Personal Vignette

The House on Mango Street

This is the narrative writing assignment for the unit.  The objective is to understand Cisneros’ unique narrative style through mimicry; you are to choose one of the following vignettes to evaluate and recreate in your own narrative.

You will write in first person.  Also, be sure to have a narrative focus, like in the novel. Don’t *only* focus on your family’s hair or your family’s house, etcetera; weave in characterization, action, and other narrative elements.

**Option 1: “The House on Mango Street”**

Observe: the contrast between Esperanza’s dream house and the description of her real house that follows.

Write about: a dream of your own; make contrasting descriptions of the dream and reality.

Tips: Use personification (giving human qualities to something inanimate.)

**Option 2: “Hair”**

Observe: how Esperanza focuses on hair to describe the differences between her family members.

Write about: your family at home; use another defining feature besides hair to describe each person.

Tips: Give extremely close attention to the physical features you describe.  Use a mental magnifying glass to describe specific details. Add action to reflect characterization.

**Option 3: “Boys & Girls”**

Observe: Esperanza’s dual relationships with her brothers inside and outside of the house.  Also, analyze the symbol of the balloon to describe herself.

Write about: your character’s dual relationship with a friend or sibling in two different places, and end with a self-reflectional symbol to describe your character or his/her feelings.

Tips: Try to capture the importance of social rules for young people and the fear of ruining one’s own reputation, perhaps by associating with the wrong people.

**Option 4: “Our Good Day”**

Observe: How Esperanza’s relationships with her new friends are expressed through action and fun (but questionable) behavior.   
Write about: a time you bonded with one or two friends and you experienced a meaningful time together.   
Tips: Express the characterization of each figure, and use motion and action to generate the enthusiasm of your narration.

**Option 5: “Gil’s Furniture Bought and Sold”**

Observe: How Nenny’s innocence is shaken when she is misjudged by the shop owner, and how she is captivated by the music box which she cannot have.   
Write about: a time you learned a hard lesson as a child, and/or when you yearned for something that was rejected from you.

Assignment Requirements:

- Approx. 1.5-2 pages double spaced, standard font, typed.

- A work of your own original creative writing.  No outside help or ideas. Reflect on your own experiences.

- Displays several examples of figurative language, such as metaphor, hyperbole, imagery, and figures of speech.

- Narrative style writing (not descriptive or “journalistic”.)  Uses dialogue and effective paragraphing to show organization and progression.

- Drafted, proofread, and revised. Undergoes the full writing process.

- Academically honest work of your own construction. **Cheating and plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and cannot be made up.**

Exceptional narratives will be polished and fluid, demonstrate use of tone, mood, and theme, and demonstrate high creativity and originality.