**THIS I BELIEVE** Name:

This packet includes a variety of activities that we will work on for several days. All are designed to get you ready for writing a narrative essay on the topic “This I Believe.” We will listen in class to some essays on the website thisibelieve.org, but you could listen to more on your own if you want.

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**This I Believe**, Listening Activity—On the chart below, write the required information down as you listen to the essays. Think about how you can incorporate some of the same skills and techniques when you write your essay.

KMS LA 10 Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration------ 1 2 3 4

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name and Claim *(Who is he or she and what does he or she believe?)* | Evidence | What else did you notice about the piece? *This can be about the word choice, tone, speaking/reading style, symbolism, imagery, your own connection, etc.* |
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**VALUES ACTIVITY SHEET**

Below is a list of some of the values that may be important to you. First, define the

value in your own words (use a dictionary if you need to). Then, put a star next to the

five values that are the most important to you. Be prepared to explain why you feel

this way! KMS Vocabulary 1 2 3 4 and KMS Work ethic 1 2 3 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Honesty: | Enthusiasm: |
| Integrity: | Compassion: |
| Love: | Empathy: |
| Respect: | Faith: |
| Knowledge: | Wisdom: |
| Freedom: | Creativity: |
| Dedication: | Loyalty: |
| Success: | Cooperation: |
| Self-Control: | Leadership: |
| Confidence: | Skill: |
| Sincerity: | Reliability: |
| Patience: | Flexibility: |
| Responsibility: | Hope: |

**Writer’s Notebook: IMPORTANT MOMENTS**

Choose one of the following questions each time and answer in your writer’s notebook. For each question, identify at least one value from the Values Activity Sheet that played a role in this event.

* When did you learn that it is better to tell the truth?
* Who was the first person to make you feel invincible?
* When did you realize you could be anything you want to be?
* When did you learn that life isn’t always fair?
* Who taught you that sometimes things don’t work out the way you want them to?
* When did you learn that you can’t always get what you want?
* Has anyone or anything ever tested your faith?
* Have you ever done something that you regret? What did you learn from that moment?
* All of us are works in progress with a long way to go before we reach our full potential. In what skill or area are you still working to make progress?
* Our society uses the word hero in many different ways. How do you define hero, and who is a hero in your life?
* When did you first realize your family loves you?
* We all tend to judge people by their appearances, even though looks can be deceiving. Have you ever prejudged someone incorrectly based on their appearance or has someone ever prejudged you unfairly based on how you look?
* Everyone has problems or challenges to overcome. What obstacles are you proud to have faced and conquered?

These questions are not always easy to answer. Remember, though, that you don’t have to answer all of them. We will only do about five in class during this unit.

**MY STORY – MEMORY CHART**

Fill in the questions with information about the event you have picked for your essay.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the event I for my essay.

2. It happened when I was\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Where did it happen? Describe the place\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_were the people involved.

5. Close your eyes and picture yourself on that day. List five adjectives that come to mind.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. When I think back on this day, it makes me feel\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ inside.

7. I would want to tell people that before this event I thought that

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

8. Now, I know that\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

9. Some values that were important to me back then were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

10. Some values that are important to me now are

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

11. Other important things to remember about the event are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**This I Believe Essay-Writing Guidelines**

This I Believe, Inc., invites you to contribute to this project by writing and submitting your own

statement of personal belief. This is challenging—it requires intense self-examination, and no one else can do it for you. You have done a lot of the work already through the pre-writing activities of defining values, working in your writer’s notebook, and doing the Memory Chart. To continue to guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions to follow up on the activities you have completed so far in the project.

**Tell a story about you:** Be specific. Tell the story of events in your life that have helped shape

your own personal philosophy. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your own personal beliefs.

**Be brief:** Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That’s about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

**Name your belief:** If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on a core belief, telling the story of why this belief is important to you.

