**Week One (September 20-29):**

**x\_\_\_1. Writing Sample** (Virginia Western requires that you submit a writing sample. You will choose one of the topics below to compose an essay. The essay does not have a required length but it should have an opening paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and a closing paragraph. This essay is for me to evaluate your writing).

Directions:   Respond to ONE of the following topics.

Topic 1:

          The best way to succeed is to begin with a reasonably realistic goal and attain it, rather than aiming at something so far beyond your reach that you are bound to fail.   It's also important to make a habit of succeeding, and the easiest way to start is to succeed at something, however small, every day, gradually increasing the level of your ambitions and achievements like a runner in training, who begins with short distances and works up to Olympic levels.

                                                -Michael Korda, "Defining Success"

In "Defining Success," Michael Korda provides his readers with a step-by-step formula for becoming successful.   Basing your essay upon actual personal experiences, discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with Korda's advice about realizing goals and achieving success.

Topic 2:

          We hail (Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr.) as heroes because their courage gives us strength, their ideals give us vision, and their spirit enlarges our own.   But keep in mind that, as extraordinary as these heroes may seem, they are still human beings like you and me.   And as such, they demonstrate that within all of us, there is potential to become heroes ourselves.

*Look around you, at your friends, your family, your school.   Is there someone among them you'd call a hero?   Probably so.*

                                                -Phil Sudo, "Larger Than Life"

Sudo's commentary on heroism reminds us that heroes are not always "larger than life," that all of us have heroes who have influenced and shaped our attitudes and values.   Write about one of your personal heroes, discussing the ways in which he or she has helped mold your character.

Topic 3:

          (Family stories) last not because they're entertaining, though they may be; they last because in ways large and small they matter.   They provide the family with esteem because they often show family members in an attractive light or define the family in a flattering way.   They also give messages and instructions; they offer blueprints and ideals; they issue warnings and prohibitions.   And when they no longer serve, they disappear.

                                                -Elizabeth Stone, "Family Stories"

Most of us have probably heard "family stories" like those to which Stone refers since we were children.   Beginning your discussion with one of the " stories" that is important in your family, discuss how that " story" fulfills some of the purposes that Stone identifies in her essay.

*\*There is no specific length.  However, you should have an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs and a closing paragraph. (I will use the sample to make decisions about what you need to do to improve your writing). You will post your essay under “Writing Sample” under “Assignments.”*

\_x\_\_2.  Read pages 97-111 on narrative writing. Take notes, highlight passages, etc. as you read.  (The notes are for your benefit. You will not submit anything to me for this assignment).  However, you will be expected to utilize this information in the narrative essay you write next week.

**\*The questions you will need to answer for the stories below may be found under the Week ONE tab under the “Assignments” tab link on your homepage. The discussion board post requirements may be found under the “Discussion Board” link, also on your homepage.**

x\_\_\_3. Read “Only Daughter” attached. Answer questions (on attachment).

\_x\_\_4. On the discussion board (entitled “Only Daughter,”) discuss what “child” you are in your family (first born, middle, only child, baby, etc.) Describe your siblings. How does the dynamic of your family work? Is one child (say the oldest) given the most responsibility? Does the “baby” get away with everything? Are you the only girl or boy in a group of siblings that are the opposite gender? How does that affect you? How has your siblings’ actions influence how your parents treat(ed) you? (For instance, because your brother always stayed in trouble, your parents were strict on you?)  
\*If you are an only child, did you want siblings? Did you ever ask your parents why you didn’t have a brother or sister? How do you see your life as compared to those who had brothers and sisters? Did you enjoy being an only child?

\_x\_\_5. Read “Shooting an Elephant” beginning on page 123. Answer questions (on attachment).

\_x\_\_6. On the discussion board entitled “Shooting an Elephant”, discuss a time in life where you caved to pressure. What influenced your decision? How do you feel about that decision now?

\_\_\_7. Read “Salvation” (attached).  After rea­ding the narrative story, post your thoughts about this story on the discussion board (under “Salvation”). Have you ever experienced anything like this in your life or know someone who has experienced something similar? (It does not have to be a religious experience. It could be an experience where peer pressure was involved, where something was not as you expected it to be, or a time during childhood where you were extremely let down by an event or circumstances.   How did this experience change you?

\_\_x\_8. Read “The Money” beginning on page 111. Answer questions (on attachment)

\_\_x\_9. On the discussion board entitled “The Money,” describe a time where you were betrayed by someone (just as the main character in this story was betrayed) OR describe a time where you did something really stupid where you can now look back at the situation and see yourself as a “stupid moron.”

x\_\_\_10. Read “My Mother Never Worked.” Answer the attached questions.

\_\_x\_11. On the discussion board entitled “My Mother Never Worked,” give your opinion on stay-at-home mothers. Do they deserve social security when they “retire” although technically, they have never paid into the system? If you believe they should be paid, where would the money come from to pay them? How do you think the job of a stay-at-home mom compares to other jobs?

***Please call or text me if you have questions about any of the above assignments!***