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DU Writing Program Retreat, Summer 2021

A New Sequence of Assignments for  
WRIT 1133  
Blake Sanz

Weekly Sketch #1 for Writing Retreat:  
Outlining a New Sequence of WRIT 1133  
Assignments

PROMPT

In 500-600 words, outline a new sequence of writing assignments in WRIT 1133 by the end of the week.

ELABORATION –

Teaching in a pandemic requires flexibility and patience. A willingness to adapt on the fly. Part of that process might require reinventing basic structures of teaching and assessing work to better suit a hybrid/hyflex environment. It may also be that your willingness to adapt could hold value for your teaching beyond the time of the pandemic. In this brief writing assignment, strive to articulate a new sequence of assignments that reflects a new way for students to encounter writing in your class.

This could involve deciding, for example, to have students write 1 major assignment of 20 pages, with a number of smaller assignments that break that work down. Or it could involve creating 3 major assignments, 1 for each of the 3 goals of the class. Or it could involve lower-stakes, weekly writing. Or some combination. Or some other breakdown of lower and higher stakes writing. Whatever you choose, be sure to describe the

larger structure. And then, in summary form, include just enough detail for each assignment so that a reader can see what an arc to the class from Week 1 to Week 10. You won't have room in 500 words to do more than that.

The point of this exercise is to get you to think beyond the usual ways that you teach writing. To whatever extent you think it's useful, design new assignments that take into consideration the kinds of challenges that students might be facing during the pandemic, but don't just think about that. Think also about how your choice of new assignments might have staying power beyond this emergency setting.

LOGISTICS –

Please write this in Microsoft Word. Use Garamond, 12-point font. Double-space. As part of how you re-imagine your sequence of tasks, be sure to include a full schedule of 10 weeks of assignments. For the part of your response that is an example of what you would ask from students, use a format that mimics the format you see in this prompt.

IDEAS FOR EXPANSION –

If you decided to choose this as one of the weekly sketches that you expand for later in the quarter—and remember, expansions are meant to go from 500 to 2,000 words—here are some things you might be able to do as part of that expansion:

- (1) Give full justifications for the choices you have made in what you ask students to write
- (2) Provide examples of writing by students that show how the choices you're making in assignment design lead to interesting writing that addresses goals of the course
- (3) Provide examples of writing by students that shows how the choices you're making in assignment design lead to certain new *challenges* you would need to address as part of the new structure of the class.

Here is my 600-word Response to the Above, Invented Prompt—

In this new course, I'll assign students a series of four weekly sketches in the quarter's first half (in each of Weeks 2-5). These will expose them to course goals and give them a chance to practice, in a low-stakes environment, different kinds of writing connected to those goals. They'll follow the format of the prompt above. Here's a brief rundown of those Weekly Sketches:

Week 2 – Choose a Nobel prize-winning researcher, learn about their career, and write the beginning of a compelling journalistic account of what their research involved. Write this for a general public unaware of the field in which the researcher has been working.

Week 3 – Choose 1 of 8 films depicting various (in)famous researchers at work (*Stanford Prison Experiment*, *Kinsey*, *The Experimenter*, *The Anthropologist*, etc.). Read a sample of research writing by the person depicted. Then write 500 words toward an analysis of how the movie depicts that type of research.

Week 4 – Read 3 consecutive issues of a newspaper from a faraway time and place (>50 years old, not your hometown). Get to know that setting and its concerns. Then, write a scene of what could become a short story depicting people in that place and time.

Week 5 – Conduct preliminary research into a topic you find interesting that is often qualitatively researched. Use that knowledge to propose a new qualitative research project that builds on the research you

read and that you might conduct that would involve interviewing/observing.

In the quarter's second half, students will choose 1 of the first 2 sketches above to expand into a full project, and 1 of the second 2 sketches to expand. This will involve taking the original 500 words and turning that into a fuller piece of writing—at least 2,000 words for each expansion.

Here's an example of what an expansion prompt might look like:

PROMPT: Expand either Weekly Sketch #1 or #2 into a complete piece of writing that follows the guidelines listed out below.

