

PAWSIBILITIES



VOLUME
ONE!

Spring
2026

AN ANTHOLOGY OF STUDENT WORK

Pawsibilities: Student Perspectives and Rhetorical Reflections is a publication from the English Department at Missouri State University. The department publishes examples of work from first-year composition courses including ENG 100, 105, and 110. The editorial board celebrates submissions that represent writing as a process, with products that are inventive, creative, and ethically-made. The rights to publication are held by the students who have contributed to the anthology. We would like to thank the students who submitted and made our first volume possible, as well as the graduate teaching assistants who helped design and copyedit the publication.

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Pawsibilities: Student Perspectives and Rhetorical Reflections
An Anthology

Missouri State University English Department
2025-2026

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Introduction

Welcome, Bears!

You are holding the first edition of *Pawsibilities: Student Perspectives and Rhetorical Reflections*, a collection of writing from first-year composition classes—including ENG 100, 105, and 110—at Missouri State University in the spring and fall of 2025.

We are excited to share this collection with you for many reasons: Firstly, because we hope that creating a repository of examples for first-year composition students to utilize will encourage them to embrace the messy process of writing and prepare students for the kinds of writing they will be asked to create at Missouri State University. Secondly, we hope to share and prioritize student perspectives in an academic space where they are rarely considered for publication. Lastly, we hope you will consider submitting your own work from first-year composition to *Pawsibilities* so that future students have the opportunity to learn from you.

Pawsibilities is a space for students to foster critical thinking skills, discover new academic identities, and shape their rhetorical voice. No piece of writing is ever fully finished, and this collection celebrates that imperfect and complicated process by re-centering re/vision as a vital part of writing.

In this anthology, you will find student narratives, rhetorical analyses, research papers, and multimodal projects, all of which are central to the first-year composition curriculum at Missouri State University. This work is not only important for students to learn from, but it also serves as a resource for teachers coming into the program.

We would like to extend our gratitude to both our graduate student associate editors and our contributors, all of whom have put in hours of hard work to provide this resource for incoming students and teachers alike. If you have questions or would like more information about *Pawsibilities*, or are interested in submitting, contact the team at pawsibilities@missouristate.edu.

Good luck, have fun!
Alyssa Hinkston, Grace Catlin, & the *Pawsibilities* Editorial Team

Narrative

Introduction

The student narrative assignment asks students to examine their personal history with language, focusing on how reading, writing, and other forms of communication have shaped their identities and experiences. We ask our students to look at this initial assignment as their first chance to experiment, take creative risks, and approach writing in a more personal and enjoyable way. Rather than prioritizing research or argument, this project encourages students to reflect on a meaningful literacy-related moment and consider what it might reveal about their relationship with identity and expression. By thinking broadly about literacy, to include speaking, listening, creating, and interpreting, students recognize the many ways language influences their daily lives. This assignment emphasizes thoughtful reflection and invites students to look closely at moments that may have gone unnoticed but carry lasting significance. At the same time, it provides space for creativity, allowing students to experiment with narrative techniques, voice, and structure as they bring their experiences to life in engaging and purposeful ways.

Elizabeth Hubbert

ENG 110 Instructor and Associate Editor

The First Loser by Andrew Abeln

From the moment I got off the team bus, I knew this game was more than anything I had ever experienced before. Walking to the locker room, I got to see the field. There were people already filing in, one by one into their seats, and it was still two hours before kickoff. My brain started rushing with thoughts: “That’s a lot of people. This could be your last game ever. What if you don’t play good? What if you get hurt? How cool would it be to score in front of so many people?” When I got to the locker room, I went through my usual pregame routine. Putting on my shorts, then jersey, then my left grip sock, then right grip sock, then left shin guard and taping it into place, and then the right shin guard and taping it into place, then I put on my left long sock, then my right long sock, then finally putting on my left cleat and then my right cleat.

From the moment I stepped out of the locker room, I knew it was going to be an experience like never before. I had never been so excited, yet so nervous at the same time. It felt like my heart was going to come flying out of my chest. I had never played in a stadium that big before. Every seat was filled with screaming fans. One side of the stadium was covered with a sea of gold and black, the other side was a sea of blue. It seemed like a scene straight out of a movie.

There I was in the middle of it all, playing the state final game in front of thousands of fans. I stood at the forty-yard line, waiting for my name to be called over the speakers. “Andrew

Abeln,” the crowd cheered. Now it was time, this is the moment that I had been waiting for my whole life, the game that I had worked for over the last four years. This is what the team had been practicing for for the last four months. The attention to detail and understanding of where everybody should be on the field for every scenario. We had plays for free kicks, and you had to understand everybody’s precise and strategic movement, otherwise the play wouldn’t work. We worked on plays where you didn’t even have to call aloud for the ball. You knew you were going to get the ball by just a simple head nod or even a point in the direction of where you wanted the ball to be played. Most importantly, you had to trust your coaches: that they were calling the right plays and that they were putting the right players into the game at the right times.

The game started with the loud blast of the referee’s whistle and suddenly all the nerves went away; it was just like every other game. After five long and tiring minutes, I finally got the ball at my feet. Three dribbles, a move, I looked up and played the ball to my teammate who was running through the middle of the field calling for the ball. Thirty minutes into the first half, Ladue found the back of the net. That could have been us is all that I could think to myself. For the rest of the first half, I was constantly getting the ball played to my feet and getting chance after chance, but I couldn’t make anything out of it. The referee’s sharp whistle blew to indicate the end of the first half; the scoreboard read “Ladue one, Vianney zero.”

The halftime talk from Coach was simple: find feet, play fast, take chances. Know where your position on the field is and trust that your teammate will find you. Trust in your understanding of the game and trust in all the plays and tactics that we have worked on in practice throughout the season. Finally, win or lose, have fun and soak it all in. Win or lose, we had made it this far and that was an accomplishment on its own.

The second half started, Shane had the ball, he looked in my direction. We locked eyes, that's all we needed, I nodded my head in the direction that I wanted him to play the ball. I got the ball in space exactly where I nodded for Shane to play, making moves past the defenders, I shot it. "Ding," the ball rattled off the crossbar. That same sequence would happen four more times throughout the second half, but I could never get anything to come out of those chances. No matter how hard the team tried to find the back of the net, we just couldn't get anything to cross the goal line. Ladue found the back of the net two more times before the final whistle blew.

After the final whistle, I fell to the ground crying. I couldn't believe that it was over. It felt like all my hard work over the last four years was for nothing. I sat there for a good five minutes, staring at the scoreboard thinking about how the score could have been different. I didn't know what to do. My coach came over to me, helped me stand up, gave me a hug, and said, "I love you buddy, you made me proud." This is something that I never thought I would hear. Someone that was built on the motto of tough love and "be a real man" and "don't let others see our emotions" just came over and said that he loved me and that he was proud of me. I looked at him and said, "Coach, I love you man, thank you for everything."

After our moment together, some of my teammates came over and we all shared a moment talking about how proud we were of each other and looking at how far we had come over the last four years. Slowly, we all made our way over to the halfway line to receive our medals. Once we received our medals, some of the pain started to go away. I was able to realize what a great accomplishment it was for our team to make it as far as we did, and that soccer meant so much more than a sport to me.

About the Author

My name is Andrew Abeln and I am from St. Louis, Missouri. I am a freshman at Missouri State University and my major is Finance (Financial Planning).

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: My inspiration for my literacy memoir was my last high school soccer game. I decided to write about this moment because it was an event in my life that has a lot of meaning and something that I think a lot of college freshmen can relate to.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I think the part of my memoir that I am most proud of is my ability to show vs. tell, and I think that adds a lot of value to my writing. I think that my ability to show vs. tell is really important, because it allows the reader to feel as if they were almost in the moment and allows them to feel my emotions.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: One area that I struggled with was finding a topic to write about. I felt like everyone in my class immediately knew what they were going to write about and I had no idea what I wanted to write about. However, when I got back to my dorm from class, I sat down and did some

brainstorming to help figure out what I wanted to write about. Once narrowing down what I wanted to write about, I was left with my topic.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My advice to people taking ENG 100, 105, 110, would be to not wait until the due date to complete your writing assignments because it will hurt the quality of your work. The strategy that I used was to start your writing when you first figure out about the assignment and to do bits and pieces everyday. This will allow you to complete your assignment before the due date and will give you more time to revise and edit your work. This is the strategy that I used, and it greatly enhanced the quality of my writing and allowed me to achieve success within the course.

Discussion Questions

1. The narrative that Abeln presents is one in which they eventually lose a high-stakes game. What is gained by their choice to thoughtfully examine what might have been a disappointing moment?
2. How does the sentence variety affect the way you read the essay?

House of Languages by Gunjinlkhham Enkhbaatar

In my mind, I can speak three languages. Each language is spoken at different times and in different circumstances. They are different rooms, made by my memories and experiences. In my house, there are three rooms, each of which is different based on its size, atmosphere and furnishings. The house makes me who I am.

The first room is a middle-sized room, furnished traditionally. Its atmosphere is warm and lit by soft warmth. The wall has two paintings on it, a picture of my whole family taken years ago, and the latest addition, a landscape painting of the Алтай (Altai) mountains, a sacred mountain. The furnishings are traditional furnishings you can see inside a Гэр (Ger). The room I have just talked about is my Mongolian. It is my mother tongue, the first room furnished inside my house, the foundation. Mongolian is the language of nomads, harmonic and unique. If I had to compare it to a part of the house, it would be the core, the hearth. People described it to me as a mix of Turkic and Korean. As a kid, learning Mongolian in school wasn't easy; there were lots of rules to learn and one other writing system,  (Mongol), it was the Mongolian script, the traditional writing system that existed during Genghis Khan. Learning it was hard because there were never really many sources about it, only schoolbooks that never offered anything better. However, I never felt hard to learn about it because Mongolian is my language. I get happy whenever I hear someone speak Mongolian in other countries.

The second and the biggest room in my house, the most used room, is full of colour and has a big bookshelf, the furnishing is innovative contemporary style. It's mainly used as an activity centre and for hanging out with my friends. English was my second language. I was taught English by my kindergarten friend; she taught me English, and I taught her Mongolian. Since I had learned English at a young age, my thoughts shifted from Mongolian to English. I had spoken about it at school with my teachers, with my friends and online. English is associated with happiness and hope. Since young, I always read books in English, listened to music in English, and I can say it made me think in English.

The last room and smallest room, I don't use it often. Its interior is "maximalist," or just very messy. There are rows of boxes on the ground, so much stuff on the wall and clutter everywhere. It used to be cleaner, but it got filled with lots of things. My third language is German. I learned it in middle school with my classmates. The language I learned was hard; I still have problems translating words from English to German. German to me was associated with anxiety and countless memorizing. It was largely spoken and learned in German. Learning languages can be easy if you have the right mindset for it. To me, learning Mongolian and English was easy because I spoke these languages with my close ones. Learning German was hard because I learned it out of duty, not out of want. The classroom I learned German in was cold, and the room was a tight space, with walls painted in yellow. In my head, I feel like I'm always there whenever I practice my German. Unlike Mongolian and English, I learned German in a classroom with a teacher. Even though I had managed to learn it, I haven't found a use for it; it sits there being forgotten and dusted.

The three rooms form the house, which is my mind. It shows that languages are more than just words. They are built on memories, emotions and everyone has different experiences that shapes their “house.”

About the Author

My name is Gunjinkham Enkhbaatar. My pronouns are she/her. I come from Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. Growing up in Mongolia, I had been surrounded by diverse cultures, people and traditions, being surrounded by many diverse languages it was easy for me to choose my memoir about languages and how they are seen by me, because they are important to me. My major is history education. I wanted to be a history educator because I liked history. Ever since I could read, I would always be interested in the past, of how similar people then were to us. I wanted to teach history through many perspectives so others could see it the way I do, and to help show the beauty and the lesson history provides.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: I had to think about my life and what story I wanted to tell that shaped my life, and to me learning new languages shaped me the most and it changed me.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I am most proud of the overall work I did as I mostly never write essays about myself, so I was super proud of this essay. After this essay, I was able to learn more about myself and how my mind works; it's a calming feeling being able to know more about yourself.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: I was challenged by writing about my thoughts and identity, as I never had to think so much about my identity and culture like I had in my project. I liked writing about the literacy memoir because I was able to learn more about myself. My writing process was super messy. Being my first college essay, I was scared it was not going to be good enough. I started my essay out by turning my ideas and what was asked of me into questions, then I answered them and proceeded to align them in a way I thought fit best. That was the most fun part about the entire thing to me – visualizing what I could write more about and where I could go on from there was fun. It was helpful to me that my classmates had so many fun ways of writing essays and getting themselves to focus. I really liked how our classmates all talked to each other and that I made lots of friends.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: Some advice I have is to learn and remember that you are not stuck at something and you can grow with a new skill. You could be bad at English, but if you try, you will find that you will grow to be good at it. What I learned from learning languages is that you have to surround yourself with it if you want to learn it. I am learning Turkish right now and surrounding myself with music and movies made it easier for me to learn it. As a student, learning a language can be hard. I have to learn so much to be fluent, and along the way I make mistakes, but I always remember that mistakes can only help me grow and not stop me from my goals.

