

READING, RESEARCH, AND TRAVEL JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT
English 234, English 420W, English 539

Your biggest assignment in English 234 (50%) and English 420 (40%) is your journal.

What is the purpose of the journal? This journal serves multiple purposes, but its overall goal is to record your learning, experience, and intellectual development over the course as a whole. It will also serve as a record of your participation in the class, including your reading, your travel experiences, and your research.

When is my journal due? Complete journals should be turned in on or before July 8, 2018.

How should I keep my journal? You can keep your journal in your preferred format: handwritten, typed, an online blog, or a mixture of these forms. There are only two requirements here:

- **You need to be able to send it to me physically or electronically.** If you keep a handwritten journal (collection of notebooks, etc.), you will need to mail it to my North Carolina address no later than **July 8, 2018**, and you will be responsible for making sure it safely arrives (i.e. pick a service that gives you a tracking number! Make sure you mail it no later than this deadline so I have time to receive it and grade it.) I would suggest a USPS Priority Mail flat rate medium box, which will set you back about \$13.70 for a 11¼" x 8¾" x 6" box, which you can get at the post office for free. Your book costs for this class are very low, so think of this is the equivalent to a textbook cost! (But feel free to talk with me about this if the postage cost might be an issue, or consider an electronic journal option.) I will provide my mailing address via email and on Blackboard. I will keep the journals safe (and private) and bring them back to Pittsburgh with me in the fall so you can have them back as mementos of your trip.
- **While we are in England you will need to have a handwritten notebook to take with you on our daily activities.** We will often build in time for writing while we are out and about, and you need to have a pen and notebook to do this. If you are keeping your journal as a typed document or a blog, you can type these handwritten pages up later, but you will need to handwrite while on our trip (rather than type on a phone, for instance). Suggestion: find a small, easy-to-carry notebook for this purpose.

Graduate Students: Please note that graduate students in English 539 should also keep a journal (25% of total grade). You should plan to keep this journal according to the same pre-departure, travel, and post-departure plan, but you can feel free to vary the assignments below based on your research needs as you identify your chosen archive, make notes during your visit to the archive, and conduct post-trip research in preparation for your research essay.

What do I record in my journal?

Your journal has three parts: pre-departure, travel, and post-trip.

1. PRE-DEPARTURE READING (ETC.) JOURNAL

Before departure you should plan to keep your journal as a record of your thoughts and responses to your reading. Although there are no required word counts or number of entries (I don't want you

to feel constrained by prescriptions), you should aim to record your responses to *at least* five of the required texts that you read during your pre-departure period, though I would encourage you to write about more than this. By “responses” I mean your thoughtful, personal engagement with the texts. These don’t need to be focused on your up-coming travel, but they certainly can be if you wish. You might use the journal to develop ideas you share with us in your blog posts, or you might choose to write about different aspects of the texts, or different texts altogether, on the blog and in your journal. In your journal entries I am looking to see evidence that you have read a range of texts and given them some thought. Since this is an informal assignment, feel free to write about your personal thoughts about the texts as well as your “academic” insights. Whatever you choose to write about, remember that these should be *your* thoughts and responses, not ones based on research (or internet searches!). This is a much more informal assignment than a paper, but you still need to be responsible; do not plagiarize! Some questions you might ask yourself as you think about your reading journal (and don’t feel you need to limit yourselves to these questions or answer them all; they’re just here to spark your ideas):

- As you were reading, did any passages, patterns, images, or thematic elements stand out to you as intriguing or puzzling? Why? How?
- Do any questions come up for you as you are reading? Are there things you don’t understand and might be able to work through in your journal? Are there particular contextual issues to do with life and culture in Victorian England that intrigue you based on your reading/that you might be interested in learning more about in order to help you better understand the text(s)?
- What ideas come to mind for you as you read? Are these texts making you think about other things you’ve read or learned?
- Do you see any patterns or connections emerging between texts? Why do you find these connections interesting?
- Are there elements of the writing style that stand out to you as interesting or intriguing?
- Many of the texts we are reading have something to do with London or England in the nineteenth century. What sort of picture are they painting for you of this world? What surprises you? Confuses you? Intrigues you?
- Based on these readings, what are you anticipating about your visit to London, Chawton, and/or Winchester?

Pre-departure research assignment: British Library Treasures Object

By May 12, each student needs to pick one item from a list I will provide of treasures in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery in the British Library. These are items that will be on display in the Treasures gallery while we are in England, and they comprise some of the most significant manuscripts, objects, and texts in their collection. Before departure you need to do some research about your chosen item. What is it? What is its context? Why do you think it is considered one of the “treasured” items in the collection? You should record your research notes (no need for complete sentences unless you wish to write that way) in your journal and be prepared to give a very brief (only two-minutes!) introduction about your item to the rest of the class during our post-breakfast discussion session in the hotel on the morning of our visit to the British Library.

Other pre-departure journaling ideas:

Feel free to be creative with your journal in the pre-departure stage! Feel free to write about your plans for the trip, your research about England, or any other aspect of your pre-departure experience to do with this class/our study abroad experience. You can keep these entries separate from the reading or integrate them however you see fit.

2. IN ENGLAND: TRAVEL JOURNAL

While you're in England your journal is a place to record your thoughts about your experiences. Use this opportunity to reflect upon the things you are learning during our group visits to sites related to nineteenth-century British literature. But you can also use this journal to record your own personal cultural experiences and thoughts about places you visit, food you eat, things you see, experiences you have. You can write poetry, sketch, create a scrapbook, or try your hand at creative writing. The goal here is to record your study abroad experience however you see fit.

