**Essay Maker**

*Essayists make a variety of decisions to plan, draft and revise an essay. Like poets and fiction writers, essayists have a menu of choices. Assembling an essay depends entirely on the line of thinking the writer creates for the reader. There is no “right” way to assemble an essay. Try this essay-making experiment to write a first draft of a personal essay.*

**Directions:** On a sheet of loose-leaf paper, write an MLA header and title the paper, “Essay Maker.” Follow the outline below. Include details and specifics so that your draft ends up being about two pages in length. You may bullet point your rough draft. Note: This is just a draft, therefore you WILL make changes when you begin typing!

* Begin with a **STRONG STATEMENT**
  + Begin the essay with your claim (belief) statement.
  + Add a sentence or two that explains the statement.
* Next, tell a **PERSONAL STORY**
  + Use a story to show the relevance of your claim (belief) statement.
  + Add details so the reader understands the setting and conflict in this story.
* Now, ask a **QUESTION** (The question might extend or shift your thinking about your claim (belief). Or the question might introduce a counter-claim.)
* Now, write **COMMENTARY**.
  + Start by rereading your writing so far.
  + Reflect on your story that you shared.
  + What do you feel or wonder about now that you have reread the story?
  + What do people need to understand about you and your claim (belief)?
* Add a **QUOTE OR A BRIEF DIALOGUE.** (The words of someone you know. What your mother, father, sister, brother, friend might say.)
* Now, tell another **PERSONAL STORY**
  + Tell a new story from your life/experience that addresses the claim (belief) in a new way.
  + Be sure this story shows the conflict that caused you to see something in this new way.
* Finally, add another **STRONG STATEMENT** and **COMMENTARY.**
  + End by explaining the new insight you have on your claim (belief) and any additional thoughts or feelings you have about it.
  + Try to push your thinking to a personal insight you now live by. (How did this change your life? Your thinking?)