.
Deadline for written version: post your character sketch on the Discussion Board before class on 8/29.

**Spoken version of character sketch**

Objectives for the spoken version of this assignment are similar to those above for the written version, plus:

- To begin to speak aloud in class in your character’s voice.
- To utilize standards for good public speaking: posture, eye contact, clarity, organization, and relevance. Remember that you’re speaking to the entire group, not just the Game Master/instructor.

Whittle down what you wrote to about 200 words, which will allow you to deliver it in 90 seconds. You’ll present this short version in class on 8/29.

Memorize, rehearse and time this 90-second version. You may use a note card but you must speak your introduction. DO NOT READ ALOUD. Reading aloud in this class will lower your grade.
   (First Draft due 9/5; Final version 9/12)

First, read and re-read SUMMARY OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL VICTORY OBJECTIVES in your role sheet.

Then read and re-read all the primary documents required for your role. These are listed in your role sheet under Reading Assignments; the documents themselves are found in your game book.

Find in your role sheet the section titled Writing/Communication Assignments. The first assignment is a 3-4 page paper and a 10-minute spoken version. You’ll use this assignment to lay out your position, both explaining and persuading.

Your position paper should include one clearly stated overall position with two reasons/examples from primary documents for your role; the documents are in your game book. Follow all instructions in the role sheet for what to write.

Objectives for this assignment:
- To practice written and spoken argumentation as you keep your victory objectives in mind.
- To practice writing a clear, correct essay with a clear thesis, relevant, effective support, a logical organization, and a strong conclusion.
- To understand your role, speaking and writing in your character’s voice.
- To understand your audience: read and re-read the parts of the game book about the factions so you’ll understand who they are, what they believe, and why they feel the way they do. Also read their self-introductions on the Discussion Board.
  o To convince those audience members who strongly disagree with you, you must consider their positions and come up with counterarguments.
  o Understand what you can/should reveal and what you must not reveal just yet. Perhaps you should explain how your life experiences motivated you to work for this issue. You may not want to share your strategy for getting naysayers to agree with you. Subtlety and discretion are part of any argumentative situation.
- To prepare you to deliver the speech. Good writing promotes good thinking. Both should help move you towards victory. The process of finding words for your ideas and fixing them on paper helps clarify and organize and develop those ideas.

**PAPER**

*Process for writing and revising this paper*
- You’ll write, revise, and edit.
- On the peer response day, bring to class a fully developed, edited, proofread draft, one that you would be happy to turn in for the
grade. This is your **working draft**. The working draft is *required* but not graded. I check off that you have it, but you don’t turn it in until you turn in the final paper. In class you’ll get peer responses to it and respond to classmates’ drafts. Keep the working draft and peer response to turn in with the final draft.

- You then revise again, significantly and productively, before turning the paper in for the grade.
- You’ll also post the final paper on the discussion board so that everyone in the game can read it.
- Failure to bring a full draft on time and participate fully on peer response day, or to turn in a working draft or peer response when you turn in the final paper, results in a significant grade penalty for that paper.
- All parts of the process are required. The final draft of the paper is expected to be carefully revised and *substantially improved* over the working draft.
- I recommend scheduling a conference with me. Bring to the conference your working draft and a specific question that we can work on in a 10-15 minute conference.

**What to turn in with the final draft.** In this order, labeled, stapled together or securely clipped together with a binder clip, not a paper clip, turn in:

- Perfect, correct, wonderful, extensively revised final draft in MLA (Noll)/Chicago (Westhoff) style; no cover sheet, please.
- The working draft that your classmate(s) responded to.
- All written responses that you received from classmates.

**SPEECH**

Use the paper contents to develop a ten-minute speech in which you persuade your audience to join you in working towards your victory objectives.

Remember that although the speech content is similar to your paper’s content, speaking aloud requires you to be even clearer in structure, content and flow so your audience can easily follow you.

Write, edit, rehearse in front of an audience, time it, and rehearse again.

Speeches will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Speaker**  
   Does the speech content fit and articulate your character’s persona and worldview?  
   Does the speech appropriately fit and identify your character’s goals?
2. Audience Adaptation
Does the speech adapt to appropriate target audiences using fitting appeals based in logos, ethos and/or pathos?

3. Research/Soundness
Does the speech reflect thorough and appropriate research in the documents of the era? Are these appropriately used and referenced?

4. Organization
Appropriateness of scheme chosen (ordering of key elements) Adequacy of development, Effective use of organizational devices (previews, transitions, summaries, signposts)

4. Style
Clarity? Appropriateness? Vividness? Correctness?

5. Delivery
Direct audience contact (eye contact; no reading aloud or excessive use of notes; facial expression)?
Vocal qualities (audibility, emphasis, pauses, rate, expressiveness)?
Posture, gestures and movement (not distracting; adds appropriate emphasis)

(Draft due 10/1; final version due 10/3)

You’ll submit a paragraph to Max Eastman in hopes that he will publish it in his newspaper, The Masses. You must submit your article to Max (and me) no later than 9 a.m. on 9/19. This will serve as the foundation for your second paper, due October 3.

Details to follow!