

**Narrative Essay**

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## **Narrative Essay**

I am a Senior at Old Dominion University (ODU), and I will be graduating from the university with a bachelor's in game design. In this paper, I will speak on my journey to pursuing my dream career at ODU. This writing will be told in a narrative format highlighting key influences and achievements I have had throughout my life. These experiences have shaped me into the person I am today, as well as been the key experiences in my mindset and thinking. I have already achieved so much, and I am eager to continue learning and growing, constantly pushing myself to accomplish the goals and ambitions I have set for myself.

### **My Decision on Game Design**

When it comes to why I chose Game Design as my major and how I arrived at this point of my life, you must first know that I am, and always have been a highly creative person. Ever since I was a child, I have always had a fascination with making things, typically involving art or writing. It started with me at an early age drawing things I found interesting. This would range from dinosaurs and animals to terrain such as mountains and valleys. Later, I drew characters or places and moved to creating stories based on these drawings. This has always brought me joy and has been my passion, no matter what direction my life has taken. Although I had always been creative and knew make something, for the longest time, I could not certain what that something was. That is, until I started gaming with my father. While this may seem as though it was merely leisure, the time bonding with my father had a profound effect on me as a person. We would stay up long hours into the night, playing games such as [Little Big Planet](#) and [Minecraft](#). We would design levels and essentially write small stories within these games using the tools provided. This is where my love for game design began, and while we were not technically

making a game, the idea of creative freedom alongside the freedom of the limited tools provided in these games birthed a dream and a passion in which I had to fulfill.

### **Challenges and the Arduous Path**

I was never very gifted in school; I frequently struggled to pay attention and had great difficulty keeping up with assignments. While I learned techniques to stay more focused, I continued to struggle in this area. Despite this challenge, I remained undeterred in my goals and continued to draw, write, and design things. The world felt as if it were in the palm of my hand; I could make life anything I wanted with no limitations and infinite possibilities. I was excited to pursue these dreams further until my father passed away when I was thirteen years old. This was an exceedingly challenging time in my life and had a profound effect on my development, not only as a person, but in my ambitions. I was uncertain where to go with my life after his passing. Although I was young and didn't lose my creativity, I struggled to keep the drive to pursue my dreams. To make matters worse, my family moved from Kentucky to Virginia. I was in a new place and far from what I considered home. This was a challenging time in my life and one that left me lonely and depressed.

Slowly, I began adjusting to my unfamiliar environment and within time, I was largely back to my old self. Everything seemed to slowly be turning around, and life was finally starting to go my way. Yet as I would soon find out, this was not to be. I began having crippling anxiety in my junior year of high school which left me almost unable to function. While I had struggled with anxiety since a young child, it was far worse now than it ever had been, and I was almost unable to finish my junior year. We tried medications and therapy that was slow to help. It was then clear that if I wanted to beat my anxiety, I would have to do it myself. I spent the next few months to a year fighting this arduous battle. There were times I was close to giving up, yet I

never could. I found a sort of solace in my creativity, from writing to drawing to brainstorming new ideas. This eased my mind and helped me take a break from the constant stress I was facing. Upon completing my senior year of high school, I had finally pulled myself from that dark place and was determined to pursue my career once more. While I still from anxiety, I have become much better at managing it. It was at this time I knew I was ready; life had thrown obstacles at me, and I persevered through each one.

### **The Next Steps**

Upon graduation from high school, I knew exactly what my next steps would be. I had no intention of earning a college degree in a field in which I was not invested. I needed to seek a degree in a field where I could find a job which I loved. I chose to pursue an associate degree in graphic and media design. This was my chance to truly begin pursuing my career, and I knew one of the most important things in that pursuit was a portfolio.

Nguyen (2013) describes a portfolio as expressing a person's creative process, serving as a method of expressing oneself to others. A portfolio is an invaluable tool when it comes to art and design; it allows your strongest works to be easily displayed while ensuring the right set of eyes will see them. Another interesting point from the reading is Green (2010) who states that a portfolio will vary in audience, but is meant to allow reflection on one's work, goals, and education. This is an idea I completely agree with and even experienced firsthand. When I started community college, I began making countless pieces of art for my courses. Many of these I did not keep as they were not particularly good, but I improved by slowly honing my craft. This could be difficult as there was always room for improvement no matter how much work I put into each project. Being that I am a perfectionist, this was a constant thought of mine as I

routinely pushed my self to be the best I could be. After three years of demanding work, I created a portfolio of which I am very proud, and I obtained my associate in graphic design.

### **ODU/ The Present Day**

I started ODU in the fall of 2023. I am close to achieving a monumental milestone in my life, graduating with a degree in game design. Transferring to ODU filled me with a sense of excitement, yet also fear. I had received my associates and was ready for the next step, yet I did not want to botch this opportunity, especially now that I was taking courses in game development. I am now understanding what goes into making a game as opposed to playing one, and the importance of the two being compatible. Though my time at ODU has been short, I have learned a lot in my game development classes. While a few courses have been challenging, I am excited and ready to continue this journey. It is a good feeling to be learning to do what I have always dreamed. Occasionally, I think back to my youth, when I was just a child who dreamed of expressing his creativity. I am close to achieving my childhood dream and obtaining a bachelor's degree in game design.

### **Conclusion**

Since being a young child, I have been creative. I knew I wanted to work in a field where I could use my creativity, but I was uncertain what that would be. My relationships and experiences throughout my youth have guided me into pursuing game design, and I am eager to make my mark. The game industry is new and ever growing; it is a competitive market where there are no guarantees. But I know what I am looking for and I am ready to do whatever it takes to achieve my goals.

## References

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