If you expand your story of a Nobel researcher (Weekly Sketch 1)—

- Make it at least 2,000 words.
- Show a progression over years that led the breakthrough moment for the research you're telling the story of.
- Refer to at least 3 research articles written by the researcher. Show that you understand them well enough to summarize not just any one article, but how those articles taken together demonstrate a progression of thought.
- Find and use at least 3 outside sources that tell a story about this

person. This should include at least 1 instance of reaching out to a person who knows the subject or their work (consider professors in your subject's field who teach his/her research). These sources could also include journalistic articles that have already been written about this person and their work.

try) to ensure accuracy of representation.

- Talk to at least 1 person who is an expert in the type of research depicted (i.e., a professor in the field within which the depicted researcher works). Use what they tell you to inform what judgments you make about how the movie represents this researcher's work.

If you expand your analysis of a movie depiction of research (Weekly Sketch 2)—

- Make it at least 2,000 words.
- Find and use at least 3 academic articles written by the researcher depicted in the movie. Read them and use them all as part of what you decide to say about the “real research” versus how it's depicted in the movie.
- Find and use at least 2 reviews of the film that address the movie's accuracy. You might also use those reviews as springboards to discovering other truths about how the movie tried (or didn't

## Major Assignment for Writing Retreat – Expand Your Weekly Sketch of a New Sequence of Assignments

The 4 weekly sketches in the first half of the quarter are meant to keep students from feeling overwhelmed near the beginning of the term, in a time when the pandemic is still raging and students seem to feel quite overwhelmed. The 500-600 words written for each weekly sketch outlined above are enough to have them be introduced to basic concepts of research and writing, but not so much work that they will feel as though they're being thrown into the deep end of the rhetorical pool.

Additionally, this rapid-fire approach gives students a chance to quickly sample a number of different options for what they might explore more fully in the second half of the class. As each weekly sketch will be taught in direct relation to a goal or goals, they will serve as survey of issues and concerns, but also as a form of invention. Since each weekly sketches are only worth 25 points (as opposed to the later “Major Assignment Expansions,” which are worth 100 points), students are invited to play in that space with possibilities for what they'll work with in longer form later. Also, since each weekly sketch asks for the *beginning* of something longer and not a complete piece of writing, it will be apparent that there is more that would have to be done. In this way, by suggesting a glacier's worth of work beneath their original 500-600 words, I'll be setting them up to understand some of the layering that is often involved in longer research projects, which they will later attempt in the second half of the quarter.

Here is a sample from a student's 600 words toward Weekly Sketch 3 (writing a short story based on research):

### One Whale

It could have been over an hour that Arthur had been sitting here, but just now was the sun creeping over the horizon. Rays of light danced across the Atlantic, bringing a sense of energy and life to the frigid shoreline. It was a solemn reminder of his sleepless night. One last time Arthur felt the sand run through his fingers as he took a deep breath of the salty air. It was time to go now.

Arthur's mind began to wander as he walked along Rockaway Beach. What would Mr. Cuffee be like? Arthur assumed he would meet an intimidating, somewhat quiet and cunning man, for it would be rare to find a jovial fisherman. His ad had seemed straightforward, and Arthur knew he was qualified to work the crew. Arthur's fear did not stem from any question of his own ability, but the skills of others at sea. Pirates weren't common, but far from rare. New York had issued a warning not three months before to prepare sailors for pirating. The dock and ship were now in sight. And there was Paul Cuffee.

The first impression of Cuffee was his strength, although Arthur only saw him loading ropes into the ship, his size and demeanor was enough to show his strength. Cuffee was a black man, a stern look on his face.

“Mornin' Mr. Cuffee.”

Cuffee looked up and his eyes met Arthur's. Then he looked back down. “So you sail?”

“Yes sir, I've been sailing my whole life, sir.”

Cuffee nodded his head and continued to untie the ship from the dock. Arthur began to load equipment into the ship, fully aware that most sailors had no patience for laziness. Arthur was used to the rough company that was found in New York. After seeing Cuffee Arthur was surprised that he had put an ad out in the first place. Although a free man of color was possible, it was far from common. It was clear that he was a man of strong character and courage.

“You ever come across pirates out here?”

Cuffee nodded his head.

“They ever come after ya?”

Cuffee nodded his head again, focused on the harpoon in his hands.

“Well what happened?”

Cuffee stopped working and stood up straight, looking Arthur straight in the eye. “Which time?”

Arthur was taken aback. Having lost his father to a pirate raid, it was shocking to see a man who had survived not one, but multiple raids.

