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NEXT STEP

MAKING THE PORTFOLIO OF AN ENGLISH MAJOR



A portfolio is basically an organised collection of carefully picked documents written by you. The works you put into your portfolio can be of two types:

i. Response or research-based papers written by you for class or for other academic purposes during your experience as an English major

ii. Any other form of creative writing that you may have written for any other reason, including published articles, poetry or fictional pieces.

They just need to be pieces that you are particularly proud of, which bring out the best of your abilities as a writer or literary critic.

There also needs to be a Reflective Essay, which is a skeletal piece that you can use to briefly highlight how you developed as a writer or literary critic over the course of your university experience. You must use this essay to relay how the works you included in your portfolio relate to the professional and/or academic aims you set for yourself.

Why do you need one?

1. It's your personal record of every good piece you have ever written, all in one place. That's almost reason enough!
2. It will come in handy when you're

applying for a job, or applying abroad for a master's degree or professional programs.

Parmita Akhter, an NSU student who recently got accepted to Varendra University for a master's in Creative Writing said, "For some institutions, this is even a requirement, and it pays to keep your portfolio organised from beforehand."

3. It provides potential employers and faculty members a means to assess how far you've come as a student of English, and how well suited you are to the kind of opportunities they are willing to provide.

4. Sending in a portfolio along with your CV is going to make you come across as someone who is organised, well-resourced and willing to commit.

What should be in a portfolio?

Here are more details on what kind of content your portfolio should boast:

The literary pieces:

The guide provided by Berry College, Rome, recommends adding at least one essay piece for each of the following types of college-level writing:

- An extended analysis/close reading of a literary work
- Poetry/fiction/ non-fiction creative prose which demonstrates awareness and

proficiency regarding basic elements of craft

- Poetry or creative prose which demonstrates a sophisticated engagement with elements of craft particular to that genre

- A research-oriented investigation or argument utilising primary and secondary sources. It's extremely important that there is proper referencing.

You can also add published write-ups, such as newspaper articles and journal entries, and even writings you prepared as an intern that may or may not be classified as "formal writing".

It would also help if you have a 'Contents' page, and all your works are numbered and organized in accordance to the time written.

The reflective essay:

A reflective essay is sort of like a cover letter merged with a summary of all your achievements and improvements as a writer so far, from your own point of view. Just like in a cover letter, you must first discuss how the major you picked and the courses you have attended are all coherent and aligned with your professional aims, and why you would be a good candidate

for hiring, or for receiving acceptance as a student. Then, continue to discuss in separate paragraphs how each of the works you included in your portfolio relates to your claim, and how they represent your growth as an English major. Eastern CT State University's guide to writing a reflective essay gave an insight into the kind of tone that is suited in this section: "Imagine this: several of your professors are sitting around a table reading your papers, hearing your voice comment about your own work, and thinking about using your comments to bring about change. What kind of voice do you want them to hear? What kind of voice do you think will be the most persuasive and present you in the best light?"

That's all! Hope you succeed in compiling your own Portfolio. As a guide, here is an online example of a Portfolio, by Kyra Sawyer: <https://portfolio.snc.edu/kyrasawyer/self-reflective-essay/>

SUSMITA NEWAZ

Susmita is a literature major who lives on tea and sweet toast. Reach her at susmita.newaz@gmail.com.

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



How to save the semester

If you've already crawled into a foetal position with your tears forming a pool around your face on the cold floor you are lying on, and you are 28 episodes of Bojack

Horseman into failing tomorrow's midterm and now all you can do is accept your inevitably plummeting cgpa and dark future... know, that there is hope yet.

1. ACCEPTING ACCOUNTABILITY

If you didn't give your 100% on your own accord, it's your fault you are getting bad grades. Stop blaming the teacher, your loved ones, your mood or the weather. In case the situation you were in was beyond your control, then accept that fixing it is still up to you. Figure out the possible worst and best case scenarios and try to make sure only the latter happens in real life.

2. TALK IT OUT

Most university professors have allotted visiting hours for a reason. Make use of them. Go make an appointment with your teacher and explain to them why you're lagging behind. If it's a legitimate reason, they will keep your case in mind while grading you. If not, perhaps they will be able to give you the best advice on how to improve your grade throughout the rest of the semester, and maybe even feel bad enough for you to make special provisions for you during assessments later on.

3. ASK FOR MORE

During your appointment with your lecturer, you can ask for a second chance. Ask them if there are any extra papers you can write as bonus assignments. Or if you can re-write and re-submit previous papers with bad grades. Maybe even talk to other students from your class who are on the verge of failing, and

request improvement assignments/tests together. Even the toughest, most unyielding faculty members respect the willingness to make amends through hard work, and when more than 4-5 students make the same request, they are bound to find the case negotiable.

4. GET TUTORED

It's not hard to find a tutor in a friend. If you have a friend who has done the course before, or is currently doing it with you and is relatively better at it, you can always reach out for help, maybe ask for notes or start a regular ritual of

5. ATTEND CLASSES

True, you may have already missed enough classes to assume you messed up your attendance grades for good, but showing up to class helps you to improve the impression your lecturer has of you. If you diligently pay attention in class and participate significantly more, your lecturer will be assured that you do plan on working harder for the rest of the semester.

6. IF NOTHING ELSE WORKS..

Share this image, or show 54 others this picture of Hosico in shades for good luck. If you don't, you will fail this semester.



meeting after class to get overviews of each lecture. Never feel embarrassed to ask for help.

