



NCCA

National Commission for Culture and the Arts
A Husay Sining Learning Resource

7

SPA

Special Program in the Arts

Creative Writing



Quarter 1
Module 1



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Creative
Writing

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Writer

Grade 7

Creative Writing

Special Program in the Arts

Introduction and Objectives

This learning module has been designed to guide Grade 7 students in the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) in their journey towards acquiring competence and confidence in creative writing.

Often, you will be asked to write about what you know—drawing on memory, family/community stories, and sensory impressions among others. You will have to equip yourself with a notebook to serve as journal. This is where you will record thoughts and observations on whatever subject you like to help you generate material for original works of creative writing.

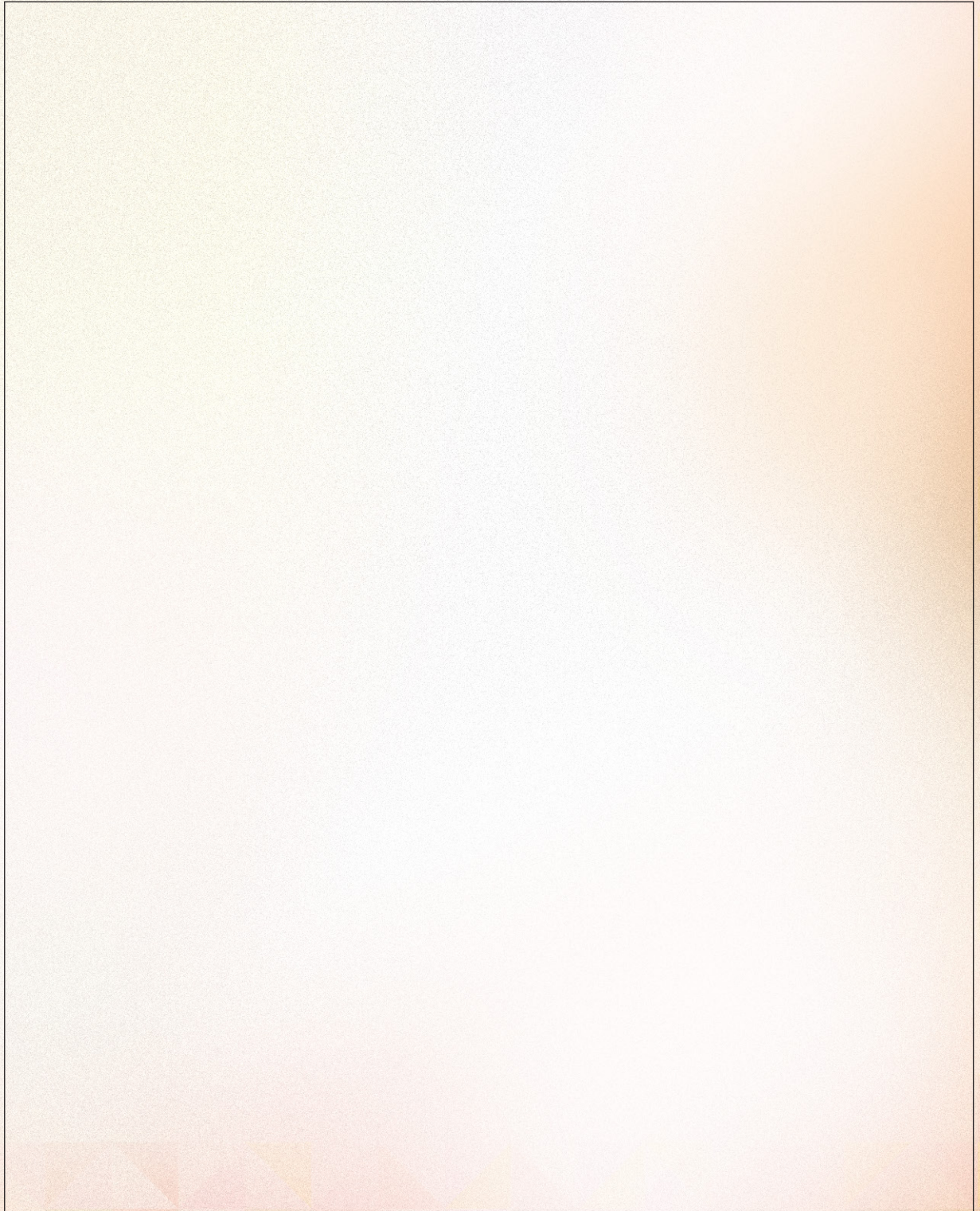
Generally, this module intends for you to gain an understanding of the elements and principles of artistic composition and how they are translated into creative writing, in particular, the essay.

Specifically, at the end of this module, you should be able to:

1. discuss the nature of art and its significance to our society;
2. examine how the elements and principles of organization of art are interwoven to create a pattern of relationships and becoming a unified work of art;
3. describe the elements and principles of writing an essay;
4. recognize the value of your roots, memories, experiences, and observations as source/s of inspiration in writing your narrative and essay; and
5. write narratives and essay that draw from memories, personal experiences, and observations of spaces within and outside your community giving due consideration of the elements and principles of organization of art.

Activity 1. Paint Me A Picture

Clip a picture/artwork/text from any newspaper or magazine that caught your attention and attach it in the space provided below. You may also opt to draw a picture or write/copy a text that connects well with you. For example, I find peace by gazing at sunsets, so I would draw inside the box a picture of a sunset. I could get creative with it and add splashes of color that form an impression of the sunset in my area. For you, it could be a picture of a tree, church, an editorial cartoon, or a poem. It could be anything that you find interesting.



Lesson 1. Understanding the Arts

Art: Its Meaning and Significance¹

Art is everywhere. It is very much a part of our lives. We find art in the clothes and accessories we wear; in the design of our furniture and furnishings; in the style of the houses we build and the vehicles we use; in garden landscapes and community plazas; in recitals and stage presentations; in movie houses; in the intricate metalwork and handcrafted jewelries, handwoven *malong*, and rituals, music, and dances of indigenous peoples. We find art in the home and in the community, in religion, in trade, and in industry. It exists in all forms of human society and in every generation because it serves some fundamental human needs.

You must understand, however, that art is not nature. You look beyond and see mountain ranges, gaze up and see a sky full of stars on a summer evening, you hear a symphony of frogs croaking in the distance. These are natural things. They are not works of art. A work of art is man-made.

Art is a planned activity. The creation process usually starts as an experience which the artist wants to communicate. A spark of inspiration, so to speak, which could have been brought about by something interesting in the natural world such as the vibrant colors of a tropical sunset, the geometric design of a flower, the comforting roughness of the bark of an old tree, or the tip tapping of the falling rain. The artist uses symbols expressed in his/her idea of order to convey that experience to the audience.

¹ From "Art: Perception and Appreciation" by M. A. R. Ortiz, T. E. Erestain, A. G. Guillermo, M. C. Montano, and S. A. Pilar, 2003, pp. 5-37.

Art provokes and stimulates the emotions and/or the intellect. Our reaction to art is personal and individual. We tend to like some works and dislike others simply because they don't reveal to us what we feel they should. We have to accept the fact that we all have our own personal preferences because of different cultural backgrounds, religion, educational attainment, and political views among others.

While each work of art may be an expression of an artist's personal viewpoint, it is at the same time an expression of a general vision of the age in which the work of art was created. He/She becomes a kind of historian—recording in his/her work the attitudes and ways of life of his/her period; a critic or moralist—analyzing and commenting on the virtues and vices of his/her particular society, pointing out a course of action for its renovation. Indeed, art can influence social behavior and bring about in us decisions to collectively change, correct, or improve upon the human condition.

