

Biographical Writing: your diary essay (due in Week 11)

Here are Guidelines to help you understand how you to write, organise and present your term essay for this course.

1. Length: minimum 1,500 words
2. Format: Course name, student name, student number and page number in the Header space.

Top of main page: diary studied = either the title, or the name of the diarist.

Your essay title

3. Organise your essay in paragraphs as follows:

Introduction: this has two purposes, to tell us about the physical diary and diary material that you have studied (number of volumes, nature of other material, number of pages, size of volume etc.), and to introduce the diarist

Basic Facts: Introduce your diarist, give name, address, all the Basic Facts on the Basic Fact Sheet.

Historical and social background: Put your diarist in his or her social and historical context. Combine their diary statements with your research.

A. What was going on around this person – locally and nationally - while they were writing this diary? Some of this will come from online research, some from novels written at the time, some from local history sites and books, some from Ancestry.com and similar sites, and some from newspapers.

B. What was going on around this person at home, at work, in their life, in the period of the diary? This information comes mostly from the diary itself – but if you have a diary that doesn't tell you these things, you need to hunt for more information.

Personality: what kind of person wrote this diary? What was she or he *really* like? Did he or she have secrets? Decode the diary. Was the person popular? Lonely? Curious? Self-obsessed? There will be clues to your diarist's personality throughout the diary. The diarist is unlikely to tell you much directly. Your task is to read between the lines.