Discussion Questions

1. The writer structures their memoir like a "house." How does this structure allow her to creatively explore the "virtues" of a language? How does it help her structure the essay?
2. How does the author's use of metaphor enhance the piece as a whole? Does this use of metaphor help you to feel more connected to the story?

Gifted Kid Burnout by Syllas McNeal

I peaked in middle school. Seriously. I know how that sounds, but it's true. Or at least, that's how it feels. When I was ten, my backpack was heavier than I was. I lugged it out of the school library with the straps digging into my shoulders, stuffed with as many books as the librarian would let me check out. By the time I got home, the pile was already leaning beside my bed, waiting for me. Dinner ended, dishes clattered in the sink, and I disappeared into my room.

"Lights out," my mom would call down the hall.

"Just one more chapter!" I'd yell back, already halfway through the next three. The words didn't feel like work. They were air, oxygen on paper, rushing into me faster than I could hold them. I curled up underneath the dim glow of my night-light, eyes straining to make out the words on the page, desperate for a story. All my flashlights were locked downstairs, taken by my parents because I wouldn't stop staying up all night to read. I showed up to school that next day, and the one after that, and the one after that, with only a few hours of sleep. I was riding high, though. I didn't need rest; I needed to know what happened next.

In seventh grade I got a near-perfect score on the ACT in English and Reading, something most high school seniors never manage. Thirteen-year-old me, who hadn't had a lick of algebra yet, managed to outperform the majority of seventeen-year-olds. Locked in that classroom with a bunch of teenagers, cold and tired and hoping they didn't notice me, I took that

test like a pro. Teachers called me brilliant. My parents beamed. I thought it meant I was destined for greatness... but brilliance has a shelf life, and mine started to expire long before I knew what to do with it.

As a kid, I didn't see the expiration date; I thought being "gifted" was permanent. I was the kid who finished book reports before the rest of the class had even chosen their novels. I was the one scribbling short stories in the margins of math homework, the one whose desk was always stacked with paperbacks. Reading didn't feel like a hobby, it was second nature.

I wasn't the kid who ran around outside, the kid who played all the sports. Instead of counting down the hours left until the streetlights came on, I was burning through books like I was running out of time. By fifth grade, I was finishing close to three novels a day. I'm not talking about *The Magic Treehouse*, I'm talking big boy books. *The Hunger Games*. *White Fang*. *Ender's Game*. *Divergent*. Plus, a slew of young adult fantasy books that all blend together so bad I couldn't name one if I tried.

Years later, I sat at my desk long past midnight, with the same bloodshot eyes, but this time for a very different reason. The words didn't come. The pages didn't turn. I put my head in my hands and just sat for hours, wondering where it all went. The cursor blinked in the empty white space of the Google Docs, patient, steady, like it could outlast me. When I finally forced out a first sentence, it wasn't brilliance anymore. It was survival, painful and slow and barely scraping by.

Somewhere between middle school and now, the spark burned itself out. The kid who carried a backpack bursting with novels suddenly had bookshelves gathering dust. Reading, once the thing I couldn't stop myself from doing, turned into something I dreaded and avoided until the last possible second. My love of reading didn't vanish overnight. It drained slowly, drip by

drip, with every assignment, every expectation, and every reminder that I was once “gifted.” Eventually, there was nothing left but the hollow shell of a kid who had once been brilliant.

Books, too, became strangers. I used to stay up until 4 in the morning, eyes red and straining to follow the story. Now, I open a new novel, scan the first few pages, and feel nothing but exhaustion. I kept buying them anyway, hoping the spark would return, lining them neatly on my shelf next to rocks and shells. But they stayed unopened, row after row of silent reminders that the brilliant kid I used to be was gone.

The worst part wasn't the burnout; it was the comparison. I measured myself against the younger version of me. The child who had devoured every book in the library, who wrote stories like they were breathing, who had scored perfectly without breaking a sweat. Compared to that kid, I was a fraud. Average. Wasted potential. My family, teachers, and friends all did it too. They didn't mean to cause me any harm, but it's hard not to wonder what went wrong when your child goes from testing out of classes to barely graduating. Maybe it's the internet, maybe the day and age, maybe COVID-19. Maybe I just got lazy, or older, or both. I don't think I'll ever know.

What I do know is that I haven't stopped being literate, I still catch grammar mistakes without trying, I can still analyze a paragraph and crank out a decent paper when it matters. On the surface, I'm still “good with words,” but the joy is gone. The ease is gone. What's left feels hollow, like talent has rotted from the inside out. I lost my motivation; I lost my ability to work. I've stayed up too many times trying to figure out why I can't just *work harder*, just *use my brain for something*, like my family has always told me. I just can't.

Sometimes I wonder if I just burned too brightly, too young. If the pressure to succeed was too much, too soon. Maybe no one should be called gifted at nine. Now I live in the shadow

of who I was. I'm still smart, still literate, still capable, but the joy I used to feel is gone. I keep waiting for the spark to come back, for the part of me that loves words unconditionally to wake up again, and maybe it will, but maybe it won't.

I used to fall asleep with books pressed against my cheek, their stories seeping into my dreams. Now I fall asleep scrolling, skipping videos with too many words, attention span shorter than a blink. I am left with grief for what I could have been, had I *tried*. I can only hope now that I'll somehow figure everything out, or the rest of my life is a little bit fucked.

About the Author

My name is Syllas McNeal. I'm from Kansas City, Missouri, and I'm majoring in Art Education.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: My inspiration for the Literacy Memoir project came from my experiences growing up “gifted.” I wanted to reflect on how that affected my sense of identity and learning throughout my life.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: The part of the project I'm most proud of is how my personal writing voice comes through. It feels like a genuine representation of me.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: One of the main challenges I faced was making the story flow naturally, instead of feeling choppy or disconnected.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My advice for students taking ENG 110 is very simple. Just show up and don't overthink your writing. You're a better writer than you think, you just need to learn how to use your own voice and trust it.

Discussion Questions

1. Where in this essay do you see evidence of the author using their own "voice"?
2. This author uses dialogue throughout the essay; can you think of other creative ways to create an immersive experience in memoir writing?

One Small Step for Man, One Giant Leap for Mankind

by Kevin Nguyen

“Tuan, wake up! You’re gonna be late for school!” A familiar female voice pulled me from my dreams. It was Mom. Like many Vietnamese mothers, she always woke me earlier than necessary, claiming I was already late when in reality I still had thirty minutes, sometimes an hour, to spare.

Still heavy with sleep, I shuffled to the bathroom for my morning routine. But something felt... wrong. My steps were slow, the usual morning sounds had vanished, and my room’s furniture was oddly scrambled, as if I had become blind and deaf right away. Confused and disoriented, I suddenly stepped into an endless hole and began falling...

iPhone radar alarm blaring...

I gasped and sat up. I wasn’t in my beloved home in Vietnam, but in a small bedroom of a shared apartment in Springfield, Missouri, USA. Just nerves and a touch of homesickness, I told myself. It was 6:30 a.m., and I needed to get ready for my first day at Missouri State University. It was January — cold and snowy. I layered up: thick coat, beanie, gloves. The breeze was light, but the cold bit into my face. At Glass Hall, the International Student Orientation went smoothly. I learned about visa rules, campus organizations, and the basics of being a law-abiding resident. From my first moments on campus, I couldn’t help but

notice the energy. Everyone seemed eager to learn, quick to laugh, and able to strike up new friendships in the blink of an eye. That's a skill I'm still learning to master.

My own "first" came in the form of a visit to the Garst Dining Hall, where curiosity got the better of me (and so did the dessert station). By the time I rolled back into the orientation event, I wasn't just carrying my welcome materials, I was carrying a very full stomach. Whew...

"When it's scary to jump, that's exactly when you jump, otherwise you stay in the same place your whole life."

I first heard that line three years ago in a short film on YouTube. Back then, I dismissed it as just another flashy motivational clip with dramatic music. But looking back now, I realize the turning points in my life have always come when I decided to "jump."

Like many Vietnamese students, I grew up obedient, letting my parents decide my education and even my future. After high school, I followed their advice and enrolled in a banking university. It didn't work out. My first "jump" was dropping out, a firm decision that caused an uproar at home.

I then applied to a technical college, trained in Information Technology, and graduated quietly. In 2017, I began my career on a small scale, helping people with their tech difficulties. The joy on their faces when a problem was solved felt like the best reward I could ask for. Wanting to expand my reach, I built a simple website so people could contact me for support. It never gained visitors, but I've kept it online (since it is free of charge) as a quiet reminder of my youthful drive. Looking back, that period wasn't just about fixing computers; it was about incorporating problem solving, empathy, and initiative into the foundation of my professional identity.

I once had a girlfriend who was a high school teacher, the only daughter in her family, kind and understanding. On paper, she was perfect. My life could easily have followed the familiar path of many Vietnamese men and women: work hard, earn more, climb the career ladder, marry (love optional), have children so my parents could become grandparents.

But cracks began to show. Her colleagues, the “friends” she trusted, started comparing my salary and degree to others. They even introduced her to a man in business management who owned a car and an apartment. That’s when I learned a painful truth: in some relationships, “love” struggles to survive without “financial status.” Her questions became telling: “What would it feel like if you drove me to our dates?” (I commuted on a scooter) and “Could we have our own apartment after marriage?”

Sensing a storm, I chose to end it before it broke. Most might expect the man to hold on, but I believed the sooner we ended, the less we would suffer. I called her, told her to find someone who met her expectations, and hung up. She cried. I turned off my phone. Eventually, we cut all ties.

It was my second “jump”, not only just away from a relationship, but also toward self-respect, clarity, and the courage to walk away when values no longer align.

Then came the biggest one: the LEAP.

It was my parents’ idea, though.

“Tuan, how about studying in the U.S.? Your English is good enough.”

“Where did you get that from?” I asked.

“We think it’s best for you.”

“I’m supposed to stay and take care of you when you’re older.”

“You go. We can take care of ourselves.”

I hadn't seriously considered it, but signs began to appear. One night, I stumbled upon a video of Boomer, MSU's mascot. Out of curiosity, I looked up the campus, the city, the state. Then I thought: "Screw it! Let's try!"

Everything fell into place: I passed my visa interview, boarded a plane for the first time, arrived in America for the first time, saw snow for the first time, started university, lived in an apartment, and even went to church, all firsts.

Eight months later, I'm still here, learning something new every day, meeting kind people, and feeling grateful I made that leap into something fresh, risky, and exciting. That decision didn't just change my location, it helped me become more resilient, more adaptive and more independent than before, a better version of myself.

This summer, I passed my driver's license test, got my Missouri Real ID, and now I'm looking to buy a car so I can explore even further. Maybe that's another big jump in the making, one more milestone in a life built on "jumps" worth taking.

About the Author

My name is Kevin Nguyen (he/him), and I am originally from Vietnam. I am currently living in Springfield, Missouri while attending Missouri State University. I am a second-semester freshman, continuing my studies after completing a technical college degree in Information Technology back home.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: The inspiration for my Literacy Memoir comes from my journey as a first-generation international student, living abroad for the very first time. Moving from Vietnam to the United States has been both exciting and challenging, and every day I find myself learning something new, whether it's about language, culture, or simply how to navigate life as a freshman in a new country.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: My student narrative was meant to capture not only how much I have grown since arriving here, but also to connect those lessons with personal experiences back in Vietnam. By blending these perspectives, I wanted my project to reflect resilience, curiosity, and creativity, while making complex ideas easier to understand through visual frameworks, summaries, and comparisons. I prefer my writing in a conversational, storytelling style, aiming to make my

papers as personal and authentic as possible by weaving in my own experiences and perspectives.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: Of course, the process was not without challenges. One of the biggest issues, not just in ENG 100, was balancing technical precision with creativity, ensuring that my work was accurate and well-sourced while also engaging and memorable.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: For future students taking ENG 100, my advice is simple: embrace structure, but don't be afraid to be creative. Use outlines, diagrams, and summaries to stay organized, but also bring in personal experiences, humor, or metaphors to make your writing stand out. ENG 100 is not just about meeting rubric requirements, it's about finding your voice and learning how to communicate ideas clearly and ethically. Writing, for me, is more than an academic exercise: it is a way to share my journey, to tell my story as a "freshly organic" international student, and to show how much I have learned along the way.

