

This I Believe

Topic: Write a personal essay about a concrete belief or conviction, telling us a compelling story about how you came to hold that belief, or a time that belief was challenged, or how that belief shapes your daily activities.

Length: Between 350-500 words.

Format: **Final Draft – Shared Googledoc**, Typed, double-spaced, 16 pt. Times New Roman.
Original title centered.

ESSAY Rubric

Writing Skill:	A	B	C	D-F
Ideas & Details	Your readers gain original & cool insights about your belief. Lots of concrete details expertly show how your belief evolved and/or how it guides you.	Your readers learn about your belief. Some specific details show how your belief evolved and/or how it guides you.	Your readers gain some understanding of your belief. More details are needed to show how your belief evolved or how it guides you.	Your readers only get a glimpse of your belief, but may be left with questions. Your readers need details to see how you developed your belief or how it guides you.
Voice	The reader enjoys the original voice of your essay through its one-of-a-kind style and tone. Strong use of stylistic devices make this a compelling speech and reading.	The voice of your essay is effective . Adding or improving stylistic devices could add interest .	While your essay may be easy to understand, it doesn't speak in a dynamic voice yet . Significantly adding or improving stylistic devices could add interest .	Your essay's voice may need work on communicating clearly and distinctly . Stylistic devices need major work in order to bring ideas to life.

PRESENTATION Rubric

Category	A 50 49 48 47 46 45	B 44 43 42 41 40	C 39 38 37 36 35	D 34 33 32 31 30
Vocal Qualities	Easy to listen to rate volume pitch tone ALL worked	Rate volume pitch tone needed work not distracting	Rate volume pitch tone a bit distracting	Lots of distractions
Conventions of Language	Proper pronunciations Clear articulation Few to no "fillers"	A few errors- did not get in the way of the listeners	Numerous errors- distracting	So many errors you lost your listeners
Sentence Fluency	Variety in your sentence length and structure create an engaging, dynamic flow .	Your sentences are, for the most part, varied in length and structure. The paper is fairly smooth.	Your sentence variety or structure may need attention in spots to improve smoothness and flow.	Your sentences need to be more varied and may, in fact, be confusing to follow structurally .

“This I Believe” Checklist

- ___ My beginning is strong because I used one of these techniques (circle one):
Question/Quotation/Strong Statement/Simile or Analogy/Description.
- ___ I found an original way to clearly name and explain my belief, avoiding cliches.
- ___ I did NOT try to persuade others to believe something. I did not just spout off my opinions. Instead, I simply spoke about what I believe.
- ___ I didn't write about what I DON'T believe.
- ___ I spoke in the 1st person (I, me, my) and avoided the editorial “we” or preachy “you”.
- ___ Every part of my essay helps illustrate or explain my belief. My readers can easily see my main idea throughout.
- ___ I told a personal story or a few anecdotes/examples from my own life to illustrate how I developed my belief OR how I use it to guide my everyday life.
- ___ I avoided abstract cliches like “the best day of my life” or “I cried my eyes out” to describe emotions.
- ___ I chose words that are original and precise -- in order to help my readers see, hear, and understand exactly what I experienced.
- ___ My sentences are varied in length, type, and structure so my writing has a dynamic flow.
- ___ I used the following stylistic techniques (fig. lang./sound effects/word play) from the toolbox to make my essay lively and personal:
- ___ My ending is strong because I didn't just summarize my belief. I may have come full circle back to an important detail, analogy, or story element from my beginning.
- ___ My essay is between 350-500 words.
- ___ I created a fitting, original title.
- ___ I spelled words correctly and used correct capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.