“My father was killed by pirates, you ever get hurt?”

“Get in the boat. .... Or don't. I don't much care, but I didn't put that ad out to hear a bunch of sob stories. You wanna learn how to handle pirates? Stick around long enough and 'yer gonna see.”

Arthur got into the boat.

Cornish and Russwurm. “Memoirs of Capt. Paul Cuffee.” *Freedom's Journal* [New York New York], 23 Mar. 1827, pp. 1–4.

McCarthy, Erin. “56 Delightful Victorian Slang Terms You Should Be Using.” *Erin McCarthy*, This Week, 3 Aug. 2018, [theweek.com/articles/567412/56-delightful-victorian-slang-terms-should-using](https://theweek.com/articles/567412/56-delightful-victorian-slang-terms-should-using).

“New York's Marine & Coastal District Waters - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation.” *New York State*, 2020, [www.dec.ny.gov/permits/95483.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/95483.html).

Schokkenbroek, Joost. “SAGE Journals: Your Gateway to World-Class Research Journals.” *SAGE Journals*, 5 Sept. 2017, [journals.sagepub.com/action/cookieAssent](https://journals.sagepub.com/action/cookieAssent).

“This Guy Used over 80,000 Old Photographs to Create a Google Street View Map of New York City in the 1800s.” *Business Insider*, 11 July 2016, [www.businessinsider.com/old-photos-of-new-york-city-in-the-1800s-with-google-street-view-2016-7?international=true&r=US&IR=T#jacob-riis-park-rockaway-beach-1897-15](http://www.businessinsider.com/old-photos-of-new-york-city-in-the-1800s-with-google-street-view-2016-7?international=true&r=US&IR=T#jacob-riis-park-rockaway-beach-1897-15).

“Top Names of the 1880s.” *Social Security*, Mar. 2020, [www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/names1880s.html](http://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/names1880s.html).

Wikipedia contributors. “Paul Cuffee.” *Wikipedia*, 30 Mar. 2021, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_Cuffee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Cuffee).

## References

This writing emerged initially from the student's exposure, via a daily assignment that

asked students to choose a time and place to read newspapers from, to an archive of articles written in the 1820s about Paul Cuffee, the free person of color who was an abolitionist and whaler. The more he learned, the more clearly an idea emerged for him of a man who might be looking for work on a Cuffee-led ship. As he explained to me, he was hoping to use this as an opportunity to explore more about not just Cuffee himself but the times in which he lived, and what life looked like in that era for not only people like Cuffee, but those whom he came in contact with. You can see in the list of sources he found how this student is pushing against a number of different kinds of mysteries to unlock a way to tell the story: he's looking for sources that will help him create verisimilitude on a number of fronts, like the Frankenstein map of NY in the 1800s; he's looking for details of Cuffee's life that will give him insight into what kinds of tensions might be the kernel for a story; eventually, this student also found and used existing stories about whaling (i.e., *Moby Dick*) to use as models for how stories of this sort are often told. And if you look more closely at some of his sources, you'll find, probably, that some of them are not going to be helpful at all. He has yet to figure, it seems, that some of his sources are related to the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, and others to a time well before then. Or that Victorian-era names are a little late for the time period being described. But that's okay! This is just a chance for this student to get his feet wet with what it means to even conduct research of this type—a type, let's imagine, that this student has probably not been exposed to before.

And that, ultimately, is the point of the weekly sketch in my mind. What you see in the prose above is a student having fun with an idea, getting exposure to what it means to use sources in a way that's likely new to him. He's not encumbered by too many rules around the assignment—he knows he needs to write a scene and that he's supposed to find some

sources to help in that process—and the result is something that feels promising, but also quite clearly in need of further development.

And here is what that student turned his sketch into, in his later expansion:

### One Whale

*I no longer remember my daughter's laugh. Even if I could she undoubtedly would be unrecognizable to me, and I to her. I long for my wife's touch and smile, the memories of her presence have been replaced by the smell of vermin and all the other daily plagues of this ship. There is some peace in the solitude at night, but we long for our journey home. Just yesterday a spout was spotted not 15 miles out. We are close.*

Hamond put his pencil down and folded his journal closed to keep it in place. Not much longer and there would be no more pencil to write with. He had been cautious to preserve it as long as humanly possible. The noise outside of Hamond's cabin was beginning to pick up, the moaning winds of the sea were openly welcomed by many members of the crew. Not Hammond though. Although they produced a soothing white noise, the increased winds indicated an ominous threat.