To learn to appreciate any one of the arts, we must understand what goes into its making: its elements or components and how these are put together in a pattern of relationships, and becoming the unity which is the work of art itself.

The Elements and Principles of Organization of Art

Beauty in art may be the result of the successful organization of its elements. But the idea of beauty is relative. What may be beautiful to us may not be so to others. Concepts of beauty change as time passes and vary from culture to culture.

As a quick overview, below is a rundown of the elements of art and the principles of organization:

Classification	Art Form	Elements	Principles of Organization of Art ²
The visual or space arts (those whose mediums can be seen and which occupy space)	Architecture	Point/dot, line, shape, form, space, texture, color	Balance; proportion and scale; dominance, emphasis, and focal point; movement; economy; harmony and unity; repetition, rhythm, and pattern; variety and variation
	Visual Arts	Line, shape, form, space, texture, value, color	
The auditory or time arts (those whose mediums can be heard and which are expressed in time)	Creative Writing	Action, character, conflict, dialogue, genre, narration, pace, plot, point of view, scene, setting, style, suspense, theme and motif, tone, voice	
	Music	Rhythm, dynamics, melody, harmony, tone color, texture, form	
The combined arts (those whose mediums can be both seen and heard, and which exist in both space and time)	Dance	Body, action, space, time, energy	
	Dramatic Arts	Literary elements: plot, theme, characters, dialogue, music, spectacle, convention, genre, and audience Technical elements: scenery (set), costumes, properties, lights, sound, and makeup Performance elements: acting, character, motivation, character analysis, and empathy	
	Film	Narrative, cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing, sound	

The above elements are organized such that ideas are conveyed to audiences in a relatively pleasing manner.

But have you ever asked yourself, are there universal elements and organization of art that can transcend all art forms? Indeed, this is a tough question and a difficult one to answer. However, for this particular lesson, allow me to take you to a different way of looking at the elements and organization of art based on the creative practice of the Arts Research and Training Institute in Southern Tagalog, Incorporated (ARTIST, Inc.)³ and its network of cultural organizations.

Below are the elements and principles of organization of art according to the practice of ARTIST, Inc. and its network to help you better understand the language of an artist.

A. Elements of Art

1. **Body.** The human body is the primary element in the creation of art. Our bodies create movements that express characters and dialogues to tell stories. The artist may use any part of his/her body to convey ideas—performance artists and dancers use their bodies to tell stories; musicians produce music by using their voices to sing and/or their bodies to play an instrument; a writer either recites or writes his/her literary piece.

Likewise, the audience experiences the story through their bodies. Stories can make us feel excited, scared, in love, and a lot of other emotions you can think of. Stories are felt by our bodies. Stories are told in the body⁴.

² "Elements of Art and Principles of Organization" by R. Spahr.

³ Founded in 1987, ARTIST, Inc. is a non-stock, non-profit, and non-governmental organization (NGO) that aims to promote culture and the arts through cultural research, conducting regular cultural training programs, and staging theater performances. Official Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ArtistIncPH>

⁴ "The Science of the Story" by J. A. Smith, 2016.



How an artist organized his/her visual story is what makes the work of art engaging, and the possibilities in creating stories are endless. An artist may be inspired by different, people, spaces, events, things, and thoughts, in the same manner that the audience responds to different stories and works of art. As George Bernard Shaw⁵ once said, “Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will.”

2. **Narrative.** According to literaryterms.net⁶, a narrative is a story. It is the account of events, experiences, and details. It also refers to the story-telling process. It can also refer to the form or style of the story being told. A narrative is something that makes sense to you. It is through which people make sense of their lives, a vehicle for ordering and organizing experiences, and a mechanism for both comprehending and constituting the social world. Any work of art has a narrative. A narrative may be real or imagined, nonfictional or fictional. It may be rendered in different structures. Nevertheless, whether or not the narrative is real or imagined, nonfictional or fictional, the narrative must appear as if it is happening at the very moment that it is being viewed. The earliest manner of narratives include cave paintings and hieroglyphics, and oral storytelling. These narratives served as guides to communities’ communal identity and cultural history.

Remember, a narrative can be used to transform anything into a story. For example:

⁵ George Bernard Shaw (July 26, 1856–November 2, 1950) was an Irish playwright, critic, polemicist and political activist. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925. “Narrative,” <https://literaryterms.net/narrative/>

⁶ Structure. Wikipedia10 defines structure as the arrangement and organization of interrelated elements in a material object or system, or the object or system so organized.

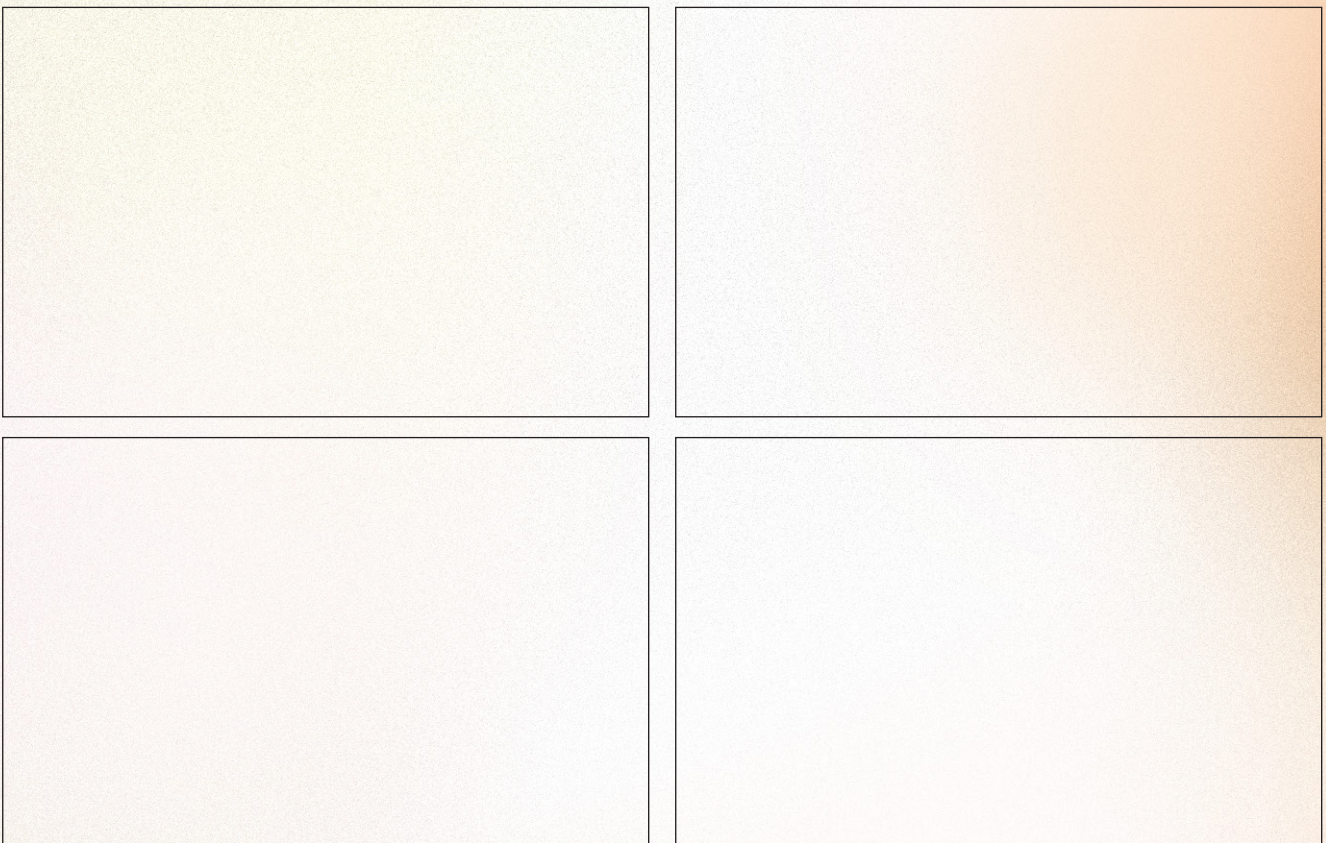
- Other forms of art can also be considered narratives. You can choreograph a narrative dance or paint a narrative series of pictures. The important element is that your creation tells a story.
 - Autobiographies are, essentially, narrative. They are written in the first-person and describe the events of the story-teller's life.
 - Theatrical monologues are narrative. In a monologue, the character tells an intimate story, often addressing the audience, asking questions and seemingly seeking answers from them. In Hamlet's famous monologue, that begins "To be or not to be," he is seeking answers to the great philosophical questions of life and death. He is discussing them with himself and the audience, trying to puzzle them out and inviting the audience to do the same.
 - Essays can also be narrative. An essay is a literary composition about a single subject. You have probably written many. A narrative essay is simply an essay written in a style that tells a story. They are often personal, anecdotal, and told from the writer's point of view.
3. **Symbolism.** Literarydevices.com⁷ defines symbolism as the act of imbuing objects with a certain meaning that is different from their original meaning or function. Authors use symbolism to tie certain things that may initially seem unimportant to more universal themes. The symbols then represent these grander ideas or qualities. For instance, an author may use a particular color that on its own is nothing more than a color, but hints at a deeper meaning. Meaning is basically the creative person's message to the reader or viewer. Symbolism⁸ differs from metaphor in that the former makes use of a character or an image to represent something else, whereas the latter allows a writer

