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Writing is a form of personal freedom. It frees us from the mass identity we see in the making all around us. In the end, writers will write not to be outlaw heroes of some underculture but mainly to save themselves, to survive as individuals.

—Don DeLillo

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the purpose of a personal writing essay.

- Recognize the different types of personal essays.
- Identify the different components of a personal writing assignment, such as point of view, structure, tone, and language usage.
- Create personal essays that are aware of the audience, have a strong plot, have a clear point, use concrete language, and properly incorporate dialogue.
- Generate essays with great descriptions by being specific, appealing to the senses, selecting the right details, and utilizing comparisons.

As you have learned, there are four primary types of college writing: personal, expository, persuasive/argument, and research assignments. You are probably familiar with personal papers because they are frequently assigned in elementary and high school. For instance, you may have written a paper describing what you did on your summer vacation, or you may have shared your impressions of a book you read or a movie you saw. In college, you will occasionally be asked to write a personal reflection or essay on a defined topic. Although personal papers may not be the most common type of writing assignment you will encounter in your college classes, you will most likely have some personal or narrative writing assignments in your courses, and many of your academic papers will be combination papers in which you must take a personal position on an issue. Perhaps you have composed an essay about a significant person or event in your life or a paper reflecting on your personal goals or what a college education means to you. Papers such as these can be defined as personal papers. Developing a personal position on a subject can help you clarify ideas, practice logical skills, and exercise your reasoning abilities.