Mode: ***What are type of writing will you be doing?*** You will be writing a “***This I Believe***” essay expressing and emphasizing one belief you are passionate about.

Audience: ***Who will be reading your work?*** Your classmates and your teacher will be reading your essay. You will be posting your published essay online with an audio reading. Think about your audience and their various levels of background knowledge as you compose this piece.

**P**urpose: ***Why are you writing this?*** You will show your abilities as a writer—through argumentative, informative, and narrative techniques—and become more familiar with revisions, technology, and sharing your beliefs.

**S**ituation: ***What is your time-frame?*** We will write the essay in and out of class over the next few weeks—be prepared to share with your peers. After our essays have been revised, we will record our essays, so pay attention to how you pronounce words when you are considering word choice.

# This I Believe Essay-Writing Guidelines

We invite you to contribute to this project by writing and submitting your own statement of personal belief. We understand how challenging this is—it requires such intimacy that no one else can do it for you. To guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions:

**Tell a story**: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, 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 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 one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

**Be positive**: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.

**Be personal**: 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.

So what am I asking you to do? Clarify the assignment…

<http://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>

“This I Believe” Exploration

Your job is to listen to or read three essays during today’s class period. When you open ThisIBelieve.org, you will have the option to browse many essays. Consider browsing by theme (like I will show you in class). Once you have found an essay you like, fill out the following information in complete sentences.

Essay #1

Title:

Author:

What does this person believe?

What are 2-3 things the author does well?

Essay #2

Title:

Author:

What does this person believe?

What are 2-3 things the author does well?

Essay #3

Title:

Author:

What does this person believe?

What are 2-3 things the author does well?