Transitioning from essay-form papers that are based on literary analysis to a free-style, whatever-you-want-to-write-about format has been one of the most challenging techniques for me to grasp in writing. We were asked on the first day of class what kind of writer we are, either a reactive writer, someone who can immediately starts writing on a topic, or a rehearsal writer, someone who thinks about the topic before words can appear on paper. I wasn’t too sure which one I placed myself under, but now, after half of the semester, I can officially say English 309 has pushed me towards becoming a rehearsal writer. The idea of writing about whatever you want, as long as it is true, seems so easy, but to me it just isn’t. That topic is what I first wrote about.

From looking back on this paper, it definitely may not be publishing worthy, but I like it. One thing we are asked to do is to stick to what we know, which is usually stories we have from our past and what interests us that goes on in our environment. So I thought, “Why not start from the beginning, the very beginning.” My memory of the story I wrote in the second grade is one of my more vivid childhood memories, and it had to do with starting my “writing career,” so I went from there. I also tied in something that was going on in my life at the time, my struggle with this new writing style, and a memory. It helped me add flow and structure to the paper as well as a little work on trying to write some type of memoir style paper. For my second paper, I am extremely interested in the topic, I am just not sure if I went in the right direction with my paper.

Almost everyone that knows me personally knows my obsession with Shakespeare. For those of you who don’t, I was introduced to him in depth in the 11th
grade. I wasn’t exactly sure how I was going to write about his works in a realistic way, since my papers are all about his fiction works, I chose an aspect of his works to write about. His additions to the English language are remarkable, and many people do not know just how much he actually did contribute to our daily language. I named many different examples of the words he created and used a quote from a play to highlight how common of a word we now see it in reference to what Shakespeare was writing about. The length is without doubt lacking and if I really wanted to, I could expand this paper into a much more intensive study of what he did actually contribute to our language. The topic is good, just not my paper! My third paper was written during a rocky week I was having and can be touchy sometimes for me, so I wrote about it.

Some people may have kept this paper to themselves, but I decided to make it public. Many members on both sides of my family have struggled with alcoholism, my father included. Some of the memories I chose to include are a little blurry, but I can piece together the chunks of time in which they happened and what I observed around me when they happened. This is probably my most vague and least structured paper. Like I said, I was dealing with a lot the week paper three was due, and I decided to just start writing. I know the time frame is in order, but where I was going with a larger point to my paper is still uncertain to me. I don’t even know if I will touch this paper again while in this class, but getting a few words down makes me feel comforted. I guess I made this paper public to see if anyone had this lifestyle in common with me and needed someone to confide in and also to just get a basic opinion from my professor. I am not ashamed of where I come from, and that is the main reason I chose to publicize my topic. I love my
parents, even if they are flawed. Paper topic four again comes from my experiences I have had in life.

I am a very fortunate young 21-year-old lady, in that I have been overseas three times. I went to Ireland when I was in the 7th grade, Italy for the first time when I was a senior in high school, and to Italy again last summer. The most recent trip is the topic I wrote about, and it focuses on the mishaps my brother and I ran into while there. I really like this topic just because both times I’ve been to Italy have been so unbelievable and unforgettable and I wanted the stories I have to transmit that to my readers. Compared to all my other writings, I tried to be very particular in my imagery and creativeness to bring the reader where I was. I didn’t incorporate a main point into this paper, which made it seem kind of pointless and even come across as angry to the professor, so I chose this paper to revise since it had those two large problems. I added a main point and since I did not want anyone to get the wrong impression of my travels, I tried to lighten it up a bit. For my last paper, I chose another rough time in my life to write about.

With the technique still fresh in my mind from the week before, I again used the help of descriptive imagery in recounting my experience with college acceptance and rejections. This point in my life was probably the hardest thus far. Being rejected from JMU was such a huge bump in the road for me, and it took me a good year and a half, almost two years, to get out of the rut. Despite this being a somewhat unhappy topic, I end it with how it has allowed me to grow as a person overall. I talk about what I was experiencing at the time with my busy senior year coming to an end and what I felt from those around me to again try to show the reader where I was and what I felt. I did get comments on expanding the end, how I see myself as a better and more mature person
from my struggle, which is an excellent idea. The sixth paper I wrote is a revision, since I had not done one yet. As stated before, I took my Italy paper and reworded some things, added a few more memories and vivid images, and expanded on the main idea of what I was trying to get across. I did not intend on my paper seeming angry, so I hope the addition of the expanded and more well rounded ending will fix that problem. Different methods, peers, and some help from the textbook have helped me gain some confidence in nonfiction writing.

I feel that using imagery in my writing helps me a lot. I read so many fictional stories that require me to analyze different imagery and I feel that it is embedded into my mind as a reader and writer. It helps the story part of your paper flow and grabs the reader’s attention at the same time. I have kept to the same group for the majority of the semester, and they include Georgette and Vicky. Both young ladies have very particular writing styles, both different and refined. They always have intelligent suggestions for how I can expand my paper and they focus on the content instead of my sometimes obvious rushed writing mistakes. The textbook is not the greatest one in the world, but then again how is anyone supposed to write a book on how to write? I enjoy reading the examples of the essays that follow what the text was earlier discussing. Some of the material is common knowledge to some students, but other examples of writing styles are nice to be reminded of and can be handy in times of uncertainty for a direction of a paper. Overall, I am more confident in writing nonfiction, but I have definitely decided I do not want to be a professional writer. Ever. The pressure of writing my own material that is considered up to not only others around me, but my standards as well would make me
grey by the time I am 30. Hopefully I can continue to add papers I am proud of to my growing portfolio.