⁷ "Symbolism," <http://www.literarydevices.com/symbolism/>

⁸ "Difference Between Symbol and Metaphor," <https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-symbol-and-vs-metaphor/>, 2012

to compare seemingly opposite or unrelated things. There is no comparison in a symbol, while comparison is the central idea behind metaphor. A metaphor tries to explain a concept to make for a better understanding. A ballerina is a butterfly is a metaphor, while using the image of a butterfly for a ballerina is a symbol. A chair, which is “a movable seat that has a part for your back to rest against, usually four legs, and sometimes two side parts for your arms,” may be used to symbolize a human being or an absence of purpose. In Nick Joaquín’s⁹ essay “A Heritage of Smallness” (Appendix A), “society for the Filipino is a small rowboat” is a metaphor. An image of the rowboat may symbolize Philippine society.

4. **Imagery.** One of the strongest devices in creative expression is imagery. Imagery is manifested through words, visual representations, or body languages. It provides the viewer a vivid and realistic visual picture of what the creative person or artist wants to express. He/She uses imagery to add depth to his/her work by “tickling, awakening, and delighting” the viewer’s sensory perceptions of his/her messages.
- Imagery appeals to human senses to deepen the viewer’s understanding of any form of creative expression. Powerful forms of imagery engage all of the senses.



5. **Movement.** Any movement, whether actual or an illusion, is a crucial element of art. A work of art may incorporate actual motion, that is, the artwork itself moves in some way. Or it may incorporate the illusion of movement, as in implied movement.

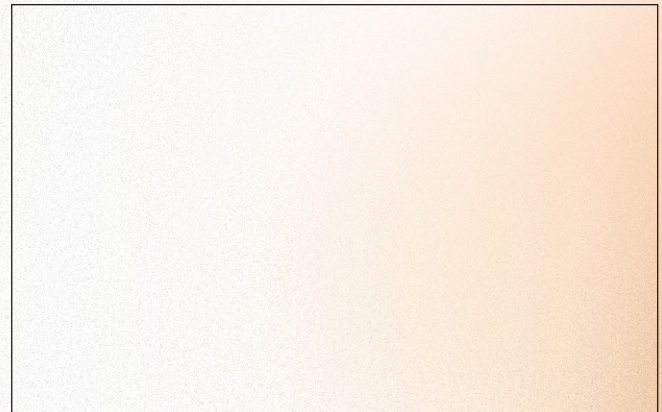
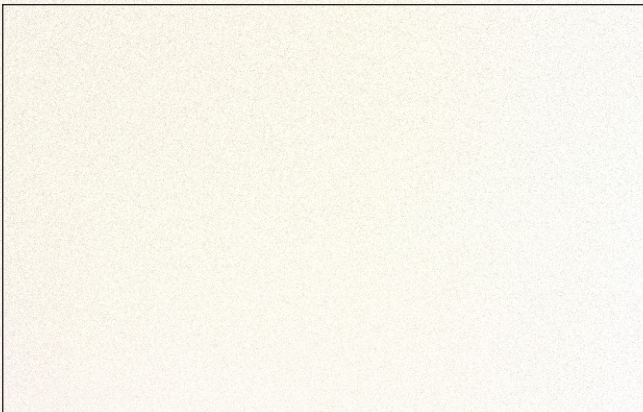
⁹ Nicomedes “Nick” Márquez Joaquín (May 4, 1917–April 29, 2004) was a Filipino writer and journalist best known for his short stories and novels in the English language. He also wrote using the pen name Quijano de Manila. Joaquín was conferred the rank and title of National Artist of the Philippines for Literature in 1976.

It is the movement or implied movement that pushes the narrative in a picture, words, or any creative expression for the imagery to take shape in the viewer's mind.

6. **Structure.** Wikipedia¹⁰ defines structure as the arrangement and organization of interrelated elements in a material object or system, or the object or system so organized.

In art, the term structure pertains to the arrangement and mutual relation of the part of the body, object or composition. Structure refers to the relation of parts, to the relative proportions of the component elements. It also refers to the underlying skeleton which supports the whole figure, giving form to flesh. It is that which gives the forms their particular nature or character.¹¹

Because of structure, you can distinguish one genre from another—what makes dance, drama, visual arts, music, creative writing, etc. the art form that they are.



B. Principles of Organization of Art

The principles of organization of art refer to the manner in which the elements of art are arranged and tapped such that the work of art becomes appealing and pleasant, and in some instances, marketable.

1. **Selectivity, harmony, and emphasis.** Select the elements that you think and feel can make your viewer experience what you want to express. The elements should be arranged coherently that no matter how symbolical your work of art is, it will still be intelligible to the viewers. In any work of art, any or all of these elements and principles will be present, but some will be more obvious than others. Some artists today like to bend or ignore these rules and by doing so are experimenting with different forms of expression.
2. **Showing, not telling.** Telling is simply informing the viewers of the narrative instead of creating a space for them to discover, experience, and understand what the artist is trying to convey. Showing is painting images in the viewer's mind through metaphors, engaging him/her in the process of meaning-making. According to an Eric Digest article¹², this particular engagement in the creative process and meaning-making actually stimulates thought and behavior critical to scientific inquiry.

¹⁰ "Structure," <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structure>

¹¹ "Structure—Arcy Art Original Oil Paintings Art Dictionary," <https://www.arcyart.com/ad-structure.htm>

¹² "Encouraging Creativity in Early Childhood Classrooms" by C. P. S. Edwards and K. Wright, 1995.