Discussion Questions

1. A running theme in Nguyen's narrative is the idea of taking "leaps." How do the vignettes reflect this theme despite being about different things?
2. How does the author use the idea of "jumping" into the unknown to show personal growth as a form of literacy?

Thursdays in Room 304 by Keri Sheffield

The first time I stepped into Room 304, the air smelled faintly of cinnamon and something unfamiliar. Lively chatter overlapped, spilling from every corner. I walked in thinking I already understood cultural diversity and appreciation. Standing frozen in the doorway, I realized how little I really knew — and just how much I was about to learn.

I first heard about the Multicultural Club in Orchestra class during my first semester of freshman year. Keanu Sua, a senior in that class, handed out advertising flyers from his large stack. He smiled passionately at each person he approached and said, “I would love to see you be part of something important and make a difference. Come join us after school this Thursday in Room 304.” His passion was contagious. As he handed me a flyer, I noticed an extra sparkle in his eyes, as if his energy was transferred to me. I found myself whispering to my friend as I scanned the flyer, “I think I’m going to go this Thursday. You should too.”

When Thursday arrived, I pushed open the door to Room 304 and was instantly surrounded by the sounds of buzzing conversations from every corner. I was glued to the doorway, taking in the lively space in awe as I analyzed the crowds of people, the unfamiliar flags hung from the ceiling, the delicious scents of the snacks, and the slight noise of music. I hadn’t noticed Keanu until he appeared beside me at the door with a warm, welcoming smile. “You made it! I was hoping you’d come.”

I laughed nervously. “Of course—I'm glad you told me about this,” I responded as I now moved to find a seat.

As the meeting began and the chatter of conversations around slowly died, the club officers stepped to the front of the room, each with their own inspiring pride and confidence radiating from them. Keanu spoke first, starting the introduction. “I’m Keanu, President of Multicultural Club. I am Samoan.”

Esli followed right after with a grin: “Esli, and I am Vice President—pure Mexican roots.” Esli then gestured towards Edith.

“And I am Secretary. My name is Edith, and my family is Guatemalan.”

Keanu then took the stand again, attention upon the crowd: “Now, we’d love to hear about you. If we can go around the room and have everyone share their name and backgrounds.” The room soon developed an open and welcoming atmosphere.

Weeks turned into months. Each meeting I attended pulled me deeper into a world of captivating traditions, flavors, and stories. I learned to fold origami at a Japanese culture night, tasted various homemade Mexican dishes during a Latin potluck, and listened to an inspiring mixed-culture panel of guest speakers.

Then came the most significant moment that changed everything. During my second semester of freshman year, news spread around our school that the district refused to allow a Black Student Union club. I observed heated whispers turn into urgent conversations in the hallways each day. One morning, I overheard Keanu speaking to a group outside our Orchestra room: “Peaceful and powerful. That’s how we will show them.”

That next day, Friday morning, groups of students marched out the front doors after first period. Some held handmade posters, which I remember a few sayings: *WE NEED TO BE*

HEARD and *BLM IS NOT POLITICAL*. Despite the brisk January weather, nearly half of our student body stood outside all day. Bundled in coats and blankets, huddled crowds of students held their signs high and shared chants. Soon, we attracted the attention of the community and the local news. By the end of the day, administrators gave in to the pressure created by the dedicated students, and later that month, the Black Student Union became official.

Witnessing and being a part of a monumental event taught me something no textbook ever could: the power of unity, leadership, and the strength student voices can have. It was our very own Multicultural Club officers, Keanu, Esli and Edith, who led and brought together a community of inspired students to build such a needed difference for our school.

The actions of these three empowering leaders left a lasting impression. When Keanu, Esli, and Edith graduated, I felt compelled to continue their footsteps and enhance the legacy they began- not just by filling their officer roles, but by building upon what I learned from each of them. I was elected Treasurer that year and later took the role of Vice President my senior year. Together, alongside the officers from the Black Student Union and newly formed Solidarity of Latinos, we worked to spread awareness and strengthen a stronger, connected community within our school.

The Multicultural Club played a large role in my high school experience. It was not just an extra 45 minutes after school—I was able to make an impact and teach other students who barely knew or thought about cultural differences, just as I was at the start of freshman year. I went from being the person who didn't know anything to being someone who cherishes these new ideas. In a full circle moment, I became the one standing in front of classrooms with a learned welcoming smile, handing out flyers and inviting new students to join on Thursdays in Room 304 to experience what the Multicultural Club has to offer.

About the Author

First semester of my freshman year, I was enrolled in ENG 110 with Ms. Elizabeth Hubbert.

What originally brought me to Missouri State was the College of Business, as I'm majoring in accounting. While my academic focus surrounds business, I have a passion for writing and my commitment to refining any sort of work I produce.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: I chose to focus my literacy memoir on multicultural literacy, as my experience with learning about it developed throughout my time in high school and has become one of the most meaningful aspects of my personal growth. Choosing to write about this in reflection of my experiences has allowed me to fully recognize how it all has shaped my character as I move into the next chapter of my life.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: In *Thursdays in Room 304*, I describe my first exposure to multicultural literacy and how it develops into a deep and real understanding. My involvement in the Multicultural Club played a significant role in shaping my memoir as well as who I am as a person. It's because of this experience I am able to share a genuine story. This piece reflects not only my development as a writer, but also my growth as an individual learning to understand and value the world around me.

Much of my growth within multicultural literacy can be attributed to the club officers I mention in my essay, especially Keanu Sua. His initial introduction of the club is what opened up this entire experience, which ultimately changed my high school journey. Had I not been there that day, my outlook on life would be entirely different. It's likely I would not have developed the same perspective I hold today.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: As a writer, I often find it challenging to formulate an essay regarding my own life in a storytelling format, which made it both difficult and rewarding to create. As this is a recount of real moments I experienced, the dialogue and specific interactions may not be exact, but were thoughtfully included to capture the tone and meaning beyond the surface.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My advice to future students of ENG 110 would be to find a connection to your writing. If you find yourself struggling or not interested in an essay, find a topic that motivates you. Another piece of advice would be not to be afraid to scrap your writing and start over. A problem commonly faced in writing is finishing something that has started. If you find yourself struggling with writing, the best thing to do is to just restart and start fresh.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the author redefine literacy in this memoir by showing learning through community involvement instead of classroom academics?

2. How does the presence of the additional characters enrich the narrator's personal journey?

Analysis

Introduction

Rhetoric describes how a message is conveyed to an audience to persuade them to do or believe something, like buy a certain brand, or vote a certain way. While many people know the rhetorical strategies of ethos, logos, and pathos, first-year composition students work to broaden their understanding of rhetoric past that and begin to see rhetoric everywhere in all different forms. This assignment pushes critical thinking as we work to analyze how the audience, power dynamics, and cultural situations work together to create a rhetorical situation around a message. Beyond ethos, logos, and pathos, students look at the rhetorical usages of color, tone, sarcasm, humor, music, dance, word choice, and so on. For this assignment, students pick a piece of media and work to understand the rhetorical situation and the rhetorical strategies used to get the message across. Students have rhetorically analyzed Princess Diana's outfits, the architecture and layout of a restaurant, music videos, commercials, and even the Miranda Sings's apology YouTube video. Through this work of analysis, students not only learn how to break down messages and see how they geared toward making them feel or think a certain way, but also understand how they can apply rhetoric in their own communication and lives.

Mary Houston
ENG 110 Instructor

Rhetoric of Oppenheimer's Final Scene

by Ben McDonald

In Christopher Nolan's 2023 film *Oppenheimer*, the final scene depicts Cillian Murphy's portrayal of J. Robert Oppenheimer, and his realization of the horrors he has set in motion by building the world's first atomic bomb. The movie depicts a non-linear series of events from Oppenheimer's life, ranging from 1926, his days as a physics student, to 1954, years after he built the world's first atomic bomb. However, woven into this time is the final scene taking place in 1945 in which Oppenheimer, an American celebrity following the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, visits an old Albert Einstein. This scene serves as a second climax to the three-hour-long film. Christopher Nolan uses a variety of techniques, such as haunting dialogue, abrupt editing, symbolic imagery, and apocalyptic music, to underscore Oppenheimer's guilt and warn audiences about the dangers of nuclear power.

The scene opens with Oppenheimer and Einstein standing together by a pond while a light rain falls into it. This is a callback to the opening scene of the movie in which Oppenheimer, a young and curious physics student, stares at a puddle where rain is falling and causing ripples in the water. This motif of rippling water is used as a visual to show a world covered with explosions. In this final scene, there are three brief, yet horrifying lines of dialogue spoken. As Einstein walks away, Oppenheimer reminds him of the conversation they had about

the atomic bomb and its potential to blow up the world: “When I came to you with those calculations, we thought we might start a chain reaction that might destroy the entire world.” “What of it?” Einstein replies. The camera holds on Oppenheimer’s face for a beat, and then he says the dagger line, “I believe we did” (Geiss).

The dialogue in this scene is genius and arguably the most important aspect of this scene. Einstein knew that the theoretical chain reaction to ignite the earth on fire that Oppenheimer brought up did not happen, since obviously, they are both still alive and well. So, Einstein calmly brushes Oppenheimer’s comment off by saying, “What of it?” However, Oppenheimer’s “I believe we did” (Geiss) exhibits his confession that, even though an immediate chain reaction didn’t occur, his work on the atomic bomb will inevitably set the world on a path to global destruction. This line alone strikes fear into the audience and brings a lingering feeling of global destruction to the final scene.

After Oppenheimer speaks these terrifying words, the editing quickly jumps from visions that Oppenheimer has of nuclear weapon usage and the end of the world, back to his guilt-filled face, which is closer after each transition. This rapid editing intensifies the scene by showing us into Oppenheimer’s mind as he grapples with the consequences of building the atomic bomb. It’s also important to note that this all happens while Einstein is walking away, symbolizing that Oppenheimer is left alone to deal with his grief because he is the only person people will blame for this weapon of mass destruction. Focusing on the visions, Oppenheimer also had visions in some of the opening scenes of the movie, which were of things like vibrating waves, light, and cosmic particles. These show his interest in what physics could achieve. However, his visions at the end of the movie include nuclear weaponry, bombs above the clouds, Oppenheimer watching a missile fly above himself, and end with our planet being engulfed by flames. This juxtaposition

from wonder to guilt and dread reflects Oppenheimer's personal journey and immerses the audience into his escalating fear. Without the masterful and rapid editing in this scene, Nolan could not have conveyed Oppenheimer's immense guilt and realization of his consequences.

Finally, the music composed by Ludwig Göransson also mirrors the story of Oppenheimer throughout the movie, including the final scene. Much like Oppenheimer's visions, the music starts out hopeful and lighthearted at the beginning of the movie. The music then turns darker as the movie progresses, and Oppenheimer's guilt becomes more apparent. In the final scene, the music turns to its most apocalyptic vibe yet, as the track titled "Destroyer of Worlds" plays. This name perfectly describes the mood of this song as a slow violin plays throughout the entire song, opposing the rest of the movie, which has a violin playing quick notes. Also, as the song progresses, so does the sound of people stomping, a reference to earlier in the movie where Oppenheimer has visions of the people in Japan that he had a role in killing since he built the bomb dropped on them. Additionally, sirens are built into the music to mimic nuclear sirens, representing the true dangers of Oppenheimer's actions. All in all, the apocalyptic track "Destroyer of Worlds" invokes dread by showing Oppenheimer's feeling of blood on his hands and finalizing his transition from an aspiring physicist at the beginning of the movie to a guilt-ridden man at the end of the movie.

Although this movie was extremely popular among the public, I believe this message was geared towards those in power, perhaps to put more control and caution into nuclear weaponry. In fact, for the generations that lived through the Cold War, the visions that Oppenheimer saw are terrifyingly plausible. Even today, more recent conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war have brought some of these terrifying possibilities back into consideration. Ultimately, I see this

final scene as a call-to-action that applies to everyone, not just people in power, because a nuclear weapon crisis would affect every living human on this planet.

The rhetorical strategies that Christopher Nolan uses in the final scene not only masterfully present Oppenheimer's guilt, but he also uses it to give the audience a warning. The use of its dialogue, ripples in the water, haunting violin, rapid editing, terrifying imagery, and the final close-up of Oppenheimer's face all force the audience to confront a problem that will affect our entire world. Our world is only a few buttons away from destroying itself through nuclear weaponry, so we must put a focus on its usage. Overall, the final scene acts as a reflection of Oppenheimer's guilt, a warning that humanity has the power to destroy itself, and a haunting call to action, forcing every human to confront the dangers of nuclear weaponry.

