

informal writing assignment i

Context

The purpose of this informal writing assignment is to provide you (and me) with a snapshot of your writing as we begin our work together. You will return to this first piece of writing at various moments during the semester as we consider how to tighten up our sentences, how to develop our ideas, and how to engage with our readers. At the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to compare this first draft with your final draft and to reflect on your growth as a writer.

Prompt

Sherry Turkle, the founding director of MIT's Initiative on Technology and Self, begins her classes by asking students to respond to this prompt: Was there an object you met during your childhood or adolescence that had an influence on your path into science?

Her students write about all sorts of objects, from maps to stop signs, from bubbles to chocolate meringue, and from bikes to LEGOs, to name a few. The connections between an object and the writer's interest in science are not immediately obvious, but they are there; one student, for example, describes how braiding the tail of her *My Little Pony* doll led to her discovery of the pattern in powers of three ($3^n = 3, 9, 27 \dots$). For this informal writing assignment we will broaden and focus Turkle's prompt.

Identify an object or an event from your childhood or adolescence that had an influence on your academic interests and, in approximately 250–500 words, describe the object and explain how it inspired your curiosity.

Begin by finding a quiet place where you can think and reflect. As you consider objects, make a few short notes to capture impressions, memories, and/or images that you can draw on to shape your narrative. Later, when you are ready, write your response; try to do this in a single sitting and with no more than minor editing. Save this initial draft as a Google Doc (or Word) file using *yourfirst-name_iwai_draft1* for the file name and share it with me by the end of the day on Sunday, August 25th. Bring a hard copy with you to class on Wednesday, August 28th.