Definitions of a Vignette

A vignette is sketch or essay or brief narrative characterized by great precision and delicate accuracy of composition. The term is borrowed from that used for unbordered but delicate decorative designs for a book, and it implies writing with comparable grace and economy. It may be a separate whole or a portion of a larger work.

A vignette is a snapshot in words. It's different from flash fiction because you're not aiming to tell a story. The vignette focuses on one aspect, mood, character, setting or object. Use it as a descriptive exercise, for character exploration, wordplay or just to get something off your mind. ---By eHow Careers & Work Editor

Vignettes are short, impressionistic scenes that focus on one moment or give a trenchant impression about a character, an idea, or a setting. The vignette is not strictly linked in with a sequential plot development but establishes meaning through loose symbolic or linguistic connection to other vignettes or scenes. Vignettes are the literary equivalent of a snapshot, often incomplete or fragmentary. The use of vignettes is suited to writing in which theme, image, emotion and character are more important than narrative.

Writing a Vignette

Make sure you use elements of style in your vignettes, such as:
metaphors, similes, personification, alliteration, repetition, and sensory details.

- This is not a narrative essay. There will be neither an introduction nor a conclusion. There will be less telling, more showing. (For example, don't write: I was nervous. Try: I had butterflies in her stomach, and my hands were cold and clammy.)
- Try to think of this moment as a dramatic scene in prose form. Pretend that you are a set designer. Use words to construct the set. Create images that appeal to the senses. Let your characters speak; let them yell; let them whisper.
- Play with verb tense; however, be consistent. If you switch verb tense, have a good reason for doing so.
- You could write the story in chronological order, or you could play with the arrangement of events, using flashback.
- Use dialogue, interior monologue. For interior monologue, try to avoid "he thought to himself." Perhaps use quotation marks around words the character says, no quotation marks around words the character thinks. Perhaps use italics to distinguish a character's thoughts from his speech. Give characters a different style of speech to indicate level of education. Use contractions and colloquialisms in dialogue. Also, if you want, use errors in agreement in dialogue. Play with spelling.
- In dialogue, you may leave out some "he said, she said." They usually aren't necessary after the narrator has established a pattern. If you want to show one character butting in on the words of another, try using a dash ("but--"). If you want to show a character "trailing off," use three or four spaced dots ("trailing off . . .").
- Include sensory imagery so your "picture" will be in color rather than in black and white.

Vignette Book Assignment Requirements

- Write”My Name”
  - You may use your journal entries as rough drafts
  - You may come up with entirely new vignettes
• Each vignette should be at least one page long. Vignettes should make a complete image, so don’t stop too soon.
• Each vignette should have a creative title
• You may use any font you like on the following conditions
  o It must be easy to read
  o It must not be all capitals or bold or italics
  o It must be 12pt, double spaced
• Make a cover for your vignette book
  o It should have a title and your name as the author
  o It should have a picture or design that is relevant to the book
• Turn in this sheet (for the rubric) with your vignette book.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Vignette Assignment Rubric</th>
<th>Possible points</th>
<th>Points received</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vignette Format: short, impressionistic scenes that focus on one moment or give a trenchant impression about a character, an idea, or a setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vignette Style: characterized by great precision and delicate accuracy of composition; not strictly linked in with a sequential plot development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Elements of Style: metaphors, similes, personification, alliteration, repetition, hyperbole, etc.</td>
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<td>Sensory Imagery: Vivid descriptions that appeal to the senses, that “show, don’t tell”</td>
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<td>Mechanics: has been thoroughly proofread, no typos, correct spelling and grammar (free from unintentional errors)</td>
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<td>Meets Requirements: Cover page, one typed page, double spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins.</td>
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