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About the Author

Hello, my name is Ben McDonald. I am from Quincy, IL, and I came to Missouri State University as an accounting major. One interesting thing about me is that my favorite musical genre is classical. In fact, I almost exclusively listen to instrumental music.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: I was inspired to rhetorically analyze *Oppenheimer*'s final scene after I saw so many edits of it on TikTok and Instagram. I loved the movie when I first saw it as well.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I'm very proud of every part of this project, but most specifically, where I talked about the music. I believe instrumental music in movies is often overlooked, and I am very passionate about it. Instrumental music can enhance the scene so much, and I feel like not enough people pay attention to it. This was my one chance to finally nerd out about instrumental music, and I did it very well, in my opinion.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: The hardest part of this project was finding a topic. It wasn't until 2 days before the first draft due date that I decided on this topic. I originally was doing a Kendrick Lamar song, but I eventually switched gears.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: For any students taking English 100, 105, or 100, be confident in your writing. Your writing style is unique to you, much like your fingerprint. You're not a bad writer because there is no such thing as that. Be confident in your writing style, and you'll do amazing.

Discussion Questions

1. The author focuses on the movies pacing through several methods; identify some of these and describe how they push the analysis forward.
2. How does the author of this essay use rhetorical strategies to convey their analysis of *Oppenheimer*? Identify specific examples and explain how these choices guide the reader's understanding, create emotional or intellectual impact, and build a persuasive argument. How might you apply similar strategies in your own rhetorical analysis writing?

Laufey's "Snow White" Music Video is a Relatable Work of Art—Especially for Women

by Zoey Warren

Laufey, an Icelandic-Chinese singer who has been creating music since she was young, recently released her third studio album, *A Matter of Time*. She shared this album with the world on August 22nd, 2025. It consists of fourteen songs, ranging from tracks about finding love and appreciating your homeland to songs about break-ups and self-worth. Her song, “Snow White” (released on August 7th as a preview of the album), focuses on the latter and communicates the feeling of chasing perfection as a woman. The song’s four verses describe the ideal woman as Snow White, and throughout the song, Laufey compares herself to this idealistic yet fictitious person. Laufey and creative director Junia Lin Jónsdóttir perfectly capture the emotional turmoil of being a woman and facing society's expectations of beauty with the environment, symbolic imagery, and body language in the music video of Laufey’s song “Snow White.”

When one watches the “Snow White” music video, it is obvious that Laufey’s twin sister and creative director, Jónsdóttir, dedicated a significant amount of time to scoping out the perfect locations for this music video. The video takes place in Iceland and begins by featuring a

rocky mountain range rich with vegetation, moss, and a few budding flowers. The location is also home to several streams of water, which are likely formed by melting snow. Laufey spends the first two verses of the song in this area, interacting with the landscape as she sings about her feelings of failure regarding her self-image. As soon as the video begins with a wide shot of Laufey lying in a lush field, a sense of isolation is felt. Laufey immediately stands out against the wide landscape, as she is dressed in a stark white dress, and it is obvious that, despite the large scale of her environment, she is alone. This idea of loneliness follows Laufey throughout the entire video, even when the scenery changes. When Laufey begins to sing about the character Snow White (starting at 1:45 in the music video) with the lyric “Sometimes I see her, she looks like Snow White,” the landscape changes to a chilly one filled with snowy glaciers. Now, Laufey and her dress blend in with the Icelandic tundra, alluding to the fact that Laufey feels completely invisible compared to Snow White. As the music video continues, the environment switches from the warmer mountains to the cold glaciers each time Snow White is mentioned. Aside from this blatant setting change, there are several nuances in Laufey’s surroundings. At 1:11 in the music video, the sun begins to cast beams of light onto Laufey. The light dances around the singer, as if the sun is trying to remind Laufey that she is beautiful even though “the world is a sick place,” as the song’s lyrics (heard at 1:12 and 2:40) suggest. Another environmental detail is showcased at the end of the video, when Laufey clings to one of the jagged rock formations. It seems that Laufey may be clinging to any sense of reliability she can find, including falling back on old habits like self-deprecation. It is in little moments like this that the environment plays an immense role in the video’s symbolism and storytelling.

The “Snow White” music video does an excellent job of conveying the song's message through a vast array of imagery. As previously mentioned, Laufey interacts with her

surroundings throughout the video. She examines the world's natural beauty around her—reaching for flowers at 0:22, examining a handful of snow at 2:01, and admiring a pebble at 2:29—yet ironically, she does not take the time to appreciate her own unique beauty. This is not the only example of symbolism within the environment, though. At 1:53, in a close-up shot of Laufey in the glacier setting, the viewer can see that the singer's eyelashes are coated with snowflakes. The same snow that she admires and compares herself to during the video is actually already a part of her. This small detail may be a significant storytelling element, as it possibly signifies that because Laufey is too busy criticizing herself, she does not notice that she already is Snow White. However, it does appear that Laufey tries to clear her critical mind at least once during the music video's duration. During an instrumental break in the song, Laufey begins to walk around the warm landscape. Sometimes, when people want to clear their heads of negative thoughts, they go for a walk. The timing of her walk alongside the song's pause in lyrics illustrates that Laufey may be trying to silence her negative inner monologue, but ultimately fails. It is not just actions like this one that convey the song's message to the viewer, though, as Laufey's outfit also plays into the overall video themes. Her white dress may represent the fact that she is chasing after the ideal Snow White, perhaps even trying to replicate the idea with her clothing. Or maybe her dress is white because that color is most often associated with innocence. It may portray that Laufey did not think negatively of herself until society suggested that there was something wrong with her appearance, an experience that many women encounter. She often grabs at her dress, as if she is clinging to the idea of Snow White or as if she is grasping for her innocence and the time before she thought so negatively of herself.

In fact, Laufey's body language is another important aspect of this music video that effectively communicates the song's message to viewers. Often, when the song lyrics

mention the word mirror, the video cuts to Laufey examining herself in a handheld mirror. She is most likely inspecting her reflection, studying her face to see if changes have occurred since the last time she checked her appearance. At one point, 0:38 in the music video, she even begins to push and pull her eye. This implies that Laufey is dissatisfied with her eye shape, a feature of her body that is beyond her control. Despite one instance, in which Laufey blows herself a kiss (perhaps trying to show herself some self-love), she looks unhappy when she examines herself. She does not like the reflection that stares back at her. Throughout the entire video, Laufey's body language and facial features lack confidence. She often tries to make herself appear smaller and holds her limbs as close as possible to her body, as if she is ashamed of every part of herself. At 2:28, a tear rolls down Laufey's cheek. She cries because despite the support and reassurance of others (Lyrics: "They try to tell me, tell me I'm wrong"), she truly feels that she will never compare to Snow White. Near the end of the music video at 3:04, the camera zooms in on Laufey laying a hand on her chest. This small movement may be because she is trying to protect her heart from the pain it is feeling. Without a doubt, comparing herself to Snow White is causing Laufey mental pain; it is obvious to conclude from her saddened body and facial language.

The dynamic duo of Laufey and Jónsdóttir effectively conveyed the struggles with body image that women face in modern society. From environment to outfits, body language to subtle nuances, every aspect of this music video was well thought out. One's relationship to their sense of self, especially when it comes to body image, can be a complex relationship to navigate. Throughout this music video, Laufey shows viewers that it is easy to feel alone in a strenuous relationship with oneself, but it is at least a struggle we all share. "Snow White" is an absolutely touching song, and the storytelling of the music video makes it that much more impactful.

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About the Author

My name is Zoey Warren (she/her), and I was born and raised in Chillicothe, a town located in northern Missouri. At the time of writing this cover letter, I am a freshman at Missouri State University, and I have just completed my ENG 110 class. Though I began my Missouri State experience by majoring in Musical Theater and Dance, I soon realized that, although I deeply love theater, I did not want to pursue it as a career path. So, I switched gears and am now majoring in New Media. When I entered college, I still had several general education classes to complete, one of which was ENG 110.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: My favorite assignment during ENG 110 was writing the rhetorical analysis. This style of writing is similar to the kinds of theorizing conversations I have with my friends about our favorite Netflix shows and video games, hunting for hidden details that foreshadow major plot points or overall story themes. When students were given the opportunity to analyze a topic of their personal interest, I quickly settled on the idea of writing about a music video. At the time, one of my favorite music artists (Laufey) had recently released her third studio album and, in turn, created a few new music videos. As I scrolled through these music videos, there was one in particular that caught my eye: “Snow White.”

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I ended up having a lot of fun analyzing this music video and writing my thoughts down. This song has immensely relatable lyrics and a music video chock-full of imagery and details to examine.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: A common challenge I faced while completing ENG 110 was procrastination. One of the most intimidating steps of writing an essay is opening that blank document and watching the cursor blink as one tries to think of what to write. There is a lot of pressure that comes with new projects

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My biggest piece of advice to incoming or current English students is as follows: “Just make it exist first; you can make it good later.” This popular quote rings true in every aspect of life, especially when it comes to creative endeavors like writing an essay. No matter how daunting a project seems, start well in advance of your due dates and just write. It does not have to make sense, be grammatically correct, or show off your writing skills. Rough drafts are intended to be rewritten anyway.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Warren's discussion of the imagery used in the music video further her claims about women and self-esteem?

2. Based on the specific rhetorical strategies that Warren identifies, who do you imagine the audience to be?

Research

Introduction

One of the most valuable lessons in the English classroom is being able to engage with scholarly research and join the conversation with an informed opinion. Information is constantly circulating through many different platforms, and it is our responsibility as citizens to determine what is credible and what is important to our lives. Without the advice of experts in the field, our world would be at a standstill. In first-year writing, our students write research papers on topics regarding issues in the world around them or their personal interests. This assignment is meant to help students synthesize and understand complex information in order to form an argument about their topic, which is crucial for the work they will be doing in their fields of study. We celebrate research papers that consider multiple perspectives around a topic and provide critical analyses of the work that is already available to us. As instructors, our favorite research papers are written with thought and passion, and we love seeing our students explore causes that are meaningful to them. Research shapes the way we advance as a society, and this assignment provides students with a glimpse at how their ideas can make an impact.

Makayla Malachowski

ENG 110 Instructor and Managing Editor

Nanomaterial Advancements in the Wake of COVID-19

by Asyl Ablai

Under COVID-19, Researchers Improved Nanomedicine and Cancer Treatments for the Future

COVID-19, the pandemic we all faced from the end of 2019, became a serious problem at the beginning of the new decade (Chauhan et al., 2020, p. 2). While the immediate consequences were devastating, with millions of people losing their lives, it also spurred rapid advancements in the nanomedicine field (nanotechnology applied in medicine) (Friedrichs & Bowman, 2021, p. 1).

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the nanomedicine field was already a promising area that combined nanotechnology and medicine to develop precise medical applications and vaccines (Thi et al., 2021, pp. 2-3). The main idea was to deliver treatments and diagnose illnesses using a nanoparticle (the "nano" prefix meaning one billionth, 10^{-9}) and perform therapy at the cellular level. Nanomedicine allowed the drug industry to go further and lessen the chances of drugs not reaching the right places, causing unwanted, harmful side effects like overdosing (p. 2).

This technology did not just emerge out of nowhere. The first nanodrug, Doxil®, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1995 and was seen as a potential

breakthrough for cancer detection and treatment. Doxil was used to treat breast cancer, and as a result, it reduced side effects like weakening of heart muscles and heart failure (Thi et al., 2021, p. 2). This approach led to research on the virus' genetics and its potential as a vaccine (Weiss et al., 2020, p. 3).

The sudden widespread of the COVID-19 pandemic created a global demand for diagnostics, treatment, and vaccines (Chauhan et al., 2020, pp. 7-8). This crisis pushed scientists and researchers worldwide to collaborate and create solutions at the fastest pace possible. Nanomaterials offered versatility because researchers could tailor their properties and functions, making them ideal for developing solutions to infectious diseases. (Weiss et al., 2020, p. 19).

The rapid response to COVID-19 led to significant breakthroughs in several areas of nanomedicine, many of which have direct or indirect implications in cancer treatment.

mRNA Vaccine Technology and Lipid Nanoparticles

The most famous success in nanomedicine during the pandemic was the rapid development of messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, particularly those from Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech (Friedrichs & Bowman, 2021, p. 1). These vaccines rely on lipid-based nanoparticles (LNP), also known as fat, as essential delivery systems (p. 2). The LNPs shield the fragile mRNA molecules and transport them into human cells. Once inside the body, the mRNA instructs cells to produce a harmless piece of the virus, which triggers the body's immune response (p. 2). In simpler terms, RNA is an acid that directs cells to produce specific proteins, which make up everything. So, by using these RNAs as messengers, wrapped in a lipid nanoparticle (LNP) to give instructions to cells and produce a harmless copy of the virus, the immune system becomes familiar with this substance and can fight it when it enters the body in the future.

