

This is a Picture of Me

This is a photograph of me

- It was taken some time ago
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print: blurred lines and grey flecks
blended with the paper;

then, as you scan
it, you can see something in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up
what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house.

In the background there is a lake,
and beyond that, some low hills.

(The photograph was taken
the day after I drowned.

I am in the lake, in the center
of the picture, just under the surface.

It is difficult to say where
precisely, or to say
how large or how small I am:
the effect of water
on light is a distortion.

but if you look long enough
eventually
you will see me.)
- [Margaret Atwood](#)

Instructions

- **Picture of Me Assignment**
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- Your task with this assignment is to create a written product which uses a picture of yourself as the springboard to teaching us a little about you. It also provides a window to your writing style.
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- Step 1: **Select a photograph** of yourself or of something that describes you as an individual. Bring it with you for our next class.
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- Step 2: Examine the photograph and take some time to really **reflect** on it. Jot down what you remember about when the photo was taken. Note as many sensory details as possible (sight, smell, sound, touch, taste). List some things you would say to that person in the photo if you could. List some things you think that person in the photo would want to tell you. Brainstorm different thoughts and feelings looking at the photo brings up.
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- Step 3: **Pick a genre** of writing with which you are familiar and comfortable. It could be poetry, a short narrative, original song lyrics, a news story, a script, or a personal essay. Whichever one you pick, just make sure to give it the time and effort to make this assignment worthwhile and not just busywork for you. Push yourself.
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- Step 4: **Write** it.
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- Step 5: Be prepared to **SHARE** it.

Brainstorm—ways to dig underneath the surface of the picture.

- What is happening in the picture?
- What is happening behind the scenes of the picture?
- List all sensory details you see in the picture and associate with the picture (sight, smell, sound, touch, taste)
- When you look at this picture, what does it make you think of? Why?
- When you look at this picture, what are the different things you feel? Why?
- If the you in this picture could talk, what do you think you'd tell yourself?
- If you could give advice to the you in the picture, what would you want to let “past you” know?

Read over your observations and pick a focus for your piece.

- Whatever it is that you pick, you need to go beyond merely describing the picture. Use it as a springboard to let us know something about you as a person (your personality, something you've learned, how you think, how you act, how you feel about yourself, how you view the world—there tons of possibilities).

Pick a genre of writing

- It should be one you're comfortable with:
 - Poem
 - Short narrative (story)
 - Song
 - News story
 - Script
 - Personal essay
- Whichever you pick, be sure your focus is on moving beyond just describing what's in the picture.
 - Make a point about yourself using the picture.

- When you have completed your brainstorming and selected your genre, you can set up at a computer to write/type.
- If you prefer to write a full draft by hand first, that is fine.
- A printed-out copy of your assignment is due at the start of class next time. Have your picture here as well.
- You will be sharing it with the class.