Take a look at the examples below:

This is Telling.	This is Showing.
He was angry.	He slammed his fist on the table.
She was happy.	She twirled as she passed the shop window, grinning at the reflection of her billowing skirt.
It was hot.	The fan beat a sluggish rhythm as sweat beads on his lip.
It was dark.	She traced the smooth plaster and felt her way along the passage.
They moved around the crime scene.	Detective Hans kneeled next to the broken safe and pulled out the necklace.
The red car drove quickly.	The Ferrari zoomed past.

Show, don't tell.

In the second paragraph of the essay “A Heritage of Smallness,” examine how Filipinos were shown to have a mindset of smallness in conducting business:

“What most astonishes foreigners in the Philippines is that this is a country, perhaps the only one in the world, where people buy and sell one stick of cigarette, half a head of garlic, a dab of pomade, part of the contents of a can or bottle, one single egg, one single banana. To foreigners used to buying things by the carton or the dozen or pound and in the large economy sizes, the exquisite transactions of Philippine tingis cannot but seem Lilliputian¹³. So much effort by so many for so little. Like all those children risking neck and limb in the traffic to sell one stick of cigarette at a time. Or those grown-up men hunting the sidewalks all day to sell a puppy or a lantern or a pair of socks. The amount of effort they spend seems out of all proportion to the returns. Such folk are, obviously, not enough. Laboriousness just can never be the equal of labor as skill, labor as audacity, labor as enterprise.”

In terms of representing cultural heritage:

“However far we go back in our history it's the small we find—the nipa hut, the barangay, the petty kingship, the slight tillage, the tingi trade. All our artifacts are miniatures and so is our folk literature, which is mostly proverbs, or dogmas in miniature. About the one big labor we can point to in our remote past are the rice terraces—and even that grandeur shrinks, on scrutiny, into numberless little separate plots into a series of layers added to previous ones, all this being the accumulation of ages of small routine efforts (like a colony of ant hills) rather than one grand labor following one grand design. We could bring in here the nursery diota about the little drops of water that make the mighty ocean, or the peso that's not a peso if it lacks a centavo; but creative labor, alas, has sterner standards, a stricter hierarchy of values. Many little efforts, however perfect each in itself, still cannot equal one single epic creation. A gallery full of even the most charming statuettes is bound to look scant beside a Pieta or Moses by Michelangelo; and you could stack up the best short stories you can think of and still not have enough to outweigh a mountain like War and Peace.”

¹³ This means trivial or very small. The word lilliputian comes from Jonathan Swift's 1726 novel, Gulliver's Travels. Lilliput is the name of a fictional island whose people, the Lilliputians, stand only about six inches high.

In terms of managing communities:

“Philippine society, as though fearing bigness, ever tends to revert the condition of the barangay of the small enclosed society. We don’t grow like a seed, we split like an amoeba. The moment a town grows big it become two towns. The moment a province becomes populous it disintegrates into two or three smaller provinces. The excuse offered for divisions is always the alleged difficulty of administering so huge an entity. But Philippine provinces are microscopic compared to an American state like, say, Texas, where the local government isn’t heard complaining it can’t efficiently handle so vast an area. We, on the other hand, make a confession of character whenever we split up a town or province to avoid having to cope, admitting that, on that scale, we can’t be efficient; we are capable only of the small.”

- 3. Plausibility in a make-believe world.** As an artist, you create an imaginary world where you define and express what you want to show by selecting, combining, and organizing the elements of art. You create a make-believe world that may or may not have existed, but with mindful use of the elements of art you are able to make the viewer feel and experience the world you created. The logic of the narrative in your make-believe world is defined and shaped by the worldview and perception of art you embrace.
- 4. Crafting a narrative of “as if” or “what if.”** “As if” is a slang expression to imply that something is farfetched or never going to happen. “What if” is a question about the consequences of something happening. Things which are usually connected and related in real life may be depicted as not having any connections or relationships at all in a work of art. Or it could be the other way around: Things having no connection at all with each other may be shown to be actually related in a work of art. The beauty of producing a work of art is creating possibilities and probabilities through integration of the different elements of art.

Activity 2. Object Writing¹⁴

Earlier in our lesson, we mentioned that a powerful imagery engages all of the senses.

Pick an object that brings you back to childhood. Write about it in your journal. Dive into your sense memories and associations surrounding the object. Anything goes, as long as it is sense-bound. Try to use all senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, organic (awareness of changes inside the body—heartbeat, pulse, muscle tension, stomachaches, cramps, and breathing), and kinesthetic (awareness of changes in body position and movement).

What did you see? How did it sound, taste, and smell? What were your thoughts? How did you feel? Be as vivid as you can be.

Write freely. No rhythm, no rhyme. No need for complete sentences. Write for 10 minutes and see where that object takes you.

Note:

You may turn this activity into a regular morning/afternoon/evening exercise to develop creativity and imagination and hone your writing skills. Just pick an object at random and write about it in your journal.

¹⁴ From “Generate Ideas through Object Writing,” by P. Pattison, 2009; “365 Days of Writing Prompts,” by The Daily Post, 2013; “Creative Writer’s Notebook,” by J. Gillard, 2016.

Please refer to Appendix B for a sample on object writing.

Reflection Activity 1.

1. Looking back at what you have written in Independent Activity 1.1, identify the phrases that depict the following senses (You may check out **Appendix B** again on how to classify imagery):

Sight

Hearing

Smell

Taste

Touch

Reflection Activity 2.

Revisit what you have written in Independent Activity 1.2. Remember our section on “Showing, not telling”? What instances can you identify in your written output that you “told” about something? How can you improve this into “Showing, not telling”? Write them down in the corresponding boxes below.

This is Telling.

This is Showing.

Lesson 2. Writing an Essay

An essay may be defined simply as a composition which discusses a single topic. “Essay” is derived from the French word *essai* which means “to attempt” or “to try.” An essay attempts to offer a new perspective, a new opinion, a solution, or new suggestions or recommendations. It can be used as literary criticism, political manifesto, learned argument, observations of daily life, and recollections and reflections of the author. Over the years, the concept of “essay” has been extended to other media beyond writing, as in film and photographic essays.

All in all, an essay ought to be good in terms of matter and style. The things we say ought to be true and important; and we ought to say them in the right way.

A. Elements of Essay Writing¹⁵

1. **Theme/Content.** An essay must have a theme or topic that you want to convey to your readers. It could be about anything that you feel strongly about. Some themes/content may already be interesting in themselves, like unusual experiences and current controversial events.

Remember this: the theme is a recurring universal concept. It is the meaning behind the narrative. It is the “heartbeat” or “soul” of your written material. Examples of universal themes are love, death, good vs. evil, coming of age, power and corruption, survival, courage and heroism, prejudice, war, adversity, success, creativity and originality, authority and leadership, individuality, morality and ethics, motivation, history and tradition, society and community, decision-making, education and the arts, friendship and collaboration, media and entertainment, progress and technology, and heroes.

In any case, read wisely. It is by reading, and thinking on what we read, that we store our mind with knowledge and cultivate our power of judging.

2. **Style.** The style and structure of an essay is limited only by the writer’s personality and the topic he/she is writing about. The essayist can be whimsical or serious, satirical or humorous, if he/she chooses.

Style can be developed through word choice, the topics he/she writes about, the pacing of ideas or facts, and his/her personal attitudes and views which are revealed by his/her work.

3. **Form and Structure.** Form and structure refer to the way in which all parts of the essay are connected to one another to achieve a certain impression or effect, and the arrangement or sequence of details or facts and the transitions between them.