SUSMITA NEWAZ

Susmita would like your good wishes.

Making a DIFFERENCE

Why incompetent people think they're smart

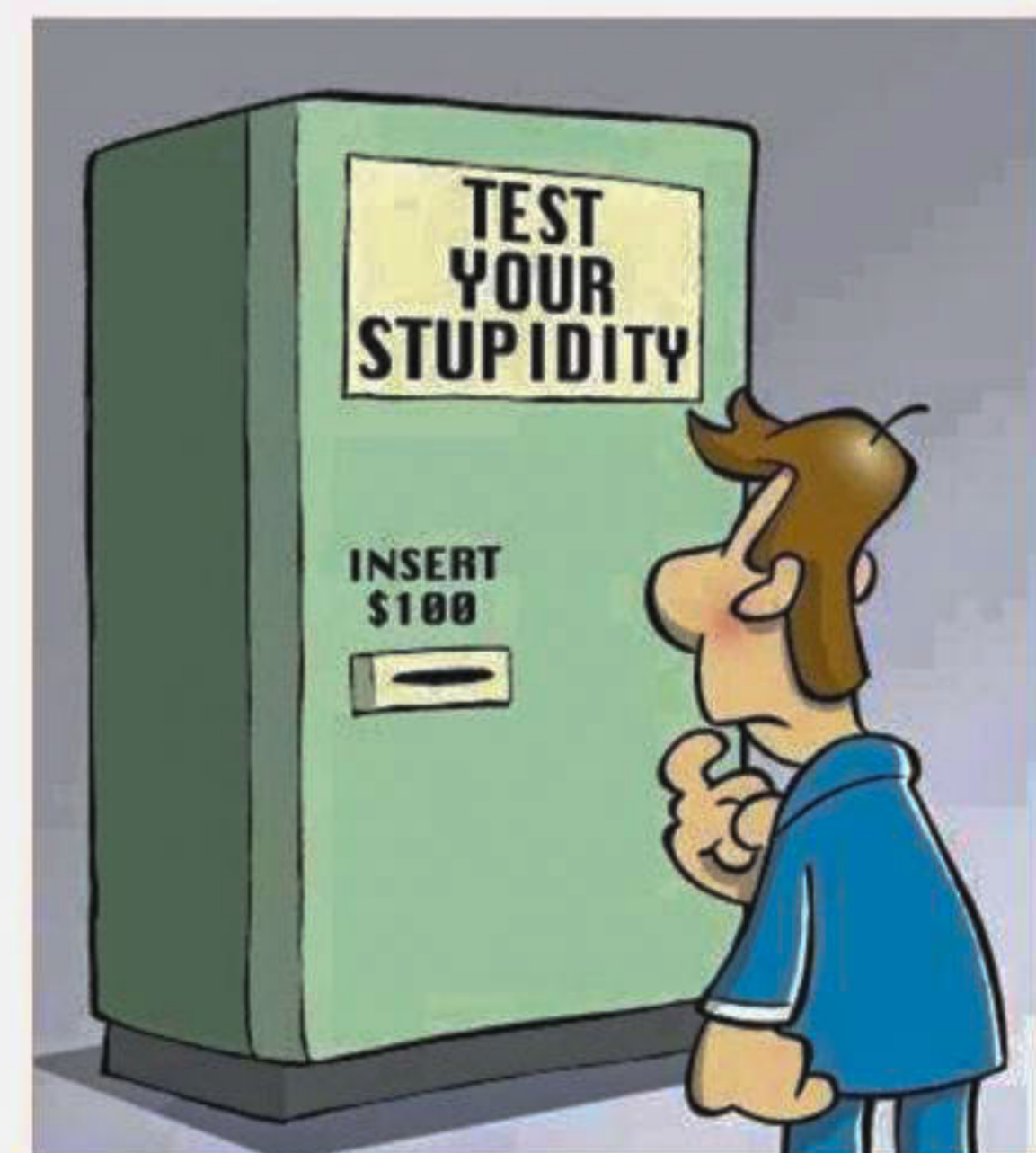
Have you ever met someone who has very little knowledge, hardly has any useful skills, but still thinks that they're the best at everything? I have had the misfortune of meeting such people in almost every walk of life. I have seen them passionately defend their uninformed opinions, confidently give the wrong answer to every question they were asked, and continue to overestimate and oversell their mediocrity wherever they go.

This very phenomenon was researched in an Ig Nobel winning scientific study. Social psychologists Dunning and Kruger published a study called "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments" in 1999. They analysed a group of students' self-assessments of their skills in logical reasoning, English grammar, and their perception of their own sense of humour, then asked those students to guess their rank in their psychology class. It was found that incompetent students had overestimated themselves, while the good ones had underestimated the rank. The research showed that the students who were at the bottom of the class had quite a bloated sense of self-worth.

The Dunning-Kruger effect ultimately shows that those who are bad at their job, are also bad at assessing themselves. Poor performers are poor learners, which is probably what makes them unskilled in the first place.

It is perfectly normal to not be aware of every aspect of your personality. Often times, our friends and peers know us better than we know ourselves. So

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.



if anyone offers you constructive criticism out of genuine goodwill, take that into account and think about how to improve yourself, instead of taking the defensive route. Self-awareness is one of the most valuable traits one can have, and it will help your personal and professional growth.

AANIKA KISHWAR TARANNUM