As he put on his boots, Hamond reflected on the greatest storms he had seen these past 6 years. Only two weeks before, the crew had lost one of their finest foreman. Teagu was a quiet man, considering he had lost his tongue to pirates as a young child. His teeth (the ones he had left) looked as rot as driftwood. His eyes were foggy from years of the salty wind, yet still able to spot the vapor of a whale's

breath better than any other scout. Although he couldn't shout to the crew, his keen sight and experience ensured the ringing ship bell would not be rung without reason. The crew knew he had come from Africa due to his dark complexion, but his true origins were never known. When a bolt of the crow's nest unexpectedly broke loose it was a quick fall to the deck, the wind carrying him nearly to the stern of the ship. A few onlookers saw the accident and were quick to put Teagu out of his misery, as the bones of his legs and spine could be seen. Hamond was responsible for lashing the apprentice in charge of maintaining the integrity of the crow's nest. The young blacksmith had been allegedly sleeping at the time he was meant to be doing his rounds, though Hamond wasn't sure if this was true. While drinking through the previous night some of the other mates rumored the Captain's wife had taken a liking to the young man. It wasn't the first time rumors of the missis had been around the ship, strange how they all seemed to become quiet when the mates joined the captain's dinner.

The air was cool on Hamond's face as he pried open his cabin door. A few other crew members were already prepping the ship's schooners in preparation for the day's hunt. Hammond would be accompanying the boat steerers on the mission. It was unusual for any mate to accompany the mission, specifically the first mate, but Hammond's reputation needed to remain intact. The nickname 'Hawk' was given to him 10 years ago in his first month as a foreman. Not many whalers were successful on their first whale hunt, the process was inherently risky. Truth be told Hamond didn't quite know

what to expect, the strength of his first whale was chilling to the bone. He still clearly recalled the jolt as the whale began pulling the schooner through the water. It was a 2 hour ride until the whale eventually became weak enough to kill, this Baleen Whale was smaller than the usual catches. Nonetheless, Hamond was renowned by his shipmates, including the captain. This skillset and respect gained made him a suitable first-mate.

The winds were picking up, and the Atlantic began to follow suit, waves crashing into the hull began to wash over the deck. Hamond observed as the waking crew rushed to the buckets. Hamond watched as a greenhand named Wilson stumbled to the mast to find a place of balance.

"Oi Wilson! Better get that bucket wet or else I swear to all that's holy I'll throw your old ass over!"

Wilson looked up at Hamond and then ran to fetch a bucket, although he was an older fellow it was important that no greenhands receive special treatment. Any signs of favoritism could lead to a lack of respect, and this would not be tolerated in this crew. Soon it looked as though the washover was under control and Hamond made his way to the stateroom to speak with Captain Aditsan.

After three strong knocks on the oak door Hamond was allowed into the Captain's quarters. Aditsan was looking over maps in the navigation room. The noise of the sea and wind was muffled and replaced by the enticing smell of cooked duck.

“Mornin’ Hawk. We are hot on this one’s trail, our morning scout is confident she’s a big one.”

“I’ll get her for us”, Hawk said. Aditsan looked up and gave a look that seemed to say ‘you better’.

The Captain was a well built Native American man with long braided hair to his shoulders. It was an unusual look for a Captain, but it suited him. His strength in character and knowledge made him a suitable leader and the respect from his crew was a defense against any potential mutinies.

Hamond’s mouth was watering as he looked at the half eaten duck resting on the captain’s table, the blacksmith Al was already happily digging into a hearty piece of the dark meat. Resisting the urge to sit at the table Hamond joined the Captain and second mate in looking at the navigation charts.

“We are gonna have to be quick with this one, looks like our window of opportunity is gonna be slim. If she’s not on the line by mid-day storms are gonna take us. I’d want to see the schooner out in the next hour, sir.”

Mancil, the second mate, was a skilled reader in nautical charts, and Hamond could sense that this would be a difficult catch.

“Al, How are those two-flutes comin’?”, said the Captain.

Al quickly choked down the dry duck that had been the center of his focus.

“Good, sir... Might be my best yet. Hawk won’t have any excuses on this one.”