B. Principles of Essay Writing¹⁶

1. Choose a topic. Make sure that the topic you choose is something you’re comfortable with. Do not settle for a topic that is beyond your writing capabilities. Define the purpose of your essay. Is your purpose to persuade? To explain how to accomplish something? Or to educate about a person, place, thing or idea?

¹⁵ From “Art: Perception and Appreciation,” by M. A. R. Ortiz, T. E. Erestain, A. G. Guillermo, M. C. Montano, and S. A. Pilar, 2003, pp. 133-135.

¹⁶ From “The Basic Principles of Writing an Excellent Essay,” by C. Rhodes, 2019.

2. **Carry out research.** Research is an important part of writing an excellent essay. The point of research is to find up-to-date information on your chosen topic. You may go to the library and read through books; search the Internet for reliable material; or conduct interviews with people in your community who may be knowledgeable about the topic you intend to write about.

3. **Write the essay introduction.** The introduction occupies the first paragraph of the essay. It is a small part that carries a lot of importance in an essay. The first sentence should captivate the attention of the reader so that they may get the interest of reading the essay to the end. You should use the first paragraph to let the reader know what the essay is all about. You can use a short, significant quote at the start of the paragraph. This quote should be relevant to the rest of the content. Make sure to include your thesis statement in this part. The statement should be both convincing and charming. Let it motivate people to read the whole essay paragraph by paragraph.

Note that the active voice, wherein the subjects direct actions rather than let the actions “happen to” them— as in “he scored a 97%” instead of “he was given a 97%”—is a much more powerful and attention-grabbing way to write. At the same time, unless it is a personal narrative, avoid personal pronouns like I, My, or Me. Try instead to be more general and you will have your reader hooked.

4. **Write the body.** This is the main part of an essay. It is the only part that is common in all forms of essays. The body may contain between 3 and 5 paragraphs depending on the type of essay and the word count. The body carries the main arguments of an essay. You should develop the arguments in this part of the essay. Make sure to use keywords well to emphasize what you are writing on and support this with the relevant evidence. Do not squeeze a lot of information in the body. Only include your strong arguments and evidence (details and examples). Avoid using long sentences and make sure that your essay flows from one paragraph to the other.

The first sentence (the topic sentence) of your body paragraphs needs to have a lot of individual pieces to be truly effective. Not only should it open with a transition that signals the change from one idea to the next, but it should also have a common thread which ties all of the body paragraphs together. For example, if you used “first” in the first body paragraph then you should use “secondly” in the second or “on the one hand” and “on the other hand” accordingly.

Always consider the following: correct grammar and spelling; correct writing format; and correct punctuation.

5. **Write the conclusion.** This is the last part of an essay. It is in the conclusion where you summarize the content of your essay. It can be a difficult paragraph to write effectively but, as it is your last chance to convince or otherwise impress the reader, it is worth investing some time in. Take this opportunity to restate the major points that you have in the body. You should also remember to mention the thesis statement in the conclusion. After writing the conclusion, read through your paper twice or thrice. Proofreading ensures that there are no spelling mistakes or any grammatical errors.

Something to Think About

Having known what art is, what purpose it serves, its elements and principles of organization, as well as an introduction to essay writing, let me ask you this: Why are you here? Why do you write?

We'll cap off this module with a meaningful challenge from Dr. Anton M. Juan, Jr.¹⁷: "Do you write to be popular? Or do you write for the people? Your responsibility is to speak the truth!"

Activity 1. Writing an Essay

1. Choose one from the writing prompts listed below. This will be your essay topic for this lesson.
 - a. Are heroes people who risk their lives or people who stand up for what they believe in?
 - b. Should national leaders be judged differently than others?
 - c. Growing Up in a Single Parent Family
 - d. Online Learning vs. Face-to-Face Learning
 - e. The Youth and the COVID-19 Pandemic
2. To guide you in the writing process, work on filling out the essay prewriting worksheet provided in Appendix C. Be mindful of the principles of essay writing discussed earlier. You may need a few sessions to complete this worksheet.
3. Write your essay!

¹⁷ Dr. Anthony "Anton" M. Juan, Jr. is a professor, director, and playwright from the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre—College of Arts and Letters at the University of Notre Dame du Lac, United States of America. He has been knighted twice by the French government, receiving the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 1992 and the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de Merit in 2002. He is the founding Artistic Director of the Step of Angels Theatre in Athens, Greece; the former Director-General of Dulaang UP, University of the Philippines; and former Fellow for Drama at the Creative Writing Center of UP.

Reflection Activity 1.

What challenges did you encounter in filling out the essay prewriting worksheet and the actual process of writing the essay? How were you able to address and resolve these?

Challenges (Prewriting)

Resolution

Challenges (Actual Writing of the Essay)

Resolution

Additional Activities.

1. Study a package design (canned goods, instant noodles, etc.). Compare this with another package design for a similar product. Which of the two captures the attention first? Which holds the interest longer? Which do you suppose will create a more lasting impression on purchasers? Which do you think will lead to more sales? What qualities of the design bring these effects about (If possible, can you identify the symbolisms present in the design)? Write down your thoughts and observations in your journal.

Note: If you prefer, you may also compare TV advertisements (commercials) or radio plugs for canned goods, instant noodles, etc. in this activity.

2. Read the essay “A Heritage of Smallness” written by Nick Joaquín in 1966. What is its theme? Does it try to convince you about something? Does it explain something? How does the author do this (What are his main arguments)? What do you think is the most striking point in the essay? Do you agree with the author’s thoughts? Why or why not? Write down your insights in your journal.
3. Other essays you may read to explore on matter and style:
 - a. “Tikim: Essays on Philippine Food and Culture (Revised and Updated)” by Doreen G. Fernandez (2020)
 - b. “Hindi Ko Alam” by Karl Gabrielle B. De Los Santos (First Prize, Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature–Kabataan Sanaysay, 2015) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dq_D-lrat3wkVsazS_fLTZTBt9vf8xn6/view
 - c. “Hymns of the Mountains, Dreams of the Stars” by Marc Christian M. Lopez (First Prize, Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature–Kabataan Essay, 2013) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u-nw2ZSPDD5f5wQKBvXCBtn2ebr2g-qO/view>
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Appendix A

A Heritage of Smallness

Nick Joaquin

Society for the Filipino is a small rowboat: *the barangay*. Geography for the Filipino is a small locality: *the barrio*. History for the Filipino is a small vague saying: *matanda pa kay mahoma; noong* peacetime. Enterprise for the Filipino is a small stall: *the sari-sari*. Industry and production for the Filipino are the small immediate searchings of each day: *isang kahig, isang tuka*. And commerce for the Filipino is the smallest degree of retail: *the tingi*.



What most astonishes foreigners in the Philippines is that this is a country, perhaps the only one in the world, where people buy and sell one stick of cigarette, half a head of garlic, a dab of pomade, part of the contents of a can or bottle, one single egg, one single banana. To foreigners used to buying things by the carton or the dozen or pound and in the large economy sizes, the exquisite transactions of Philippine *tingis* cannot but seem Lilliputian. So much effort by so many for so little. Like all those children risking neck and limb in the traffic to sell one stick of cigarette at a time. Or those grown-up men hunting the sidewalks all day to sell a puppy or a lantern or a pair of socks. The amount of effort they spend seems out of all proportion to the returns. Such folk are, obviously, not enough. Laboriousness

just can never be the equal of labor as skill, labor as audacity, labor as enterprise.

