

# HIDDEN MEANINGS: CREATIVE FICTION, NON-FICTION, AND FACTS

## SESSION FIVE—ASSIGNMENT

Below are the assignment questions for this session

1. In fewer than 1500 words, write a **narrative nonfiction essay** in which you vacillate between the two different variations of first-person POV, singular (“I”) and plural (“we”), as is seen in George Saunder’s short story, “Escape from Spiderhead.”
  - Peer response question: In which ways do you think this piece benefits from the author’s shifts in POV? Would remaining in a single POV improve the story or does the shift between POVs add something special to the story that would be lost if the story were told in a single POV? Do the POVs affect your opinion of the reliability of the narrators?
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2. In fewer than 1500 words, write a **short story set** in a fictional building such as a house, office, store, factory, or hotel. Attach your Points of Entry and Exit (POEs) to movement through the building. For example, let the entry into each part of the building also serve as an entry into a new paragraph or section.
  - Peer response question: Does the use of the building’s architecture to structure the piece serve the story well? Is this approach enough to create a workable structure for this piece? Is it enough for an extended version of this piece? Why or why not?
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3. Write one to three linked **flash essays** (under 300 words each) based on an event that happened in real life in a community to which you belong. In each flash essay, suggest the ending, or the outcome of the events in the first line. This approach can be seen in “A New Front Line” by Lindsey Hilsum when she opens the essay by explaining the risks Marie Colvin encountered in Chechnya in 1999, which were similar to the risks she later experienced in Syria in 2012.
  - Peer response question: The first and last lines of a piece of writing tend to have the strongest presence and resonance in a piece of writing. In your opinion, what is the effect on the reader of arriving at these essays endings that were hinted at in the beginning of the pieces? Or arriving at endings that are resonant with the first line of

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the stories? What are some other ways in which the author could play with the relationships between the first and last lines in their essays?