Required On-site Writing:

During our scheduled trips out together you will need to carry with you a small notebook and pen/pencil. We will occasionally set aside some time while we're in galleries or museums to pause and write for a while. If you want to keep this notebook separate from your main journal (a sub-journal!), that's fine. If you want to type it up later, that's fine! Figure out what works best for you.

During these times you should feel free to write about whatever strikes you in that moment, but I do expect you to use this time to write (rather than to give into the phone-checking temptation!) There are two exceptions—occasions when I will ask you to write about something specific:

Slow Looking Assignment¹ in the Tate Britain (Sunday, May 27)

During our visit to the Tate Britain we will spend some time discussing and looking together at some pre-Raphaelite paintings and reading some Victorian poetry. But after that session you will have some time to roam the Tate Britain yourself. Here you will find a vast collection of great British paintings.

1. Wander around until you find a work of art that intrigues you or catches your eye. This doesn't have to be a nineteenth-century painting—pick whatever you want! So often in a gallery we only give a few seconds to each object. This assignment is designed to slow you down—*way* down. Pick your work of art, and then sit with it. Open your notebook, and write down the work's title, the name of its creator, and its location. Take a digital photo if you can.

2. Now turn off your phone; you don't want any distractions while you are completing this assignment. Have a notebook and pencil in hand. Write down the starting time of your "slow looking" as well as the time (30 minutes later) when you'll be done. Then start **LOOKING** at the work of art. Jot down brief observations of what you notice as the time goes by. Look, think, reflect, look, scrutinize, change positions, look again, observe patterns,

¹ Assignment inspired by Jennifer L. Roberts. "The Power of Patience: Teaching Students the Value of Deceleration and Immersive Attention." *Harvard Magazine* (2013), <http://harvardmagazine.com/2013/11/the-power-of-patience>

make connections, let the artwork *happen* to you. Focus on a small corner; step back and catch it all at one glance. Associate, allow yourself to be reminded of other objects and visual experiences. Look, look slowly, thoughtfully, carefully. Look at everything. Your focus should be on looking more than writing; one page of jotted notes is fine. After thirty minutes you're done!

4. Finally, either while you're still in the gallery or back in the hotel or at home, write a response of approx. 400 words in your journal in which you reflect on your experience of "slow looking." What was it like? What are your thoughts about the work of art you saw? Did your interpretation of it change at all over the 30 minutes?

British Library Treasure Assignment (Monday, May 28)

Before departure you chose an item in the Ritblat gallery and researched it. Once you visit the gallery you will get to see this item up close in real life. Take your journal with you. Our visit to the Ritblat gallery is self-guided, and so you will get to wander around by yourself or with a group and see a range of items for yourself. But spend extra time with your researched item. Make some "field observations" for yourself: what stands out to you about the object now that you are seeing it in person? Use your journal to write about the experience of your encounter while you are still in the British Library.

Two Additional Adventures!

In addition to the visits, activities, and excursions we have together, I'd like to encourage you to do more things in London independently, hopefully in small groups. You have a London Pass, which allows you to have 6 days of free access to a whole range of otherwise quite expensive museums, galleries, and other fun things to do in London (see www.londonpass.com for ideas). And there are many other free (because publically funded) museums and galleries we don't have time to see together (see the Google Map I shared on our Facebook page for ideas). In your journal, please write about your experience of two London adventures beyond those we have together. These might be museums and galleries or they might be visits to parks or shops, wonderful walks, or other adventures. I hope you will have many, many more than two, but you need to make sure you write about at least two in your journal.

How much should I write in my journal while I'm in England?

As much as you can make time for! Try to make *at least one entry a day*. I understand that you will want to soak up as much travel time as you can while you're in England rather than sitting in the hotel room writing your journal. So why not take a notebook with you and sit in a park to write? Write in museums, churches, bookstores, cafes, teashops, etc. Make writing part of your experience of England!

Do remember that you need to be able to turn this journal in to me. I will keep it private, but I just want you to be fully aware that I will read it. Remember for instance that, as a professor, I am considered a Mandatory Reporter under Title IX, which means I have to report any abuse if I learn about it. You have a right to your privacy, so I just want you to be aware of this!

3. AFTER YOU RETURN: REFLECTION AND RESEARCH JOURNAL

After you return your journal will help you reflect on your study abroad experience and prepare for your final project.

Now that you're home, which experiences are you reflecting upon the most? What had the greatest impact on you? How did your study abroad experience challenge or meet your expectations? What did you learn about nineteenth-century British literature and culture? What did you learn about twenty-first century British life?

For English 234 students, use your post-trip journal to take notes for and plan your final reflection paper. Remember that this paper asks you to combine reflections on your personal experience with your reading and learning about nineteenth-century British literature. Can you use your journal to narrow down your focus so that your paper has a coherent structure?

For English 420W Students, your post-trip journal is also a place for you to plan your final research essay. Jot down ideas, plan your thesis, think about what sorts of evidence you want to use. Free-write your ideas. Outline your paper. Take notes from your research. Use any combination of these strategies to make use of your journal as a research notebook.

How will my journal be graded?

Your grade for your journal will be based on your completion of the three parts of the journal (pre-departure, travel, and post-trip, and the requirements written in this assignment sheet) and the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of your journal entries taken as a whole. While there are no page requirements for the journal, you must show evidence that you have kept the journal throughout the class experience and that you have completed all required parts (including reading reflections that consider at least five texts, on-site writing activities as specified and regular entries while in England, and post-trip reflections). Don't worry too much about spelling and grammar, though coherent and clear prose is helpful! Focus more on recording your learning experiences of all kinds during your study abroad experience.