**Be positive:** Write about what you *do* believe, not what you *don’t* believe. Avoid speaking in the

editorial “we.” Avoid statements of religious dogma, preaching, or editorializing. Avoid writing an opinion piece about civic or political issues.

**Be personal:** Make your essay about you; speak in the first person. Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

When you have finished the final draft of your This I Believe essay, we encourage you to share

your essay with others—classmates, friends, parents, and grandparents. Ask them to write their own This I Believe essays. See if you learn something new about someone close to you.

Hook, Line, and Sinker—Your Introduction

The introduction may just be the most important part of an essay. It is the first thing your reader sees and can interest a potential reader to continue on in your work.

First, we’ll focus on introductory sentences.

Your HOOK, the first sentence or two, sets up the rest of your paragraph. They introduce the main idea, without getting too specific. There are several ways you can choose to begin your introduction.

Techniques for your HOOK sentence for this essay:

* Share a story: “I will never forget the last time I had to make a difficult choice.”
* Ask a question that gets to the point of your paragraph: “When was the last time you saw someone do the right thing?”
* Make a list: “The next time I meet a new friend, I will make sure to say hello, ask his name, and smile!”
* Use a quote related to your topic. There are wonderful websites online that provide

thousands of quotes for you to use. Make sure you credit the original author!

* You can even start with “I believe…..”

The LINE connects your kicky opening sentence with the thesis, or main point of the whole essay. Write your thesis (SINKER) first and then tie it to the HOOK with your LINE.

Your SINKER is the last sentence of your introduction paragraph. It is your thesis and is what you will prove/explain with the rest of your paper.

*General techniques and tips for introductory (Hook, Line, Sinker) paragraphs:*

• Don’t wait too long to get into the actual body paragraphs (CEAL)

• Don’t worry so much about length here. Sometimes a good two- to three-sentence

introduction can say all you need to say.

• Use action: An active voice with strong verbs will grab your reader’s attention. Instead of

starting out explaining what your essay will be about, tell the reader.

# EXAMPLE INTRO from: “A Drive to Achieve the Extraordinary” by Juliet Frerking - New York, New York

I believe in the challenge to accomplish something out of the ordinary (HOOK). I have to confess I acquired this belief from the book Guinness World Records (LINE). That book showed me the value of equal opportunity and competition (LINE). It proved to me, early on, that I could rise above anonymity and achieve remarkable things (SINKER).

CEAL Paragraphs

In this essay, you will have two or more CEAL paragraphs as the body of your paper. In these paragraphs, you will provide the details of the experiences or memories that shaped your belief. Remember to use the guidelines, of Claim, Evidence, Analysis, and Link. The link will connect to your thesis and/or to the next paragraph.

# CEAL Example from “Sam’s Valentine” by Kathy Heffernan - Missoula, Montana

I must admit I was concerned when I first met Mrs. Hogan (CLAIM). She was a beginning teacher (EVIDENCE). She seemed so young and sweet and inexperienced (ANALYSIS). How was this new teacher going to lift up a boy who had learned to dread school? (LINK)

TRIP—Conclusion paragraph

Thesis restated

Review Points

Implications of topic

Parting thought

# TRIP Example from “Accomplishing Big Things in Small Pieces” by William Wissemann - Hastings on Hudson, New York

The Rubik’s cube taught me that to accomplish something big, it helps to break it down into small pieces (THESIS). I learned that it’s important to spend a lot of time thinking, to try to find connections and patterns (REVIEW). I believe that there are surprises around the corner (REVIEW). And, that the Rubik’s cube and I, we are more than the sum of our parts (REVIEW). Like a difficult text or sometimes like life itself, the Rubik’s Cube can be a frustrating puzzle (REVIEW). So I carry a cube in my backpack as a reminder that I can attain my goals, no matter what obstacles I face (IMPLICATIONS).

And did I mention that being able to solve the cube is surprisingly impressive to girls? (PARTING THOUGHT)