How does this work? Let us start with the fact that both deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and Ribonucleic acid (RNA) have similar features. DNA has two strands that connect using their bases, which are nucleobases: Thymine (T), Adenine (A), Cytosine (C), Guanine (G). The T connects with A, and C connects with G, forming the long chains inside our bodies. So, in every strand of DNA, there is a constant chain of TA and CG continuing (Minchin & Lodge, 2019, p. 1). However, RNA is single-stranded, and although it contains C, G, and A, it has uracil (U) instead of T (p. 4). When a messenger RNA (mRNA) enters a cell, the cell's ribosomal RNA (rRNA) and transfer RNA (tRNA) work together to build an amino acid according to the base pairing of the mRNA: A with U, C with G, and so on. When tRNA matches the bases on mRNA, it has an amino acid attached to it, so as the tRNA moves along the mRNA, the amino acid chain forms, and if it continues, it makes a protein (pp. 18-23). This process is called translation. So, if there is an mRNA in the body, any protein can be made, which is the basis of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The success of mRNA-LNP vaccines opened new ways for the LNP technology (Thi et al., 2021, p. 23). This opening makes it easier to design unique treatments for each patient's circumstances. Successful use in infectious disease has paved the way for broader applications of LNPs, including therapeutic vaccines against cancers and other immune-boosting treatments (pp. 21-22). Researchers can use this knowledge to deliver genetic materials for cancer therapies.

In cancer immunology, researchers use mRNA translation to produce proteins that fight tumors. Instead of carrying blueprints for a protein, they convey the "tumor antigens," which are unique identifying proteins found on cancer cells (Vishweshwaraiah & Dokholyan, 2022, p. 4). These self-produced tumor cells would be targets for the immune system, enabling it to recognize and target the actual cancer cells that share the same antigens.

The nanocarriers reduce the harmful side effects of drugs that do not reach their intended targets and make them more potent, safer, and easier for patients to take. Like other treatments, we have also damaged normal cells as well as cancer cells, which makes them have more side effects. Results encourage the field of nanomedicine to expand and to conduct further research.

Nanotheranostics: Combining Diagnosis and Therapy

The pandemic also highlighted the potential of "nanotheranostics," which refers to nanomaterials that can simultaneously diagnose and treat diseases. This dual capability has helped manage COVID-19, notably cancer, where early diagnostics result in significant outcomes. They can enhance imaging techniques like MRI and CT scans by infecting nanometal particles like gold, tungsten, or iodine compounds, which makes it easier to distinguish between similar tissues and locate tumor more confidently (Gupta et al., 2024, pp. 4-7). These nanocarriers can deliver heat for thermal ablation (using heat to destroy tumor cells) or enhance the radiation therapy techniques that we have right now (Gupta et al., 2024, pp. 4-7). Nanomaterials have proven to be practical tools for combining these functions, addressing the gap between diagnostics and therapy (Weiss et al., 2020, p. 4).

Nanoparticles can modulate (either stimulate or suppress) the immune system, which is important for vaccine development and for counteracting dangerous immune over-reactions, such as the "cytokine storm" seen in severe COVID-19 cases (Weiss et al., 2020, p. 6). A cytokine storm occurs when the immune system continuously produces more cytokines, which are cells that produce heat to fight viruses; that is why we get a fever when we are ill. However, when cytokines are created in excess and not directed to the right places, it can damage the organs that have not been infected, resulting in death (Alcaide, 2022). It can be controlled by using nanocarriers because they have targeted drug delivery, and they can reduce the drug dose.

It can also be designed to evade the immune system, thereby reducing the risk of a cytokine storm (Weiss et al., 2020, p. 6).

While the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly provided an unexpected boost to nanomedicine, translating these advancements fully into cancer treatment remains challenging. Cancer is a complex disease with many variations and developing safe and effective treatments is expensive and time-consuming (Friedrichs & Bowman, 2021, p. 2). Proving that new nanomedicine approaches are better than existing cancer treatments can also be difficult. It remains a step we had to take, and it has already helped numerous people, as well as the nanomedicine field. The pandemic has certainly helped nanomedicine gain its own field. The rapid improvement and fast approvals from the FDA indicate that this technology has the potential to play a crucial role in addressing significant health challenges, such as cancer (Friedrichs & Bowman, 2021, p. 2).

COVID-19 has caused significant damage, around 7 million to date, according to the World Health Organization, not only in numbers, but also with mental health and ways of living too. Even though we suffered a lot, we could save a lot more people from cancer and other diseases that have not been found in their treatments. The impact of COVID-19 has accelerated nanomedicine research and development. Collaboration among scientists worldwide has led to the discovery and advancement of nanomedicine and has guided the way to fight diseases like cancer in the future. The pandemic, despite the tragedies, has changed the future of cancer treatment through innovations in nanomedicine.

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About the Author

My name is Asyl Ablai, and I'm from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. I wrote this paper to decide if I wanted to pursue nanomedicine or something similar. I'm a chemistry major, and I like chemistry. However, I couldn't decide which field is better, even since I saw Dr. Santra's, a professor in the Chemistry and Biochemistry department at MSU, research in Research Directions at the Majors Fair on September 17, where he was researching nanotechnology and nanomedicine, specifically drug delivery and cancer therapy.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: It was interesting. I wasn't really interested in how COVID-19 affected nanomedicine because in those times, I was only thinking of how to watch anime in an online class without getting caught, but it was really an interesting concept, and I didn't know that drugs and medicine can be delivered to a specific cell to create specific reactions. I am still not sure about this direction of research, so I will study more in different fields for now.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: The thing I am most proud of is the citations and how I learned how to cite the same article, but from different pages in one paragraph.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: There were a lot of challenges, like where I was looking for papers – there wasn't much research that analyzed this specific topic, and I would stray in the wrong direction and waste my time so much while I was looking for something that wasn't in the research I needed. But I never had to worry about the research being outdated because the COVID-19 pandemic happened only a few years ago, which I think was one of the advantages of looking for research.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: To people who will take this course or are just starting to write papers, don't be afraid of the word count, because with enough research, there will be enough words to write. If the word does not reach the minimum, then you must do more research.

Discussion Questions

1. In her piece, Ablai avoids overwhelming the reader with technical terms and sources. What moments in her writing invite the reader to understand and what language does she use to pull the reader in?
2. As shown in this essay, sometimes evidence does not directly discuss the main idea of the paper, but still support the writer's ideas. How does the author use analysis to tie their evidence back to their main idea about nanomedicine development during the pandemic?

How Do Tsunamis Have a Long-Term Impact on the Quality of Life and Well-Being of Coastal Communities in Japan?

by Liliana Deng

How Do Tsunamis Have a Long-Term Impact on the Quality of Life and Well-Being of Coastal Communities in Japan?

Destroyed homes, flooded hospitals, and separated families are just a few of the many consequences that Japan's coastal population has to witness due to tsunamis. However, the terror continues long after the catastrophic event and can continue for decades afterward. In this essay, I discuss the way tsunamis still affect the well-being and quality of life for Japanese coastal towns well after the actual disaster is done. Japan, situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire and known as a nation of islands, has seen some of the largest tsunamis in recorded history, such as those following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and recent submarine and volcanic events. While so much attention is spent on the instant destruction that this natural disaster caused, the long-term effects such as public health, community confidence, economic recovery, and even government policy, paint a clearer picture of natural disaster aftermath, and it becomes an extremely important factor to which we must pay more attention. From academic sources and

additional research, I examine how these catastrophes impact Japan's economy, public health, and community resilience and how the nation continues to evolve and recover after all.

Economic and Infrastructural Impacts

Natural disasters have significantly affected Japan's economy in the past, particularly in regions reliant on marine industries, agriculture, and fishing. Huong and Minh (2023) argue that natural disasters, like tsunamis, destroy physical infrastructure, dislocate families, and destabilize local markets, resulting in losing jobs and economic growth in Asia, especially in developing coastal communities like rural Japan (p. 67). For Japan, tsunamis devastate economic foundations by destroying ports, fisheries, and coastal industries that are integral parts of the Japanese local livelihoods.

Recent events such as the 2022 Tonga volcanic eruption tsunami demonstrated this continued vulnerability. Imamura et al. (2022) observed that while there were no fatalities in Japan, the event caused significant economic losses due to damage to aquaculture and fisheries, reducing the supply of marine products and highlighting that even moderate tsunamis can have lasting economic ripple effects. Similarly, Fujiwara et al. (2024) found that submarine volcanic eruptions within the Sofu Seamount area produced unexpected tsunami waves in 2023, underlining that even new or low-seismic zones can generate destructive events with horrible results. These findings indicate that despite all technological advances, Japan's coastal economy remains exposed to persistent environmental uncertainty, disturbing and worrying the government and its citizens; if another disaster were to happen, it would have major consequences for the nation.

Furthermore, Yamanaka and Shimozone (2022) examined tsunami inundation along the Japan Sea coast and found that ports, breakwaters, and natural dunes play a key role in

determining the range of tsunami damage. While those infrastructures reduce inundation in sheltered areas, they can increase wave height in exposed areas. In other words, Japan's highly developed infrastructure helps to reduce the damage of tsunamis, but not to completely prevent the long-term disruption to economy and the slow local recovery which continues for years following each disaster.

Long-Term Effects on Health and Well-Being

One of the most long-lasting impacts of tsunamis is their impact on human health, both physical and psychological. The article by Shiba et al. (2022) offers one of the most comprehensive analyses of how survivors of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami were impacted. Nearly ten years later, many people who had lost their homes continued to struggle with emotional and physical problems such as depression, stress, and sleep disturbance. The researchers further observed that individuals became less willing to assist or interact with others following the disaster, an indicator in which tsunamis can weaken the sense of community that individuals usually would normally rely on to recover. The research suggests this loss of trust and connection makes people feel even lonelier, especially the elderly who rely heavily on their neighbors for support. In some cases, neighborhoods that were previously close-knit started to fall apart as families moved away or struggled to rebuild their lives as a result of the disasters.

I found this article particularly interesting as it shows that the emotional and social traces of a tsunami last much longer compared to those visible physical ones. Older adult survivors, especially, have many problems due to the disaster, and many lose their homes, their families, and everything they possess. These problems lead to negative complications like an increase in social isolation, decline in health, loss of meaning, and other problems even after the physical rebuilding is over. Even years later, public health problems persist. The study by Shiba et al.

(2022) stated that survivors are likely to experience lifestyle changes due to the limited availability of facilities and infrastructure which contributes to long-term illness. These health problems show how the impact of a tsunami extends well beyond the disaster itself, showing that reconstruction is not simply a case of reconstructing buildings but reconstructing lives.

Community Resilience and Social Recovery

In my view, one of the most inspiring yet complex aspects of Japan's tsunami experience is its approach to community rebuilding. After each disaster, Japan's recovery efforts focus not only on rebuilding structures but also on restoring social fabric and public trust. However, studies show that this process is uneven. Huong and Minh (2023) found the following:

The close coordination with regional and international organizations such as ADPC (the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center), UNDP (United Nation Development Program), UNICEF (United Nations International Children Fund), WHO (World Health Organization), international Non-Governmental Organizations members of the disaster management group and other countries is vital to support the countries to recover more quickly and efficiently from the disasters. (p. 76)

This quote indicates that Asian social recovery requires international cooperation and local participation to minimize the impact of disasters efficiently because if people are all united like a team, and each group or organization does a small part, the result will be greater, faster and will benefit everyone. Furthermore, Shiba et al. (2022) stated that communities that were higher in social capital, meaning trust, attachment, and reciprocal support, had better overall well-being years later after the tsunami. These findings demonstrate that the long-term effects of tsunamis in Japan's coastal areas extend far beyond physical destruction. They reveal how the strength of community bonds and the capacity for collective action play a crucial role in achieving recovery and long-term resilience.

Nevertheless, keeping a sense of community after a disaster is not easy at all. When residents must move, entire neighborhoods can be ripped apart, and the close-knit relationships

people once shared are usually lost. Some survivors never return to their hometowns out of fear of another disaster or because they are emotionally unable to go back. As a result, some of these coastal towns lose their inhabitants, and their culture and community spirit start to break down until they are all but forgotten.

