

**Writing Assignment Two: Personal Narrative Essay**

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### **Abstract**

This paper will discuss the academic, professional, and personal experiences that have shaped my identity as a double major in Computer Science and Cybersecurity at Old Dominion University. It recounts key events from early exposure to technology to hands-on technical experiences such as discovering secure networks during an internship that influenced my decision to pursue the cybersecurity career path. Through challenges, breakthroughs, and mentorship, I began to see how my interests in problem-solving, digital security, and ethical technology aligned with a broader professional purpose. This story is structured chronologically, weaving together personal motivation and technical growth to illustrate the development of my academic and career direction. Ultimately, the narrative demonstrates how self-reflection and meaningful experiences contribute to a clearer, purpose-driven identity in STEM fields.

### Writing Assignment Two: Personal Narrative Essay

When I started my first internship, I was assigned to do research on artificial intelligence. I had the opportunity to take part in various initiatives provided by the internship, which exposed me to a wide range of technical tools and concepts relevant to cybersecurity fields. This experience proved to be highly valuable, as it contributed to my professional development and prepared me for future roles in the cyber industry. During my internship, I was tasked with exploring the role of artificial intelligence (AI). As a result of my involvement with the technical activities at the workplace, I conducted research on how AI technologies can be implemented in military operations. Artificial intelligence refers to the field of computer science that enables machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as decision-making, learning, and problem-solving.

The military has shown growing interest in the use of artificial intelligence to support combat and operational missions. A key objective in modern warfare is to safeguard the health and safety of soldiers. Bioinspired AI-driven robots present a promising solution on the battlefield, as they are capable of navigating independently, detecting potential threats, and reacting faster than humans. These robots can also follow pre-programmed paths and are typically equipped with built-in GPS technology. A notable example is *Spot*, a four-legged robot developed by Boston Dynamics, designed to traverse a variety of terrains with ease (Bistrion & Piotrowski, 2021). Equipped with cameras and sensors on all sides, *Spot* utilizes a navigation method called simultaneous localization and mapping (SLAM), which enables it to map unfamiliar environments in real time while tracking moving objects and adjusting its position accordingly (Bistrion & Piotrowski, 2021). This robot can operate fully autonomously or be controlled remotely, offering a high level of flexibility and independence.

While studying artificial intelligence, I explored its definition and examined its expanding role in military operations. These advanced computer systems, which are capable of mimicking human thought and behavior, are expected to continue evolving rapidly during our lifetime. That's why gaining early exposure to this emerging technology was incredibly valuable for me. Since my future in the tech industry will likely involve working with AI in some capacity, it was important to begin building my understanding now. Artificial intelligence is a rapidly advancing field with an undeniable role in shaping the future, making it essential for those pursuing technical careers to stay ahead of its development.

### **Awareness of Systems and Cyber Practices**

As part of my internship experience, I was required to complete cybersecurity training. The training presented realistic scenarios demonstrating the consequences of failing to properly safeguard sensitive data. It emphasized essential cybersecurity habits, including creating strong passwords, regularly updating software, and enabling multi-factor authentication. Failing to follow these best practices can lead to serious issues such as identity theft, data breaches, and file corruption. The training also covered how to recognize phishing attempts and the appropriate steps to take when encountering suspicious emails. Additionally, I learned that cybersecurity threats aren't limited to digital spaces—physical security is equally important. For instance, leaving doors unsecured can allow unauthorized individuals to access restricted areas. Overall, the training provided practical knowledge and skills that I will carry forward in my cybersecurity career.

By taking part in the internship's activities, I gained valuable insights from both technical exchange conferences and cybersecurity training sessions. The knowledge I acquired will not only deepen my understanding of cybersecurity concepts but also contribute to my overall

professional development. What I learned can be directly applied to real-world roles in the tech industry, making me better prepared for a future in the field. Cybersecurity continues to be an area that genuinely excites me, and I plan to use the skills and information I've gained to support my career advancement. As a constantly evolving and essential field, cybersecurity is here to stay and its importance in protecting digital systems will only continue to grow.

### **Technical Skills Learned**

As I contributed to the projects during my internship, I gained hands-on experience with creating and formatting spreadsheets in Excel, as well as expanding my understanding of system configuration processes. Excel is a valuable tool used to structure and present data in a clear, organized way that makes it easier for both creators and viewers to interpret. While working with Excel, I became familiar with various formatting options and table styles that help structure data effectively. I learned how to adjust page layouts and select designs that enhanced the readability and flow of the information. These formatting techniques allowed me to better manage the content and allocate space for more detailed insights. Since Excel is widely used in technical fields for data analysis and organization, it was essential for me to become comfortable with its features. Additionally, I had the opportunity to observe and learn about system configuration, which added another layer to my technical skill set.

System configuration refers to setting up and managing software components within a computer system. During the project I contributed to, I gained experience working with various types of software setups used in the organization. One of my tasks involved examining individual systems to identify the specific software installed on each one. This required navigating through multiple system settings and attributes, which made the process both detailed and somewhat complex. Through this hands-on experience, I also became familiar with different

software versions and learned how to distinguish between them. Since software configuration plays a crucial role in many tech-driven workplaces, this exposure helped me understand how different applications function within a system and how their versions can impact overall performance.

During my time at the internship, I actively participated in programs that enhanced my understanding of Microsoft Excel and system configuration processes. These tools are commonly used in technical careers, and I anticipate encountering them frequently once I begin my professional journey after graduating from Old Dominion University. Gaining early exposure to how these technologies are applied in real workplace settings gave me valuable insight into the structure and expectations of technical projects at a professional level. The practical knowledge and skills I developed throughout this experience will serve as a strong foundation as I move forward in the tech field.

I feel proud to be part of a new generation of innovators preparing to make a meaningful impact in the world of technology. Learning how to navigate technical systems and organize data efficiently taught me the importance of precision and attention to detail. These experiences also helped me strengthen my problem-solving skills and boosted my confidence in using industry-standard tools. I now feel better prepared to contribute to future projects in any professional tech environment I enter.

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