Hamond had seen the double fluted harpoons tied to the mast earlier and they did look good.

“I’ll prepare the men sir, the sea is alive today but we should manage just fine. Won’t be my first time getting a little wet.”

After a quick meal of dry duck, preparations for the schooner began. A variety of harpoons were tied down and the smaller boat was loaded with provisions and equipment. Al was sharing some words with his apprentice on the preparation of blades for the journey. Hamond had noticed that the ordering of carving tools had been out of the ordinary and was happy to see Al had been paying close attention to the work of his apprentice. After some words and a firm slap on the back of the head the young man quickly corrected his mistake. For this run Hawk would be accompanied by three other greenhands, as Mancil anticipated either a large Baleen or even a Blue Whale. Hamond was personally hoping for the latter, as a bigger catch meant a bigger paycheck. Soon after the reorganization of carving knives the schooner was ready for departure, with the scout’s eyes on the whale. Hamond’s party boarded the schooner and was lowered down to the sea.

It wasn’t the smoothest landing, but luckily all the greenhands on board understood to stay away from the side of the boat. Many naive sailors had been thrown off or crushed against the hull in this process. A cool spray of salty water splashed over Hamond from the port side, bucket in hand, Hamond shoveled out the overwash.

“Keep us on course! Keep your eyes peeled for another spout!”

The rowers continued to direct the ship towards the whale as waves continued to bully the schooner, but she was on course when Hamond saw another spout. This was a big one, and Hamond wiped the moisture off of the harpoon in his hands. Al wasn't lying when he said this may have been his best work, the weapon felt balanced and comfortable in Hamond's hands.

Soon it would be time to use it as the crew continued to rhythmically row through the dark sea. Hamond was now fully focused, the crew continued to yell at each other to maintain the proper course, but none of these words were heard by Hamond.

Crouched near the front end of the boat, Hamond finally got a clear visual of the whale, and a stealthy chill snuck up his spine. It was about 4 times the length of the schooner and was moving at around the same speed as the boat. From the main ship the spouts had looked somewhat average, but now Hamond couldn't help but jolt when the creature shot what must have been over 500 gallons of water into the sky. The loud water crashed down into the sea, louder than dynamite. Hamond adjusted his grip and narrowed his eyes with focus. Poised like a hawk, he slowly drew back his arm. Slowing his breathing he adjusted to the rhythm of the boat's movement, the timing of this throw was imperative.

*Nom.*

Hamond launched the harpoon into the air, the rope hissing as it was drawn from the schooner into the air. The throw looked slightly off, but

when the harpoon entered the water it was clear that it was a direct hit that was followed by a force so powerful Hamond feared it may rip their vessel into two. The chase had begun.

The schooner was rapidly pulled through the daunting waves of the Atlantic. Water was filling the entire craft, the crew was frantically scooping with the buckets to try to stay afloat. Hamond could hear the yells of excitement from the greenhands, but the hunt was far from over.

One hour later and the schooner was still being pulled by the great beast. The sky was now dark and Hamond couldn't tell whether the water was coming from above or below, the cold had taken a toll on the men and Hamond could no longer feel his hands gripping his bucket. Still, he continued to shovel out the constant overflow of water. The main ship was barely in sight to Hamond now, but he knew that the ship's scout still likely knew their exact whereabouts. Billows of wind screamed in unison with the ever growing waves.

Then, out of nowhere the boat began to slow, and there was a brief silence. Hamond looked up. All of the men aboard screamed in horror, one man leapt overboard. Hamond stared in awe. The great creature erupted into the air, gallons of water falling from the beast like raindrops. The ridged underbelly twisted out of sight as the creature flew above Hamond blocking out all sunlight. The ship was then yanked into the sky as the harpooned rope became taught. Hamond held onto the hull for dear life, watching as his crew fell into the dark sea. As the whale twisted above him Hamond

looked into the eye of the great beast. The eye alone was twice the size of him, darker than granite. Hamond felt as though he was looking into the eyes of death.

It could have been over an hour that Hamond had been sitting here, but just now was the sun creeping over the horizon. Rays of light danced across the Atlantic, bringing a sense of energy and life to the frigid shoreline. It was a solemn reminder to Hamond that he had gone the entirety of the night without sleep. One last time he felt the sand run through his fingers as he took a deep breath of the salty air. It was time to go now.