The Filipino who travels abroad gets to thinking that his is the hardest working country in the world. By six or seven in the morning we are already up on our way to work, shops and markets are open; the wheels of industry are already agrind. Abroad, especially in the West, if you go out at seven in the morning you're in a dead-town. Everybody's still in bed; everything's still closed up. Activity doesn't begin till nine or ten— and ceases promptly at five p.m. By six, the business sections are dead towns again. The entire cities go to sleep on weekends. They have a shorter working day, a shorter working week. Yet they pile up more mileage than we who work all day and all week.

Is the disparity to our disparagement?

We work more but make less. Why? Because we act on such a pygmy scale. Abroad they would think you mad if you went in a store and tried to buy just one stick of cigarette. They don't operate on the scale. The difference is greater than between having and not having; the difference is in the way of thinking. They are accustomed to thinking dynamically. We have the habit, whatever our individual resources, of thinking poor, of thinking petty.

Is that the explanation for our continuing failure to rise—that we buy small and sell small, that we think small and do small?

Are we not confusing timidity for humility and making a virtue of what may be the worst of our vices? Is not our timorous clinging to smallness the bondage we must break if we are ever to inherit the earth and be free, independent, progressive? The small must ever be prey to the big. Aldous Huxley said that some people are born victims, or “murderers.” He came to the Philippines and thought us the “least original” of people. Is there not a relation between his two terms? Originality requires daring: the daring to destroy the obsolete, to annihilate the petty. It's cold comfort to think we haven't developed that kind of “murderer mentality.”

But till we do we had best stop talking about “our heritage of greatness” for the national heritage is—let's face it—a heritage of smallness.

However far we go back in our history it's the small we find—the nipa hut, the barangay, the petty kingship, the slight tillage, the tingi trade. All our artifacts are miniatures and so is our folk literature, which is mostly proverbs, or dogmas in miniature. About the one big labor we can point to in our remote past are the rice terraces—and even that grandeur shrinks, on scrutiny, into numberless little separate plots into a series of layers added to previous ones, all this being the accumulation of ages of small routine efforts (like a colony of ant hills) rather than one grand labor following one grand design. We could bring in here the nursery diota about the little drops of water that make the mighty ocean, or the peso that's not a peso if it lacks a centavo; but creative labor, alas, has sterner standards, a stricter hierarchy of values. Many little efforts, however perfect each in itself, still cannot equal one single epic creation. A gallery full of even the most charming statuettes is bound to look scant beside a Pieta or Moses by Michelangelo; and you could stack up the best short stories you can think of and still not have enough to outweigh a mountain like War and Peace.

The depressing fact in Philippine history is what seems to be our native aversion to the large venture, the big risk, the bold



extensive enterprise. The pattern may have been set by the migration. We try to equate the odyssey of the migrating *barangays* with that of the Pilgrim, Father of America, but a glance of the map suffices to show the differences between the two ventures. One was a voyage across an ocean into an unknown world; the other was a going to and from among neighboring islands. One was a blind leap into space; the other seems, in comparison, a mere crossing of rivers. The nature of the one required organization, a sustained effort, special skills, special tools, the building of large ships. The nature of the other is revealed by its vehicle, the *barangay*, which is a small rowboat, not a seafaring vessel designed for long distances on the avenues of the ocean.

The migrations were thus self-limited, never moved far from their point of origin, and clung to the heart of a small known world; the islands clustered round the Malay Peninsula. The movement into the Philippines, for instance, was from points as next-door geographically as Borneo and Sumatra. Since the Philippines is at heart of this region, the movement was toward center, or, one may say, from near to still nearer, rather than to farther out. Just off the small brief circuit of these migrations was another world: the vast mysterious continent of Australia; but there was significantly no movement towards this *terra incognita*. It must have seemed too perilous, too unfriendly of climate, too big, too hard. So, Australia was conquered not by the fold next door, but by strangers from across two oceans and the other side of the world. They were more enterprising, they have been rewarded. But history has punished the laggard by setting up over them a White Australia with doors closed to the crowded Malay world.

The *barangays* that came to the Philippines were small both in scope and size. A *barangay* with a hundred households would already be enormous; some *barangays* had only 30 families, or less. These, however, could have been the seed of a great society if there had not been in that a fatal aversion to synthesis. The *barangay* settlements already displayed a Philippine characteristic: the tendency to petrify in isolation instead of consolidating, or to split smaller instead of growing. That within the small area of Manila Bay there should be three different kingdoms (Tondo, Manila and Pasay) may mean that the area was originally settled by three different *barangays* that remained distinct, never came together, never fused; or it could mean that a single original settlement; as it grew split into three smaller pieces.

Philippine society, as though fearing bigness, ever tends to revert the condition of the *barangay* of the small enclosed society. We don't grow like a seed, we split like an amoeba. The moment a town grows big it become two towns. The moment a province becomes populous it disintegrates into two or three smaller provinces. The excuse offered for divisions is always the alleged difficulty of administering so huge an entity. But Philippine provinces are microscopic compared to an American state like, say, Texas, where the local government isn't heard complaining it can't efficiently handle so vast an area. We, on the other hand, make a confession of character whenever we split up a town or province to avoid having to cope, admitting that, on that scale, we can't be efficient; we are capable only of the small. The decentralization and *barrio*-autonomy movement expresses our craving to return to the one unit of society we feel adequate to: the *barangay*, with its 30 to a hundred families. Anything larger intimidates. We would deliberately limit ourselves to the small performance. This attitude, an immemorial one, explains why we're finding it so hard to become a nation, and why our pagan forefathers could not even imagine the task. Not *E pluribus, unum* is the impulse in our culture but out of many, fragments. Foreigners had to come and unite our land for us; the labor was far beyond our powers. Great was the King of Sugbu, but he couldn't even control the tiny isle across his bay. Federation is still not even an idea for the tribes of the North; and the Moro sultanates behave like our political parties: they keep splitting off into particles.

Because we cannot unite for the large effort, even the small effort is increasingly beyond us. There is less to learn in our schools, but even this little is protested by our young as too hard. The falling line on the graph of effort is, alas, a recurring pattern in our history. Our artifacts but repeat a refrain of decline and fall, which wouldn't be so sad if there had been a summit decline from, but the evidence is that we start small and end small without ever having scaled any peaks. Used only to the small effort, we are not, as a result, capable of the sustained effort and lose momentum fast. We have a term for it: *ningas cogon*.

Go to any exhibit of Philippine artifacts and the items that from our “cultural heritage” but confirm three theories about us, which should be stated again.

First: that the Filipino works best on small scale-tiny figurines, small pots, filigree work in gold or silver, decorative arabesques. The deduction here is that we feel adequate to the challenge of the small, but are cowed by the challenge of the big.

Second: that the Filipino chooses to work in soft easy materials—clay, molten metal, tree searching has failed to turn up anything really monumental in hardstone. Even carabao horn, an obvious material for native craftsmen, has not been used to any extent remotely comparable to the use of ivory in the ivory countries. The deduction here is that we feel equal to the materials that yield but evade the challenge of materials that resist.

Third: that having mastered a material, craft or product, we tend to rut in it and don't move on to a next phase, a larger development, based on what we have learned. In fact, we instantly lay down even what mastery we already possess when confronted by a challenge from outside of something more masterly, instead of being provoked to develop by the threat of competition. Faced by the challenge of Chinese porcelain, the native art of pottery simply declined, though porcelain should have been the next phase for our pottery makers. There was apparently no effort to steal and master the arts of the Chinese. The excuse offered here that we did not have the materials for the techniques for the making of porcelain—unites in glum brotherhood yesterday's pottery makers and today's would be industrialists. The native pot got buried by Chinese porcelain as Philippine tobacco is still being buried by the blue seal.

