

This I Believe – Writing

What Do You Believe?

Name _____

Date _____

Atticus Finch is a man that has shown that he believes he should do the right thing, no matter what the consequences. He shows what he believes at every opportunity, as a way to teach his children what kind of human beings they should be. You are going to reveal, through this piece of writing, a belief that you have in your life. As you have seen, This I Believe is part of a nationally produced radio program by NPR – National Public Radio. In it, ordinary people, sports stars, celebrities,, etc., pour their hearts out in order to explain what their true belief is and how they show, or have lived through that belief in their life. This belief is a core value you have formed in your life, something that is very important to you and truly shows who you are as a person. As a test grade, you will form a This I Believe statement, and then tell the story of how you gained that belief in your life.

How To Write It: Tell a story and be specific. Your belief should be stated right in the beginning of the piece or as the part of the last paragraph of the piece after your story is told. Either way, there should be no guessing about what it is you believe. It should be very matter of fact.

Example: I believe that family bonds can never be broken. (Beginning of essay)

Example: And that is why I believe that Sunday Dinners at Grandma’s house made this family what it is today. (End of essay)

When telling your story, explain how your belief was formed, what you went through to form it, how it has been tested, or how it has changed over the years, but find a way to show that you truly carry this belief in your life. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching – it can even be funny if you need it to be – **but it must be real**. Remember, this is a personal philosophy on life for you.

Be Brief: Your *This I Believe* essay must be in the range of 300 to 500 words. While you may think you’re going to struggle to get there, most of you will struggle to keep it within this range. When reading aloud at a normal pace, it would take you about 1 ½ - 2 minutes.

Be Positive: Make sure to write about what you do believe in, not in what you don’t believe. This is not meant for you to be negative; this is meant for you to show off a true core value. This is your personal philosophy on life, and you should show off your true character. I realize that not every belief was formed from a happy experience; I just mean that you should not list off items that you don’t believe in.

Be Personal: Speak about the stories and beliefs you know using familiar language and write in the most comfortable way you know how. I recommend that you read your essay aloud to yourself a number of times, and each time edit and simplify it so that you find the words, tone, and structure that best personifies the core belief that you wanted to write about in the way in which you want to tell the story.