Hamond's mind, still foggy from the booze, began to wander as he walked along Rockaway Beach. The words of his wife rolled through his head. Fine. Go. But that's goodbye, for both of us. Hamond's finger anxiously itched at the empty bottle of booze in his hand. The ship was now in sight, and Captain Aditsan was likely already on board. Hamond stopped walking, took one last look at New York. One last look at home. He thought about leaving, running home, finding his daughter and wife. They would still be in the city at this point, he knew that the carriage was slow, he knew he could find them. Water continued splashing onto the shore at his feet. The sun was halfway over the horizon, turning the sea to a bloody crimson and gold. Hamond thought it may have been the closest thing to seeing heaven on Earth.

#### Works Consulted

“Life Onboard a Whaleship - New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (U.S. National Park Service).”

NPS, 2020,  
[www.nps.gov/nebe/learn/historyculture/whaleship.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nebe/learn/historyculture/whaleship.htm).

This source was extremely valuable for the whole process of this writing. All of the details from the nicknames for ship items to the members on the ship were gathered through this source. This is how I found the term GreenHand, which is a rank on a whaling ship. I also found the terms foreman and overwash. These terms allowed me to be more specific in the purpose of each character in the story. Having a clear idea of what each member did makes it easier to write because I was able to create a scene. For example, the scene where the blacksmith, navigator, first-mate, and captain are eating in the captain's quarters came from the fact that this source said the captain and mates would eat together.

“Blacksmithing, Whaling and Sailing.”  
Storm Castle, 2019,  
[www.stormthecastle.com/blacksmithing/blacksmithing-whaling-and-sailing.htm](http://www.stormthecastle.com/blacksmithing/blacksmithing-whaling-and-sailing.htm).

This source was used to give me all of the details of blacksmithing on a whaling ship. Although the blacksmith himself is not a key figure in the story, his supplies and duty is. The relationship between the blacksmith and his apprentice was learned through the mannerisms described by the museum in

this source, and there is a lot on the specific tools that were used in whaling. Although I did not write about every single tool that is listed on this website, it did make sure that I was accurately writing about the harpoons used in whaling. This source also helped me figure out exactly how whalers would catch a whale.

Kiley, Kathy. "Vessels and Terminology." New Bedford Whaling Museum, 15 Apr. 2021, [www.whalingmuseum.org/learn/research-topics/whaling-history/vessels-and-terminology](http://www.whalingmuseum.org/learn/research-topics/whaling-history/vessels-and-terminology).

This source was used to help create the dialogue that is used in the story. Although slang is not used excessively in the story, it was important that when it was used it was used correctly. The way the Captain speaks is different from the way that others would speak, and more importantly what they would be speaking about. This source also provided an insight into what a whaling ship actually looks like. The design of the ship is explained in this source and for parts in the story like the scout falling from the crow's nest, I wanted to be accurate about how that situation would actually look.

McCarthy, Erin. "56 Delightful Victorian Slang Terms You Should Be Using." Erin McCarthy, This Week, 3 Aug. 2018, [theweek.com/articles/567412/56-delightful-victorian-slang-terms-should-using](http://theweek.com/articles/567412/56-delightful-victorian-slang-terms-should-using).

This source was useful for getting an idea of how people in this time frame, being 1800s, would speak. Although many of the words were not applicable for my story as I needed to look more into sailor slang than the average slang, it still was very insightful to see the tone of the average person in this time. The next step was to research the personas of the sailors which were in different sources and create more rebellious versions of the average speaking man/woman. There is a small amount of swearing in the story, which is less than I originally thought it would be. After seeing this source and understanding how people would talk it appeared that there was still a lot of class at that time, and sailors would be raunchy in comparison to this. Not in comparison to vulgar language today.

"New York's Marine & Coastal District Waters - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation." New York State, 2020, [www.dec.ny.gov/permits/95483.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/95483.html).

This source helped me develop my setting in the very last portion of the story. We get a very brief background of Hamond and his origins in New York. To do this I needed to research what New York actually looked like at the time of this story. To my surprise it was still very undeveloped, meaning very little technology and more old school jobs and careers.

Hammond's situation is never fully explained, as there are only some vital ties to his history and present situation that are necessary, but it is still important that those facts are correct. For example, the name of the beach he is on before he sets sail.