Preparation and Future Challenges

Japan has been a leader in disaster preparedness on the global scale, always adapting to each tsunami to improve its early warning and urban planning capabilities. Imamura et al. (2022) highlighted how the 2022 Tonga-related tsunami exposed the vulnerabilities in Japan's warning systems as early predictions underestimated wave height and arrival times. On the other hand, recent studies by Fujiwara et al. (2024) noted that the 2023 Sofu Seamount submarine volcanic eruption generated an unexpected tsunami in a region that was not even considered risky previously. This change only shows how geological uncertainty continues to test Japan's preparedness and proving that there is still room for improvement. Meanwhile, Yamanaka and Shimozono (2022) also proposed strengthening both natural and artificial coastal barriers such as dunes and levees to further reduce inundation. Therefore, whereas Japan's advanced technology and infrastructure play an important role in damage reduction, they cannot completely remove risk. These studies remind us that disaster readiness must go beyond physical measures; preparation must also include education, public participation, and mental preparation. The ability of human beings to be aware, respond in time, and help one another during and following a tsunami is as important as the power of seawalls or warning systems.

After reviewing these studies, I have come to understand that tsunamis are not one-time events; they are experiences that reshape lives, economies, and societies for decades. Japan has made remarkable actions in disaster planning and building infrastructure, but the long-term

impacts of tsunamis remain deeply in the people's minds. Survivors continue to face emotional trauma, disrupted communities, and economic instability long after reconstruction efforts are completed. The research by Huong and Minh (2023), Shiba et al. (2022), Imamura et al. (2022), Yamanaka and Shimozono (2022), and Fujiwara et al. (2024) collectively illustrates that resilience is not only about design, but it also requires empathy, social connection, and policies that support long-term well-being. Looking at Japan's experience, I believe that understanding and addressing these human aspects are essential to truly improve the quality of life in communities affected by the tsunamis.

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About the Author

My name is Liliana Deng. I was born on a small island in Venezuela called Margarita Island, but my family is originally from China. I am currently a freshman majoring in finance, and I would like to minor in Fintech or investment. I have been here in the United States for almost a year now, and I am very grateful for the new experiences I have had so far.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: Regarding the inspiration for my project, I have always been interested in the topic of natural disasters in general. And knowing that we had to choose a topic that was informative and educational, I felt that tsunamis were perfect, and what better place than Japan, which is famous for the unfortunate events it has experienced due to natural disasters.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: Without a doubt, what I am most proud of is the structure of the paper; I feel that it is very organized and clear. I effectively used the scholarly articles that were required and implemented them in the paper to give it more credibility. Personally, I believe I am person who functions best when following a plan; that is why, from day one, I already had the steps to follow clearly mapped out in my mind. Thanks to my experience writing academic papers in my home country, I already knew which methodology suited me best. First, I had to choose a topic, and as I

mentioned earlier, that was not a problem for me. I already had a clear vision of the structure I wanted for my paper which is the one that works best for mostly all academic assignments: Introduction, Body, Conclusion, and References. Second, I got straight to work and began researching studies related to tsunamis, Japan, or other Asian countries in that region. Finally, I divided the paper into different topic sections to ensure better readability and organization. I incorporated my sources wherever they fit most logically, and then I drafted the accompanying text explaining how each specific source contributed to or supported my topic.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: A challenge I faced was time management. I will not lie, I almost stayed up all night to finish that paper. I already had all my sources and my ideas defined. I do not find it difficult to brainstorm ideas or do research; what I struggle with most is getting started; the only thing that held me back was laziness. Something that helped me with that was telling myself that if I kept procrastinating, it would be much worse and more stressful for me.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: If I had to give advice to any English student, it would be start early and have a plan of what you want to do after receiving the assignment. Believe me, I know firsthand what it is like to procrastinate until the very last day and do everything in a single sitting—it is not fun at all. The only things you will experience are a lot of stress and the feeling that you are running out of time. So, the key is to do a plan and follow it as early as possible; doing a little bit every day is better than doing everything on the last day.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the writer's use of section headings help the reader understand the content?

How could they also help a writer structure their content?

2. According to the evidence in the essay, how does social capital (trust, community bonds, and cooperation) influence long-term recovery after a tsunami?

The First-Gen Experience: An Analysis of Barriers Faced by First-Generation Students

by Keri Sheffield

Earning a college degree is often viewed by the public as the ideal pathway to a successful career, higher income, and personal growth. However, for individuals who are the first in their family to navigate the unfamiliar system, the path is often shaped by barriers that complicate or fully halt the experience. The convergence of studies on the struggles experienced by first-generation students identifies a range of challenges, including limited parental guidance, mental health struggles, societal disadvantages, and lower success rates. By analyzing data from numerous academic sources, insight is provided into these challenges and reveals a comprehensive view of the first-generation student experience.

When defining “first-generation,” various sources struggle to come to one perfect definition as the circumstances surrounding the term are complex. Generally, “first-generation” refers to a student whose parents have not earned a four-year bachelor’s degree (Honors et al., 2024, p. 76). This designation often leads to a lack of academic comprehension, creating a more difficult transition and overall navigation of the world of academia. Research has demonstrated how this lack of parental education reportedly affects student performance; according to Linder

(2025) in his article titled “First Generation Statistics,” 20% of the national college student population is labeled as “first-generation” (para. 1). With roughly a fifth of the American student population falling within this category, researchers have homed in on the first-generation college experience to gain insight into how much this difference ultimately varies their experience and outcome of higher education.

As researchers found, parental education can be traced as the source of the challenges that first-generation students face. The U.S. Department of Education in the *National Center for Education Statistics* (NCES) journal explains that the parents’ lack of education results in negative influences for the first-generation classification. Researchers, Cataldi et al., (2018) establish in the NCES journal titled “College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor’s Outcomes” that parental education and experiences are valuable resources for students, and without that guidance, the student is left navigating independently (p. 2). Instinctively, students typically resort to going to their parents for support and guidance; however, in the case of first-generation students, this guidance may be lost. First-generation students' experiences are additionally hindered as the students are subjected to spending more time learning the information while their peers have already gained the information from their parents.

Understandably, mental health struggles are frequently addressed by research as a main aspect of first-generation student challenges. Entering a new environment without prior knowledge can contribute to the stress and unfamiliarity that these students endure, especially since they are often learning and approaching college on their own means. A survey study conducted by research associates of the Pell Institute reviewed their data from New York University first-generation students. Brunt & Breen (2025) reported that two-thirds of the New York University students evaluated reported struggling with their mental health due to factors

such as financial insecurity and psychological distress (para. 5). The results of this survey suggest that most first-generation students experience significant mental health challenges during their transition to college life.

Similar to the Pell Institutes' survey study, an article found in the *Cogent Education Journal* reviewed the differences between first-generation and continuing-generation students between 2010 and 2020. In the article, López et al. (2023) identified one major factor: first-generation students have restricted time studying, compared to continuing-generation students, as their focus on coursework is shortened due to other important responsibilities, like a part-time job (p. 4). The research associates from the Pell Institute revealed, "91% of the students in the study that carry student loans were first-generation students, with 78% concerned about their long-term financial impact" (Brunt & Breen, 2025, para. 3). López et al. (2023) and Brunt & Breen (2025) both highlight the financial stress first-generation students go through in their college experience; factors like relying on student loans to pay for university or paying fully out of pocket result in additional challenges for first-generation students.

Societal influence is another defining factor that researchers have found to impact first-generation students' overall performance. According to the *Education Sciences Journal* article titled "First-Generation College Students and Family Support," first-generation students are more likely to come from a low socioeconomic status or minority class (LeBouef & Dworkin, 2021, p. 5). This helps to explain some of the challenges faced by first-generation students; however, not all students from low socioeconomic families are labeled first-generation. Revealed by López et al. (2023) in the *Cogent Education Journal*, parents from low socioeconomic classes tend to place a lower value on education, resulting in less motivation from students for academics and school activities (p. 3). This can be explained by the parents' education level, as

not obtaining a collegiate degree can shape the perceptions and importance of education. As a result, societal influence is established as a key factor in understanding the displacement of first-generation students.

Some first-generation students who originate from a low socioeconomic or minority class may be motivated to attend university for the access to higher paying jobs. Earning a degree in a specialized field opens numerous stable employment opportunities. However, the harsh reality revealed in the article titled “A Critical Review of Empirical Research Literature” published in the *Education Sciences Journal* explained that graduated first-generation students have left college with lower levels of income and employment opportunities compared to their continuing-generation peers (LeBouef & Dworkin, 2021, p. 18). Further evidence of first-generation students’ lower income after graduation is demonstrated in a similarly-themed article titled “Academic Performance and Adjustment of First-Generation Students to Higher Education” from the *Cogent Education Journal*, where López et al. (2023) revealed that despite similar levels of work put into their studies, first-generation students have been found to make less progress academically (p. 3). When compared withing similar academic positions, first-generation and continuing-generation students experience opposite outcomes. Evaluating these income results reveals that, alongside societal disadvantages, attending higher education as a first-generation student begins with disadvantages and continues during college navigation.

After considering the influences on the first-generation experience, graduation rates are widely studied to better understand the difference of attending college with this label. The *National Center for Education Statistics* (NCES) journal reviewed first-generation students in the early 2000s, showing 33% dropped out of university before earning their degree, while the dropout rates for continuing-generation students were 26% (Cataldi et al., 2018, p. 4). Since the

disadvantages piled on first-generation students have been addressed, it's understandable how and why the graduation rates differ. When the NCES journal reviewed graduation rates specifically, only 19% of first-generation students obtained their Bachelor's, while continuing-generation students tripled that to 58.7% (Cataldi et al., 2018, p. 6). A study from the *College Student Affairs Journal* reviewed these statistics, revealing that not addressing first-generation students' needs within higher education was a main contributing factor in the low graduation rates of first-generation students, resulting from the lack of addressing their needs (Honors et al., 2024, p. 77). Evaluating the numerous circumstances and negative statistics regarding first-generation students, there are few solutions or benefits to ensure positive outcomes. This raises the question of how universities are addressing such a prevalent issue.

With first-generation students being a large percentage of the student population, there are some transition and success programs that have been demonstrated to decrease their challenges while increasing graduation success rates. Brunt & Breen (2025) addressed this in the Pell Institute survey study, reviewing their findings from New York University students. They stated that, despite the obstacles of first-generation students, there are programs created in most universities such as TRIO, McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement, and Education Opportunity Centers which provide guidance, mentoring, financial resources, and academic advising (Brunt & Breen, 2025, para. 9). Universities are gradually creating various support systems for first-generation students; however, they have not yet been widely studied to conclude their success.

Drawing from the existing research, first-generation college students face numerous disadvantages that have been studied and proven to affect academic performance outcomes and college experiences. Certain factors that influence the experience are limited parental guidance, mental health issues caused primarily by finances, disadvantaged societal influence, and lower

academic completion rates. The studies mentioned indicate that such interconnected factors are negatively influencing educational success. In response to these needs, there have been early efforts with universities to introduce programs aimed at increasing graduation rates by minimizing the negative impacts of the first-generation experience. Recognizing the circumstances surrounding first-generation college students invites an open discussion about how such students experience college. Through continued research, knowledge of these barriers will continue to support and further develop an understanding of the differences first-generation college students experience in their college journey.

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About the Author

First semester of my freshman year, I was enrolled in ENG 110 with Ms. Elizabeth Hubbert.

What originally brought me to Missouri State was the College of Business, as I'm majoring in accounting. While my academic focus surrounds business, I have a passion for writing and my commitment to refining any sort of work I produce.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: When brainstorming for the research synthesis, I identified different communities I am a part of to choose a topic I could write about and have specific interest and knowledge in. The most prominent for me was first-generation college students. Because of my connection, being a first-generation student in their first year of college, that is what I shaped my research around.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I aimed to identify the challenges first-generation students face during their transition into the college environment, as well as their development throughout the years and overall graduation rate outcomes. This synthesis specifically examines how parental guidance, mental health, and societal structures all play a role in shaping the experiences and success rates of first-generation college students. Most sources cited were discovered within academic databases provided by Missouri State's online library collection, ensuring the credibility and reliability of information referenced within this paper. Through blended research amongst each of these sources, I was

able to identify each of the challenges and connect them in a way which presents a complete and well-rounded understanding of the first-generation experience.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: Working on this piece allowed me to understand how perspectives can affect the guidance of research, as I found myself connecting the information I learned with the aspects I previously known. Rather than researching a foreign topic, I was engaging with a topic that was both meaningful and relevant to my life while being a strong source of academic information.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My advice to future students of ENG 110 would be to find a connection to your writing. If you find yourself struggling or not interested in an essay, find a topic that motivates you.

Another piece of advice would be not to be afraid to scrap your writing and start over. A problem commonly faced in writing is finishing something that has started. If you find yourself struggling with writing, the best thing to do is to just restart and start fresh.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the writer "synthesize" multiple sources into a single, cohesive conversation?

