

Senior Summer Reading Project:
A Personal Essay Inspired by *Name All the Animals*
Due on the first day of school
3 pages (~750 words) prepared in MLA format

Name All the Animals is Alison Smith's courageously candid memoir which recounts how she and her family came to terms with her brother Roy's accidental death. Smith's own grief prompts her to question assumptions about such fundamental elements in her life as her relationships with parents and friends, her faith, her place in her school and in her community, and her own sexual identity.

As a response to this work, choose an instance in Smith's memoir in which she challenges an idea or a belief, and use this example as a starting point for an essay. After citing and explaining what Smith challenges, recount a situation in which you similarly questioned a core belief. What was the catalyst for your examination of this issue? Did this episode in any way change your attitude or your behavior?

Keep in mind that the challenge about which you write need not be as dramatic as a reconsideration of your spiritual beliefs or an announcement about your own sexual orientation. Accounts of challenging a family or school rule, examining a prejudice, or reflecting on the reasoning behind a ritual would all make appropriate topics for your essay.