Our cultural history, rather than a cumulative development, seems mostly a series of dead ends. One reason is a fear of moving on to a more complex phase; another reason is a fear of tools. Native pottery, for instance, somehow never got far enough to grasp the principle of the wheel. Neither did native agriculture ever reach the point of discovering the plow for itself, or even the idea of the draft animal, though the carabao was handy. Wheel and plow had to come from outside because we always stopped short of technology. This stoppage at a certain level is the recurring fate of our arts and crafts.

The *santo* everybody's collecting now are charming as legacies, depressing as indices, for the art of the *santero* was a small art, in a not very demanding medium: wood. Having achieved perfection in it, the *santero* was faced by the challenge of proving he could achieve equal perfection on a larger scale and in more difficult materials: hardstone, marble, bronze. The challenge was not met. Like the pagan potter before him, the *santero* stuck to his tiny rut, repeating his little perfections over and over. The iron law of life is: Develop or decay. The art of the *santero* did not advance; so it declined. Instead of moving onto a harder material, it retreated to a material even easier than wool: Plaster-and plaster has wrought the death of relax art.

One could go on and on with this litany.

Philippine movies started 50 years ago and, during the '30s, reached a certain level of proficiency, where it stopped and has ruttled ever since looking more and more primitive as the rest of the cinema world speeds by on the way to new frontiers. We have to be realistic, say local movie producers we're in this business not to make art but money. But even from the business viewpoint, they're not "realistic" at all. The true businessman ever seeks to increase his market and therefore ever tries to improve his product. Business dies when it resigns itself, as local movies have done, to a limited market.

After more than half a century of writing in English, Philippine Literature in that medium is still identified with the short story. That small literary form is apparently as much as we feel equal to. But by limiting ourselves less and less capable even of the small thing—as the fate of the pagan potter and the Christian *santero* should have warned us. It's no longer as obvious today that the Filipino writer has mastered the short story form.

It's two decades since the war but what were mere makeshift in postwar days have petrified into institutions like the jeepney, which we all know to be uncomfortable and inadequate, yet cannot get rid of, because that would mean to tackle the problem of modernizing our systems of transportation—a problem we think so huge we hide from it in the comforting smallness of the jeepney. A small solution to a huge problem—do we deceive ourselves into thinking that possible? The jeepney hints that we do, for the jeepney carrier is about as adequate as a spoon to empty a river with.

With the population welling, and land values rising, there should be in our cities, an upward thrust in architecture, but we continue to build small, in our timid two-story fashion. Oh, we have excuses. The land is soft: earthquakes are frequent. But Mexico City, for instance, is on far swampier land and Mexico City is not a two-story town. San Francisco and Tokyo are in worse earthquake belts, but San Francisco and Tokyo reach up for the skies. Isn't our architecture another expression of our smallness spirit? To build big would pose problems too big for us. The water pressure, for example, would have to be improved—and it's hard enough to get water on the ground floor flat and frail, our cities indicate our disinclination to make any but the smallest effort possible.

It wouldn't be so bad if our aversion for bigness and our clinging to the small denoted a preference for quality over bulk; but the little things we take forever to do too often turn out to be worse than the mass-produced article. Our couturiers, for instance, grow even limper of wrist when, after waiting months and months for a pin—a weaver to produce a yard or two of the fabric, they find they have to discard most of the stuff because it's so sloppily done.

Foreigners who think of pushing Philippine fabric in the world market give up in despair after experiencing our inability to deliver in quantity. Our proud apologia is that mass production would ruin the "quality" of our products. But Philippine crafts might be roused from the doldrums if forced to come up to mass-production standards.

It's easy enough to quote the West against itself, to cite all those Western artists and writers who rail against the cult of bigness and mass production and the "bitch goddess success"; but the arguments against technological progress, like the arguments against nationalism, are possible only to those who have already gone through that stage so successfully they can now afford to revile it. The rest of us can only crave to be big enough to be able to deplore bigness.

For the present all we seem to be able to do is ignore pagan evidence and blame our inability to sustain the big effort of our colonizers: they crushed our will and spirit, our initiative and originality. But colonialism is not uniquely our ordeal but rather a universal experience. Other nations went under the heel of the conqueror but have not spent the rest of their lives whining. What people were more trod under than the Jews? But each have been a thoroughly crushed nation get up and conquered new worlds instead. The Norman conquest of England was followed by a subjugation very similar to our experience, but what issued from that subjugation were the will to empire and the verve of a new language.

If it be true that we were enervated by the loss of our primordial freedom, culture and institutions, then the native tribes that were never under Spain and didn't lose what we did should be showing a stronger will and spirit, more initiative and originality, a richer culture and greater progress, than the Christian Filipino. Do they? And this favorite apologia of ours gets further blasted when we consider a people who, alongside us, suffered a far greater trampling yet never lost their enterprising spirit. On the contrary, despite centuries of ghettos and programs and repressive measures and racial scorn, the Chinese in the Philippines clambered to the top of economic heap and are still right up there when it comes to the big deal. Shouldn't they have long come to the conclusion (as we say we did) that there's no point in hustling and laboring and amassing wealth only to see it wrested away and oneself punished for rising?

An honest reading of our history should rather force us to admit that it was the colonial years that pushed us toward the larger effort. There was actually an advance in freedom, for the unification of the land, the organization of towns and provinces, and the influx of new ideas, started our liberation from the rule of the petty, whether of clan, locality or custom. Are we not vexed at the hinterlander still bound by primordial terrors and taboos? Do we not say we have to set him "free" through education? Freedom, after all is more than a political condition; and the colonial lowlander—especially a person like, say, Rizal—was surely more of a freeman than the unconquered tribesman up in the hills. As wheel and plow set us free from a bondage to nature, so town and province liberated us from the bounds of the *barangay*.

The liberation can be seen just by comparing our pagan with our Christian statuary. What was static and stolid in the one becomes, in the other, dynamic motion and expression. It can be read in the rear of architecture. Now, at last, the Filipino attempts the massive—the stone bridge that unites, the irrigation dam that gives increase, the adobe church that identified. If we have a "heritage of greatness it's in these labors and in three epic acts of the colonial period; first, the defense of the land during two centuries of siege; second, the Propaganda Movement; and the third, the Revolution.

The first, a heroic age that profoundly shaped us, began 1600 with the 50-year war with the Dutch and may be said to have drawn to a close with the British invasion of 1762. The War with the Dutch is the most under-rated event in our history, for it was the Great War in our history. It had to be pointed out that the Philippines, a small colony practically abandoned to itself, yet held at bay for half a century the mightiest naval power in the world at the time, though the Dutch sent armada after armada, year after year, to conquer the colony, or by cutting off the galleons that were its links with America, starve the colony to its knees. We rose so gloriously to the challenge the impetus of spirit sent us spilling down to Borneo and the Moluccas and Indo-China, and it seemed for a moment we might create an empire. But the tremendous effort did create an elite vital to our history: the Creole-Tagalog-Pampango principalia—and ruled it together during these centuries of siege, and which would which was the nation in embryo, which defended the land

climax its military career with the war of resistance against the British in the 1660s. By then, this elite already deeply felt itself a nation that the government it set up in Bacolor actually defined the captive government in Manila as illegitimate. From her flows the heritage that would flower in Malolos, for centuries of heroic effort had bred, in *Tagalog* and the *Pampango*, a habit of leadership, a lordliness of spirit. They had proved themselves capable of the great and sustained enterprise, destiny was theirs. An analyst of our history notes that the sun on our flag has eight rays, each of which stands for a *Tagalog* or *Pampango* province, and the *Tagalogs* and *Pampangos* at *Biak-na-Bato* assumed the representation of the entire country and, therefore, became in fact the Philippines.

