**Activity 1**

**Sara King**

**Research Interests Narrative**

**Using the assigned readings to help you prepare for the Research Interests Narrative essay:**

* Think about each reading in relation with your Research Interests Narrative essay assignment. What parts of the writer’s experience resonate with you as you reflect on your own academic journey?
* Identify turning points in the writer’s education or career, especially those presented in scenes. Pay special attention to first time experiences. Note the details of time and place, the ways that teachers and mentors (including family members) are described and made into characters. In the chapter or excerpt that you were assigned to read, where do these scenes appear and to what effect?
* Look at descriptive narrative (summary) about the writer’s background or life experiences, especially those that occurred before the writer had a clear idea of an educational or career path. When does the writer recognize and explore the significance of these experiences?
* Look at historical narrative about the development of an academic discipline or professional field or about a particular issue within the field. How have research questions and debates changed over time? How does this information provide context for the writer’s own academic or professional goals? How does the writer themselves within and/or outside the mainstream?
* Identify the questions or concerns that have influenced the direction of the writer’s education and career. How did these lead to the writer’s current research interests (or the project of the book the excerpt is taken from)? When you finish reading the chapter or excerpt, what emerges as the most important question?
* If two or more readings are assigned, make sure you can identify similarities and differences in the writers’ approaches. If you prefer one, think about why. If two or more passages from the same book are assigned, analyze the relationship between them and any differences in their purpose.

**Using the assigned readings to help with the Discipline Awareness Project and your own research:**

* What impact has the writer had on the field? (Often these writers have criticized or revolutionized the field in some way.) Check out the writer’s webpage, TED talks, YouTube interviews, book reviews.
* Look at other types of articles by these authors. The assigned readings are taken from books aimed at a general audience. See if you can find articles in scholarly journals, trade publications, or gray literature by these authors or which cite these authors’ work.
* Look at the references cited in the readings. What types of sources were used?
* What research questions are raised in the reading that researchers in your field could weigh in on?
* What questions interest you personally?

[Creative Commons License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) “Using the Assigned Readings to Help Prepare for the Research Interests Narrative” is the original work of Sara King, created and revised between 2016 and 2018 in the context of ongoing conversations with colleagues in the George Mason University Composition Program. The assignment is licensed [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which means that it may be reused, adapted, or remixed by others as long as any document that incorporates content taken from the assignment includes or links to the following: a statement giving credit for the borrowed content, a link to the license, and an acknowledgment of any changes made to the content.