

ENG 1113: Three Wishes

Essay Topic:

Your essay will explore a “what if” situation: What if you found Aladdin’s Lamp, and a genie gave you three wishes (and only three). What would you wish for? Why? What do those wishes reveal about your values, ethics, ambitions, goals, vulnerabilities, strengths, and needs?

This essay asks you to use your imagination to identify the three wishes, but you must also analyze yourself. Socrates is famous for saying “Know thyself.” For him, self-knowledge is the first step to enlightenment and a fulfilled existence. That means we must be able to look inside and take an honest assessment of who we are.

If I were wishing, I would wish for the following, and I am TOTALLY serious about this:

1. I wish my closest friends and family to live with me (as humans) in the post-Borg Star Trek Federation.
2. I wish to be among the smartest 15% of people in the federation.
3. I wish those in my first wish were in perfect health.

INTRODUCTION

Your introduction must address the issues of imagination and self-reflection/analysis – why are these good things to cultivate? Some people may think pondering a “three wishes” scenario is a foolish waste of time, but how would you justify it?

BODY PARAGRAPHS 1-3

Your first three body paragraphs must identify each wish and explain why you would want that wish. You might also have to explain exactly what it means. Be sure you can phrase it in the form of 1 wish. Your topic sentence should follow a pattern similar to: *My first wish would be for my closest friends and family to live with me (as humans) in the post-Borg Star Trek Federation.* You can find a variety of ways to communicate this wish in the topic sentence, but write the wish part as you would express it to the genie.

BODY PARAGRAPH 4

This paragraph must analyze what these wishes reveal about you. You can address a variety of topics, such as values, ethics, ambitions, goals, vulnerabilities, strengths,

and needs. Part of the analysis will involve make decisions

about what to talk about. Be sure to include meaty topics, though, that will lend themselves to analysis and introspection, like values and needs. Obviously, wishing to find the cure for cancer would reveal that you value life and care about people. What else does it say about you? Or, what is not so obvious about this wish? Is part of the reason behind it a reaction to a personal loss? A need for fame? A fear of death? In analyzing, realize that you may find positive and not so positive reasons for your wish. That’s what you should look for.

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion, address what you have learned about yourself through this writing process. Then, tie that back to the issue of the importance of Socrates’ “Know thyself” philosophy.

Writing Guidelines:

- use proper tone and voice for a formal essay.
- use formal (not conversational or casual) language.
- avoid the use of contractions.
- use strong verbs and specific words to convey your meaning.
- employ correct punctuation and grammar.
- follow page format guidelines as described in your syllabus.
- Your **audience** for this assignment consists of **intelligent, college-level readers**.
- Your paper must be at least 3 pages in length (@1000 words).

Final Thoughts:

Have fun with this essay, but do not be fooled by the fun aspect of the genie in the lamp. This is still a college-level writing assignment, and you should strive for a thoughtful paper. Remember Paul Roberts’ advice in “How to Say Nothing in 500 Words” – don’t go for the obvious choices. Really think about this and create an interesting and unusual paper. Roberts reminds us that the job of the writer is to make the topic interesting for the reader. Choosing clichéd wishes will make that task harder.