Birth Order Theory: Fact or Fiction? by Packy Carroll

It is common in the post-psychoanalytic world to notice certain behaviors based on one's role in the birth order. Oldest children are responsible, middles keep the peace, and the babies of the family just want to have fun; or so the stereotype goes. However, this is more than conventional wisdom. Psychologists have been observing this phenomenon for the last century. Birth order theory was posited in the 1920's and has been met with varying degrees of acceptance and skepticism. This theory predicts certain personality traits based on the three birth order roles: firstborn, middle child, and youngest child.

In "Birth order theory: Personality traits and more," Beth Sissons specifies the origins of this theory. This idea is credited to Austrian psychotherapist Alfred Alder, who highlighted the importance of the varying childhood experiences within the birth order in shaping one's personality (Sissons, 2024, para. 1). Alder developed his theory during the age of psychoanalysis, a Freudian school of thought that emphasized the effect of childhood experience, unconscious desires, and past trauma in shaping personality. Alder's theory asserts that the birth order results in common experiences that shape personality, leading to predictable personality traits based on where one falls (oldest, middle, youngest). So, what are these cardinal traits?

The eldest: stereotypically the perfectionist and the responsible one. In "Development of Alder Birth Order Scale," researchers Hina Sultan and Subha Malik empirically associate

firstborns with trait conscientious. Conscientiousness is a psychometric trait that characterizes individuals as orderly, industrious, and good at planning for the future. For firstborns, this is attributed to receiving more responsibility and higher expectations from their parents. Led by the desire for parental attention, they are typically independent, serious, and consistent (Malik and Sultan, 2023, p. 16). With the addition of younger siblings: life gets hectic, parents get stressed, and the oldest children must start pulling their weight at an early age.

Beth Sissons adds another element that makes the role of eldest child unique. Since they are the first to experience life, oldest kids receive the most guidance from their parents. This often results in the parents' values being deeply instilled in their first born. It is common to see the eldest tend to "uphold family traditions and morals" and "behave conventionally to keep the attention of their parents" (Sissons, 2024, para. 6). Because they are the first in the lineup, eldest children feel the most pressure to live up to their parents' expectations. They compete for parental attention through achievement and prestige.

The middle child is the 'forgotten one' in most stereotypes. According to Sissons, Middle children require the least attention, which often manifests in lower self-esteem and greater insecurities. However, it's not as bad as it sounds; this shared experience of being 'forgotten' can lead to higher social ability, thoughtfulness, increased independence, and stronger extrafamilial relationships (Sissons, 2024, para. 15-16). Middle children are often known for being peacekeepers with more subdued personalities and behavior. In "An Analysis of Empirical Validity of Alfred Alder's Theory of Birth Order," Kathleen Marano contrasts the experience of the middle child with firstborns. Marano states that a middle child "must share attention with another sibling from birth and is therefore more likely to be cooperative than the firstborns,"

(Marano, 2017, p. 5). Unlike eldest children, at no point in a middle child's life are they the sole recipient of their parents' care, making them more willing to compromise and be flexible.

Middle children also feel a greater sense of competition, spending their childhood trying to keep up with the eldest. Middle children are known to set unrealistic expectations for themselves (Sissons, 2024, para. 15). The amalgamation of these traits and experiences can make them good team players and ambitious employees but can also lead to neurotic problems in adulthood.

Ironically, in this paper as in real life, the youngest child will get the most attention. The baby of the family is famous for being extroverted, bubbly, selfish, and pampered. In Sultan and Maliks' study, youngest children show a higher probability to be self-centered, competitive, deviant, and socially interested. "... parent's pampered attitude makes the last-born children dependent. To escape such an inferiority complex, children develop social interest ..." (Sultan and Malik, 2023, p. 16). In short, being the subject of the most parental attention with the least responsibility has a variety of outcomes.

Because of their position, youngest children grow up always needing the most help and having the least experience. As Beth Sissons put it, "They may develop an outgoing personality, humor, and social intelligence to elevate themselves in the family dynamic," (Sissons, 2024, para. 13) Youngest children make the fewest compromises and take on the fewest duties while also struggling to live up to their siblings and find their place. Often these factors lead to the classic, fun-loving baby of the family, but not in all cases. According to Sultan and Malik, youngest children are the most likely to be "deviant." Due to unequal treatment from their parents, such as over-indulgence or neglect, last-borns can turn to asocial behaviors. These can include theft, assault, excessive drinking, and substance abuse (Sultan and Malik, 2023, p. 15).

Though not universal, the childhood environment created by the position of youngest child seems to have the most dramatic consequences in terms of personality and behavior.

A common question with this theory is whether the traits associated with birth order effect adulthood. The article “What is Birth Order Theory” from the Cleveland Clinic concludes that this question is unfortunately too complicated to definitively answer. However, they do confirm that common birth order experiences can cause mental health issue such as anxiety and depression; the example given is firstborns feeling that they lost their childhood due to being given extra responsibility early on (Cleveland Clinic, 2024, para. 24). Personality is still somewhat of a mystery, shaped by a multitude of factors like sex, age, genes, life experience, and trauma. The idea that birth order shapes personality into predictable traits is predicated on common childhood experience. In adulthood, a larger portion of life happens outside the familial context, thus mitigating the effect of birth order on personality as experiences become more unique to each individual. Even so, when members are crammed back into their childhood context (family Christmas for example), the hallmark birth order traits and behaviors often make themselves apparent again.

Though uncanny in its accuracy, there are many limitations and objections to Alder’s birth order theory. There are so many forces that effect personality, making this theory unreliable. In addition, too many details effect the results. Age gaps, gender, parenting styles, and divorce can all shift the family dynamic and change the outcome. In her analysis, Kathleen Marano credits the waning accuracy of birth order theory to cultural change. Optimistically, she predicts that further analysis could reveal new childhood norms and apply a modified birth order theory to current generations (Marano, 2017, p. 14). Seeing that birth order theory was developed in the 1920’s, children certainly grow up in a different environment than in Alder’s time.

In “Brought Up to Rebel in the Sixties: Birth Order Irrelevant, Parental Worldview Decisive,” authors Fordland, Korsvik, and Christophersen from the University of Oslo invalidate birth order theory through an analysis of revolutionary movements in the sixties. Their findings suggested no correlation between radical political orientation and any place in the birth order, even though birth order theory would suggest that youngest children would be more attracted to radical political movements (Fordland, Korsvik, and Christophersen, 2012, p. 13). An adherent to Alder’s theory might predict more last-borns to support revolutionary movements and more firstborns to oppose such movements, but no significant correlation was found.

Cultural shifts and lifelong effects aside, spend enough time around families with young children, and parallels in personality within the birth order are certain to be visible. Child rearing simply creates too many common experiences for this phenomenon to be fictional. In everyday life, birth order theory can provide helpful insight to parents and equip careful observers with seemingly clairvoyant skills.

Alfred Alder’s theory emphasizes the effect of one’s place in the birth order on shaping personality. This idea builds off the psychoanalytic school of thought popular in the early twentieth century. The common experiences based on birth order lead to predictable, shared personality traits between eldest, middle, and youngest children. This theory proves that there is psychological evidence for stereotypes such as the responsible oldest, the chill middle child, and the sociable baby of the family. As with everything, these stereotypes are not universal but provide a reliable guide when exploring family dynamics.

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About the Author

My name is Packy (short for William Patrick) Carroll. I'm a first-year undergrad at Missouri State. I seem to be the only one in Honors College without a finely detailed plan of conquering the world. But to put a positive spin on things, I like to think of myself as the most potently undeclared student in town. I grew up in Rogersville, which is just twenty minutes east of Springfield if you take highway 60. During my senior year of high school, I found myself picking up a pen and vomiting out the thoughts that were boiling over in my nervous mind. Slowly, my incoherent scribbles became a voice.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: Birth order theory was a topic I somewhat stumbled upon. My older sister and I have stayed up many times into the wee hours of the morning psychoanalyzing the various oddities that make up our extended family and discussing ways in which our parents have failed to discipline our younger brother. We are truly Freudian to the core. I figured if I was going to come up with 1500 words of academic research, it should probably be a topic on which I was a proficient yapper. I set out to research psychometric correlations based on birth order. However, I was unaware that I would not only find a wealth of sources, but a whole school of thought in psychology pioneered by one Alfred Alder...

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I'm just proud of my research paper as a functional piece of literature. I hate writing research papers; I always feel redundant and derivative. I think with this one I was able to use my own life experiences perspective to create something unique.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: The information was a lot to sift through. Especially in scholarly source, which would be chocked full of psychometric data, historical background details, and scientific jargon. I began to go to the conclusion of the scholarly source first and then back track, and that helped me a lot to not drown in academia.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: ENG 110 is a great class, definitely one of my favorites. Take it with Mary Houston if you can. She is the goat!

Discussion Questions

1. What is the author's thesis statement and what evidence do they use to support it?
2. What specific examples does the author use to complicate traditional birth order theory, and how do these examples challenge the idea that birth order alone shapes personality? Why might the author have included this information in their research?

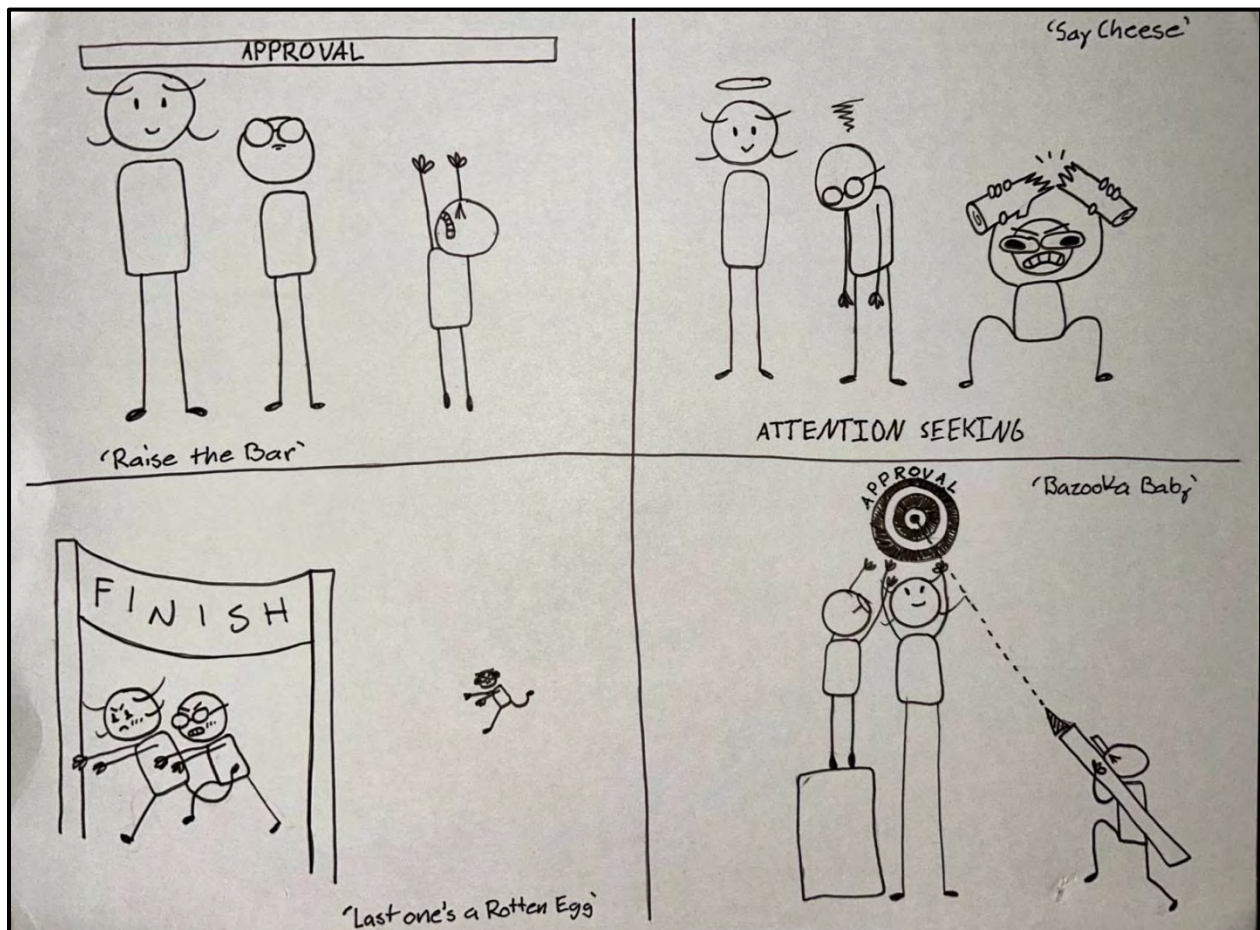
Multimodal

Introduction

Multimodal projects offer students an opportunity to branch off from the traditional essay format. Using the same topic they chose for the research unit, we ask our students to then insert themselves into the conversation they've spent the previous weeks researching. There are two parts to our multimodal projects: (1) an argument made through the medium of the students' choice, and (2) a written analysis describing the specific ways in which the student used rhetoric to persuade their audience. We encourage our students to get creative and think outside of the box. They can choose to make a video, a podcast, an Instagram story, a TikTok, a letter, a petition, a web page, a song, a poem, a photo series, a drawing, a comic, a meme, an infographic, a collage—anything that's not a traditional essay. One of the most fun and most gratifying parts of being a writing instructor is watching your students spread their wings and take creative risks, and no project exemplifies this quite like the multimodal project.