From the field of battle this elite would, after the British war, shift to the field of politics, a significant move; and the Propaganda, which began as a Creole campaign against the Peninsulars, would turn into the nationalist movement of Rizal and Del Pilar. This second epic act in our history seemed a further annulment of the timidity. A man like Rizal was a deliberate rebel against the cult of the small; he was so various a magus because he was set on proving that the Filipino could tackle the big thing, the complex job. His novels have epic intentions; his poems sustain the long line and go against Garcia Villa's more characteristically Philippine dictum that poetry is the small intense line.

With the Revolution, our culture is in dichotomy. This epic of 1896 is indeed a great effort—but by a small minority. The Tagalog and Pampango had taken it upon themselves to protest the grievances of the entire archipelago. Moreover, within the movement was a clash between the two strains in our culture—between the propensity for the small activity and the will to something more ambitious. Bonifacio's Katipunan was large in number but small in scope; it was a rattling of bolos; and its post fiasco efforts are little more than amok raids in the manner the Filipino is said to excel in. (An observation about us in the last war was that we fight best not as an army, but in small informal guerrilla outfits; not in pitched battle, but in rapid hit-and-run raids.) On the other hand, there was, in Cavite, an army with officers, engineers, trenches, plans of battle and a complex organization—a Revolution unlike all the little uprisings or mere raids of the past because it had risen above tribe and saw itself as the national destiny. This was the highest we have reached in nationalistic effort. But here again, having reached a certain level of achievement, we stopped. The Revolution is, as we say today, “unfinished.”

The trend since the turn of the century, and especially since the war, seems to be back to the tradition of timidity, the heritage of smallness. We seem to be making less and less effort, thinking ever smaller, doing even smaller. The air droops with a feeling of inadequacy. We can't cope; we don't respond; we are not rising to challenges. So tiny a land as ours shouldn't be too hard to connect with transportation—but we get crushed on small jeepneys, get killed on small trains, get drowned in small boats. Larger and more populous cities abroad find it no problem to keep themselves clean—but the simple matter of garbage can create a “crisis” in the small city of Manila. One American remarked that, after seeing Manila's chaos of traffic, he began to appreciate how his city of Los Angeles handles its far, far greater volume of traffic. Is building a road that won't break down when it rains no longer within our powers? Is even the building of sidewalks too herculean of task for us?

One writer, as he surveyed the landscape of shortages—no rice, no water, no garbage collectors, no peace, no order—gloomily mumbled that disintegration seems to be creeping upon us and groped for Yeat's terrifying lines:

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold: Mere anarchy is loosed...

Have our capacities been so diminished by the small efforts we are becoming incapable even to the small things? Our present problems are surely not what might be called colossal or insurmountable—yet we stand helpless before them. As the population swells, those problems will expand and multiply. If they daunt us now, will they crush us then? The prospect is terrifying.

On the Feast of Freedom we may do well to ponder the Parable of the Servants and the Talents. The enterprising servants who increase talents entrusted to them were rewarded by their Lord; but the timid servant who made no effort to double the one talent given to him was deprived of that talent and cast into the outer darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth:

“For to him who has, more shall be given; but from him who has not, even the little he has shall be taken away.”

Appendix B

Sample Object Writing: Back Porch¹⁸

I must have been four. Memories from that time are a rare species—lobbing in like huge bumblebees on transparent wings, buzzing old Remington shavers torn free from those thick and brittle wires tangled in webs under our porch where I loved to crawl and hide; black snaking wires disappearing up through floors and humming into wall and socket. I still hear them. I hid under the back porch, smell of damp summer earth cool under my hands, ducking, scrunching my shoulders tight to avoid the rusty nails waiting patiently above for my back or skull to forget them. The tingling along my back and neck kept reminding me, don't stand up. Under the back porch, a place tinged with danger and smelling of earth, the air tastes faintly of mold and hollyhocks twining around the trellises that I see only the bottoms of, speckled gold by the shafts of sun slipping through high elm branches in the backyard, weaving shadows like Grandma's lace dresser doilies. When I squint, I can blur the sunlight into a bridge of green-gold. Crouching there fetal and content, I could feel Mom above me, could hear her high heels tap-tapping.

Imagery:

- Sight:** huge bumblebees on transparent wings; thick and brittle wires tangled in webs; black snaking wires disappearing up through floors; rusty nails; hollyhocks twining around the trellises I see only the bottoms of; speckled gold by shafts of sun; high elm branches in the backyard; weaving shadows like Grandma's lace dresser doilies; when I squint, I can blur the sunlight into a bridge of green-gold
- Hearing:** buzzing old Remington shavers; humming into wall and socket; I still hear them; could hear her high heels tap-tapping
- Smell:** smell of damp summer earth; smelling of earth
- Taste:** the air tastes faintly of mold and hollyhocks
- Touch:** thick and brittle wires; damp summer earth cool under my hands; tingling along my back and neck
- Organic:** crawl; crouching; ducking; scrunching shoulders tight; stand up quick; tingling along my back and neck; when I squint; crouching there fetal and content
- Kinesthetic:** lobbing in; tingling along my back and neck kept reminding me; avoid rusty nails waiting patiently above for my back or skull to forget them; don't stand up; I could feel Mom above me

¹⁸ From "Generate Ideas through Object Writing," by P. Pattison, 2009.

Supporting Reason #2: _____

Detail #1: _____

Detail #2: _____

Detail #3: _____

Supporting Reason #3: _____

Detail #1: _____

Detail #2: _____

Detail #3: _____

Restatement of Thesis: _____

Call to Action (What do you want your reader to do after reading your essay):

Essay Writing Rubric

Criteria	Needs Improvement 1	Fair 2	Strong 3	Excellent 4
Topic	Topic is unclear.	Introduces the topic but the focus is unclear.	Introduces the topic.	Clearly introduces the topic.
Evidence	Little to no facts, concrete details, quotations, or examples included.	Attempts to develop the topic with facts, concrete details, and examples but some of the information is not relevant.	Develops the topic with facts, concrete details, quotations, and examples.	Thoroughly develops the topic with relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, and examples.
Explanation and Analysis	Little to no explanation or analysis of the information presented.	Explanation and analysis attempt to discuss the information but is unclear or lacks depth.	Clear explanation and analysis that discusses most of the information presented.	Clear and concise explanation and analysis that thoroughly discusses the information presented.
Conclusion	Abrupt ending. No concluding statement.	Ends with a concluding statement that does not clearly relate to the topic.	Ends with a concluding statement about the topic.	Effectively ends with a strong concluding statement.
Formal Tone and Style	Informal language present throughout.	Writing contains some informal elements (e.g., contractions).	Writing attempts to maintain a formal and objective tone.	Writing maintains a formal and objective tone throughout.
Organization and Transitions	Little to no attempt at organization.	Attempts to organize ideas, but transitional language is needed.	Organizes ideas in a logical way. Transitional language used.	Strong organization and transitional language used skillfully throughout.
Mechanics (Spelling and Grammar)	Distracting mechanical errors throughout.	Mechanical errors distract at times.	A couple errors present, but they do not distract.	Mechanics reflect careful editing.

