John Smith 6S—4 ***(your name, grade, teacher initial, dash-dash, your number, space)***

Ms. Doglio/English ***(your teacher, subject)***

October 12, 2012 ***(date—write it out, use spaces and commas where needed)***

Personal Narrative ***(Name of Assignment: Informative, Opinion, or Narrative)***

Title

 This is an example of what your essay should look like. It is in standard MLA format with one-inch margins. Most likely, you will use MLA format in Junior High, High School, and beyond. All text must be in standard form; use Times New Roman in a text size of twelve.

Notice that the title above is the same text size as the rest of the document, and nothing special is done to it. All you need to do is center it.

 Always indent a new paragraph; use the tab key to do this. You do not need to skip any extra lines. The indent itself is enough to show the start of a new paragraph.

 Just as I have done above, single space your header, skip one line, type your title, skip one line, and then start your paper. Please **double space your essay**. If you highlight your work and push Control 2, your work will double space.

 Please use just one space after sentences, not two. There are conflicting opinions about this, but I prefer and expect just one.

 The page number should appear in the header half an inch down, and include your last name, as you see it on this document. Be sure to put a space after your name.

 Once your paper is typed, you should read through it ***slowly at least*** five times to make sure you have capitals, periods, commas, and spelling correct; this is called **editing**. While you are re-reading it slowly, you can decide if your sentences make sense. You can also add adjectives, adverbs, and other words to improve the quality and clarity of your essay; this is called **revising**. Then, you can ask a friend to peer-edit your work. When you get home, ask your parents/grandparents if they have any suggestions to improve your story or the quality of your work. Remember, any numbers less than one hundred need to be in word form. For example, type ***three***—not ***3***. You also do not use contractions in formal writing. You may type and print your essay at home, but you will be given time to work on it and print it at school in English and computer class, as well as in study hall.

 Fifth grade essays should always be at least one to two type-written pages long; sixth graders should write two to three depending on the assignment.

 Do not ever begin a piece with, “I am going to write about . . .” Use a captivating lead. Do not give details in your introduction, and do not put any new information in your conclusion. Use interesting words; stay away from the simple ones that beginning writers use. End your paper with a strong statement, a theme, something gained or learned, or something that gets the reader thinking. Draw conclusions from the facts presented. Please do not start sentences the same way, or with the same word. Use a variety of sentence types including compound, complex, and simple. Avoid using words like *really, very*, and be careful not to use *also* too much. Use transitions to connect ideas.

 I look forward to reading your work. Happy writing, editing, and revising! Remember: never let your teacher be the first reader of your final draft. You are always the first reader of your work, and a friend and adult close to you should be next.

Don't forget to **Spell Check** your work.

To check the **Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level** of your writing: Click ***Review, Spell Check***