“Aboard a Whaling Ship, 1850.”  
Eyewitness in History, 2010,  
[www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/whaling.htm](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/whaling.htm).

This source was used to get a better idea of how crew members interacted on a whaling ship. I didn't know what the day to day life would look like or happy or sad or angry the sailors actually were. This article discusses what the general feel on a ship was like and gave me the opportunity to create some events through the day that were realistic for the story.

When there is a wash over on the deck, that is a very common issue for these ships. Knowing that gave me some opportunity to create action in my story and show just how busy the crew often was. It also allowed me to explore how dangerous it was.

“Top Names of the 1880s.” Social Security, Mar. 2020,  
[www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/names1880s.html](http://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/names1880s.html).

This is the source that I used to come up with the different names for my characters. Although some characters

from different ethnicities had names not on this list, it was a very helpful starting area to find realistic names. The story would not have made any sense if there were names that are used currently, and it would have been strange to go with names that were all very basic. I made decisions to use a few basic names, like Al, to create as realistic a scene as I could. This source allowed me to find those names, and then figure out if they would work for a character in the same class as my characters.

Kiley, Kathy. “Whales and Hunting.”  
New Bedford Whaling Museum, 15 Apr. 2021,  
[www.whalingmuseum.org/learn/research-topics/whaling-history/whales-and-hunting](http://www.whalingmuseum.org/learn/research-topics/whaling-history/whales-and-hunting).

This source is also from the Whaling Museum, and this one specifically talks about how the whalers would go about capturing and killing the whales. I was completely uneducated in this regard and truthfully had never thought about how difficult it would have been to catch a whale in this time period. This source allowed me to get insight into how dangerous it really was to be a whaler and the exact process that was used by whalers. This works its way into my story when Hamond is hunting the whale on the Schooner. The process of harpooning the whale and then letting it drag you around was actually performed at this time.

In this expansion, much has changed. The amount and type of engagement with sources is fuller. Cuffee and Arthur are gone, and the new whaling expedition, freed from the constraints of an actual person's biography, becomes more fully focused on bringing to life a certain whaling way of living. The original scene is nowhere to be found, and a cluster of scenes revolving around a specific expedition have replaced it, though the original fascination with this time and life have remained. In how the story has morphed, you can also see a deepening of the writer's understanding of what constitutes a fictional story. There is not just dialogue here, but a few more elements of fiction apparent (flashbacks, scene setting, the arc of a plot, journal entries, etc.). Beyond that, you can feel the writer's engagement with the language of the time. His awareness of specific whaling and seafaring vocabulary indicates a deeper engagement with sources. His creation of a full arc around the question of whether this wannabe sailor will stay behind and look for his family or join the whaling expedition more permanently speaks to a kind of "research"—i.e., reading short stories and beginning to understand how they work—that goes beyond content.

The 2 "expansions" in the second half of the quarter—like the one you see above—are meant to do these sorts of things: that is, to deepen students' understanding of what writing that involves research can involve. By allowing a clear choice in what students can expand—this student chose to expand his fictional scene based on research, as opposed to his qualitative research proposal, which would've necessitated fully engaging with qualitative methods—I'm allowing them a wide range of possibility in creating a path for their own learning that best suits their own sense of what they're good at, and what they most feel will be useful for them to learn from this class. In how each expansion requires heavy lifting in terms of new research and

new writing, this period of the class provides a chance for immersion in a larger project, an immersion that not only *shows* what research writing *looks like* but also gives them a feel for what it *feels like* to practice in those traditions.

In the case of the example above, it's clear that the expansion has provided the student an opportunity to explore questions of research and research writing in ways that deepen the earlier writing, which had really only served as an introduction to what such a project might entail. And in subsequent revisions that came about as part of the portfolio process, the student went further in his development of the story, and I like the idea that this structure to assignment design provides 4 stops along the development of a project—daily assignment (researching archives in this case), weekly sketch (writing a scene), major expansion (expanding the scene into a story), and final revision (for the portfolio). These steps feel connected and gradual in a way that's likely to lead to deeper and more sustained learning than a process that only involves a first and final draft. And in the end, while these gradual steps were things I offered as a response to pandemic times, these kinds of results have led me to feel it worthwhile to continue to refine this new structure for future classes to be taught in less trying circumstances.