Lydia Ash
ENG 110 Instructor and Associate Editor

Turbulence Trifecta by Packy Carroll



To remix my research on birth order theory, I chose to make political-style cartoons to capture the essence of birth order theory. The ideas depicted in each cartoon are my own, but the drawings themselves are by my lovely sister to whom I must devote a majority of the creative

praise. We used caricatures, archetypal representations, and figurative imagery to speak about the temperamental and behavioral patterns within birth order theory. The characters are based on my siblings and I, but the thematic statements are based off my research.

These cartoons focus on the ways in which siblings compete for parental approval and attention. They reflect the point of view of each child in their respective position to their siblings. We used a few simple symbols to make implications about the reality of birth order theory. In ‘Say Cheese,’ a halo was used to portray the oldest child as the perfectionist and high achiever. In ‘Bazooka Baby,’ a target was used to symbolize parental approval as something children actively seek. In ‘Last one’s a Rotten Egg,’ distance running finish line helps in illustrating a few things. For one, birth order itself placing the children in their roles of first, second, and third. Second, it illustrates the struggle of children to win their parents’ affection. It also shows the way in which younger siblings can struggle to keep up in maturation and achievement; always being the last to each milestone.

Archetypally, birth order is illustrated through the height of each character. The youngest is portrayed as the most dramatic with displays of anger, frustration, and volatility. The middle child looks like Dr. Bunsen Honeydew from the Muppets. In congruence with birth order theory, this character displays little emotion and shows signs of depression and low self-esteem. The box on which the middle child is standing in ‘Bazooka Baby’ is meant to represent extrafamilial relationships; to which, according to birth order theory, middle children often turn to fill the void of parental attention they experience. As always (or so the stereotype goes), the oldest is illustrate as upright, happy, and always ahead.

Hyperbole is the most significant rhetorical technique my sister and I used. Obviously, this is not a realistic visual representation of three siblings. However, it sparks a unique

understanding and relatability in the mind of the viewer. We had to blow these stereotypes out of proportion to make their manifestations in life noticeable. Oldest children are not angels constantly outperforming everyone else, yet the representation is relatable. The baby of the family is not just a bazooka launching rage monster, yet the metaphor is instantly recognizable to older siblings near and far.

The audience of my cartoons is most effectively members of families of four or more. This illustrative representation of birth order theory is relatable to parents and older children. For younger children they may still be humorous, but the message will likely be missed in large part. In addition, these cartoons could strike a chord in adults who come from tight-knit families. The inter-sibling relationships from childhood are hard forgotten, and these dynamics often follow them into adulthood even through physical and periodic distance.

About the Author

My name is Packy (short for William Patrick) Carroll. I'm a first-year undergrad at Missouri State. I seem to be the only one in Honors College without a finely detailed plan of conquering the world. But to put a positive spin on things, I like to think of myself as the most potently undeclared student in town. I grew up in Rogersville, which is just twenty minutes east of Springfield if you take highway 60. During my senior year of high school, I found myself picking up a pen and vomiting out the thoughts that were boiling over in my nervous mind. Slowly, my incoherent scribbles became a voice.

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Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: Ironically, with the multi modal remix, I am the most proud of the artwork (which is not even mine). My sister (the artist) has such a talent for conveying a gold mine of meaning with the most minimal of drawings. I knew as soon as I received this assignment I would probably need to employ her skills.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: I think the hardest part was putting my analysis into words. Once I had the artwork, I kind of felt like ‘enough said.’ I had to sit at my desk and parse out each little message in each drawing. In the end, I really just had to sit with it for a while.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: ENG 110 is a great class, definitely one of my favorites. Take it with Mary Houston if you can. She is the goat!

Discussion Questions

1. Identify rhetorical strategies used by the author to communicate their argument. How effective are the modes and argument working together?
2. What role does design or arrangement play in how the message is received?

Overtime by June Robinson



What I created is a photo bash or digital collage artwork portraying a woman at a coffee shop, serving a brain. There are an overwhelming number of details showcased in this artwork. From the writing on the blackboard in the background, to the bookshelf where coffee should go, to the uncanny question on the woman's face, and bloodshot eyes. There are also school supplies in the bottom left-hand corner and an engagement ring on the woman's finger. I purposefully made this artwork uncanny, to give the viewer a sense of unease. The woman in the picture is obviously stressed out; you can tell her smile is not real and that she is tired from her eyes and eye bags. All she can focus on is school and work, and she's getting them mixed up. But it's not just school and work in a student's life, as represented by the engagement ring. The artwork is grainy and uneven, with different textures and renderings, as well as different pixel sizes. This can be seen to represent the complexities of life and how every little bit of detail is different and every detail matters.

The audience I had in mind for this particular artwork would be school executives, principals, or presidents such as President Williams. I do see how people could see this as a weak argument as people can easily overlook the meaning of this or misconstrue it. I do not mean to say in this argument that no college student should have a job, but instead to say that no college student should be forced to have a job that is not helpful to them. In this picture it is obvious that this woman does not need to be at this coffee shop at this time. Although I did put lots of effort into this, I am a college student who works 2 jobs, and I do not have time to create everything by hand, so it's much easier for me to just use existing images and warp and shade them to convey my idea.

About the Author

My name is Rhiannon Robinson, but most people call me by my middle name, June. I grew up in Durango, Colorado, but moved to Rolla, Missouri, in 2018, and lived there until I came to Springfield for college. I am a Hospitality Leadership major with a focus in Hotel and Lodging Management, and I am getting a minor in Business.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: All my projects were assignments from my ENG 110 class, and each had their own inspiration (but the main factor was that it's for a grade). However, I can say that my essays are fueled by my own personal experiences and beliefs.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I am proud of all my work individually and as a whole, but the one that stands out to me in my multimodal remix, mostly because I got to use my artistic expression to my advantage, and experiment with an art form. My art process started with self-reflection; looking inward to see how the topic affects me personally. Then I imagined what the average person with this problem is going through. I took elements of my struggles and the average person and amalgamized them into one piece encompassing an entire experience.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: I faced lots of challenges while writing these projects, most of which were time and willpower. Working two jobs, and having 15 credit hours, all while moving into an apartment and looking for another job, is very stressful. Finding time to put substantial thought and effort into my work was challenging, but I powered through.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My advice to future students taking this course and similar ones is to enjoy it. I love all aspects of art, and don't have much time to create, since I am not an art major. This class is a great channel for your creativity and academic talent to shine through. Make the most of classes that give you the power to express yourself and have fun.

Discussion Questions

1. Robinson's art uses grainy, disjointed images that unsettle the viewer. How does this uncanny effect contribute to her argument?
2. Robinson reflects on how personal experience with feeling overworked and burnt out inspired the creation of this piece. How much does the author's creative process affect the final message of the collage?

The Best Fitting Pants by Boston Hammond



**The best fitting pants?
How do they compare?
Who is the designer?**

Best Fitting?

Bostohn edition

2025

versatile



mid-waisted



high-waisted



low-waisted

These jeans can be worn any way you want, they can fit EVERY style

Made with an extra long rise for MAXIMUM comfort and ENDLESS styling options

Designed with a baggy/flared pattern which has been revised to perfection

I have worked on this pattern since 2023. I truly believe these are these are one of the best fitting pants for anybody in the market for a pair of jeans with a similar sense of style. I have weeks where I struggle to wear pants NOT made with this pattern. I hope to be able to share with pattern with a wider audience in the future. Once the budget is approved, we will be doing a limited size run production to get as many pairs of legs into these jeans as possible.

Compare?

Bostohn edition

2025

How do Bostohn jeans compare
to the original & classic Levi's 501?



Bostohn Jeans

VS

Levi's 501 Jeans



Which one do you prefer?

Who is the designer?

Bostohn edition

2025

Designed by me. I am an independent designer based out of St. Louis, studying fashion design at Missouri State University. I have been passionate about clothing since the beginning of high school, and my love for clothing followed soon after. Since 2022, I have been designing and creating clothes. This is my passion and what I plan to make a career out of.



About the Author

My name is Boston Hammond, and I am a freshman at Missouri State University. I am studying fashion design both academically and on my own. My whole life has been engulfed by the world of fashion in the past few years. From starting my own brand, to studying fashion here, to even just my own way of expressing myself, fashion is the center of it. Art has been the center of attention for my whole life. From the earliest I can remember; I was always taking the art-related classes in school and to this day they all still stick with me.

Question: What is your inspiration for your submission?

Answer: My biggest inspiration for this project was myself. My pants are some of my most prized works and what I stand behind the hardest. I have been picky since I was a child, and I knew what I liked from a young age. These jeans are no different. From years of hating jeans to finally making a pair I love and can't stop wearing. I have altered a pair of flare pants for years until I came to this pattern, which is still evolving. I hated how jeans would have an uncomfortable rise, so I lowered them. I hated how jeans wouldn't sit over my shoes, so I made the leg opening wider. I even hated the feeling of the fabric at one point, so I made the jeans fit loosely. I guess some could say that my design inspiration for these jeans stemmed from my hatred for other jeans. I chose to use this project for my assignment because it is something I truly care about. I knew from my years of art experience that if I wanted an assignment to look good, I had to have feelings for it. When passion is the fuel to create instead of a deadline, true art can be created.

Q: What parts of your project are you the most proud of?

A: I am the proudest of my craftsmanship on the jeans. From years of making jeans and experimenting with cuts, patterns, and silhouettes, I feel that I have truly found the perfect pair of jeans for me and other like-minded individuals.

Q: Did you face any challenges while completing the project? What were they, and how did you overcome them?

A: The only challenges I faced throughout the project were not English-related; they were sewing related. I ended up breaking my personal sewing machine during the production of these pants resulting in me having to get a new one. It was all worth it in my eyes.

Q: What advice do you have for students in ENG 100, 105, or 110?

A: My advice would be to find any way to relate your projects to your passion; it will make the class a whole lot easier.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the usage of color work to catch viewer's eye? Does the writing on the TV Guide work well with the colors and images?
2. The multimodal remix is designed to be a persuasive piece. What rhetorical strategies does Hammond employ to make his product as appealing as possible to the viewer?

About *Pawsibilities: Student Perspectives and Rhetorical Reflections*

Pawsibilities: Student Perspectives and Rhetorical Reflections is an anthology of writing from students enrolled in ENG 100: Introduction to College Composition, ENG 105: Writing I with Studio, and ENG 110: Writing I at Missouri State University. Over the course of a semester, students complete assignments including narrative, analysis, research, and multimodal projects. Students can submit their projects from ENG 100, 105, and 110 during the fall and spring semesters to be considered for publication. Finalists for *Pawsibilities* are selected in the spring.

After the pieces have been selected for publication, the department's graduate teaching assistants, managing editor, and faculty advisor work together with the student author to edit and revise their piece. When submissions are finalized, the managing editor is responsible for designing and building the manuscript. The issue is published annually in the fall and hosted on the MSU English Department website.

Finalists for *Pawsibilities* are selected based on their approaches to the assignments. The editorial board for *Pawsibilities* values submissions that push the boundaries of the assignment descriptions and seeks projects that are thoughtful, inventive, unique, and ethical. *Pawsibilities* does not accept submissions that are created by generative AI—whether partially or fully—without disclosure or ethical use, and does not accept works that have been plagiarized from other students.

For questions about the publication, please contact Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Faculty Advisor and Director of Composition, at pawsibilities@MissouriState.edu.

About the English Department at Missouri State University

The English Department is a part of the Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities at Missouri State University. It is home to five undergraduate programs, including creative writing; culture, literature and media; English education; literature; and professional writing; seven graduate programs in English literature and creative writing, writing with an emphasis in rhetoric and composition and technical and professional writing, applied second language acquisition, English education, and an MFA in creative writing; and several options for minors and certificates. Students in the department have the opportunity to get involved in several activities, like Moon City Press, Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society, Workplace Writing Forum, Rhetoric Club, and Folklore Club.

If you are interested in learning more about department programming or opportunities, please visit english.missouristate.edu or contact the English department at English@MissouriState.edu.