

Vocab List: *This I Believe*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Write a definition on this page sentence on a **separate** page.

1. implied to hint or suggest without directly stating
2. abide to follow, submit to
3. revelation sudden realization
4. transom border
5. solicit to seek, ask, persuade, to obtain
6. aggregate to accumulate, gather together N (accumulation)
7. multiplicity large number of diverse elements
8. convictions strong or firm belief
9. emphatically forcefully or with emphasis
10. trivial meaningless, unimportant
11. missives letter, written communication
12. colleague associate, co-worker
13. discourse intellectual discussion on a topic
14. earnest with conviction, sincerity, + seriousness
15. prevailing dominant, over-arching, powerful
16. prominent conspicuous, standing-out, dominant
17. cynical pessimistic, distrustful, negative attitude
18. convene call together, to assemble
19. fodder hay, fire-starter
20. declarative strong, assertive, convincing
21. resonating resound, lasting long after
22. hysteria uncontrollable emotional outburst
23. commodities valuables, things you buy or trade
24. enveloping surrounding
25. fortitude great strength
26. divisiveness to be divided, debating, conflicted
27. compelled to motivate, inspire, engage to do
28. virtual not physically there, product of imagination
29. annihilation total destruction, semblance of what is.
30. philosophy the study of ideas, principles, theories

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Personal Writing Prompts For A Writer's Notebook

<p>1. Most of us have been in a situation where we made a promise that for one reason or another we were unable to keep.</p> <p><b>When were you disappointed because someone made you a promise that they failed to keep? Or when did you break a promise that you made to someone else?</b></p>	<p>4. We all tend to judge people by their appearances, even though looks can be deceiving.</p> <p><b>Have you ever prejudged someone incorrectly based on their appearance or has someone ever prejudged you unfairly based on how you look?</b></p>
<p>2. All of us are works in progress with a long way to go before we reach our full potential.</p> <p><b>In what skill or area are you still working to make progress?</b></p>	<p>5. Everyone has problems or challenges to overcome.</p> <p><b>What obstacles are you proud to have faced and conquered?</b></p>
<p>3. Our society uses the word <i>hero</i> in many different ways?</p> <p><b>How do you define <i>hero</i>, and who is a hero in your life?</b></p>	<p>6. There is a famous adage: "To err is human, to forgive divine."</p> <p><b>When did you feel divine because you were able to forgive someone for their mistake? When did someone act divine by forgiving you when you were wrong?</b></p>

## "This I Believe" Assignment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

1. Complete Vocab List: definitions & sentences
  2. Read "This I Believe" Packet
  3. Brainstorm/Map 3-5 different possible topics
  4. Write first draft of your piece on what you believe in and how it inspires your life, revealing your perspective on the world to others:
    - Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double spaced, 500 words
  5. Peer Edit 2 classmates' essays
    - Edit for grammar
    - Complete assessment rubric for each
  6. Write a second draft of your essay, based on peer feedback
    - Enhance the verbs, adjectives, imagery
    - Edit for grammar
    - Cut what isn't needed
    - Add justification, clarification where needed
  7. Conference with Ms. Rankin
  8. Write a final draft based on teacher comments
  9. Create notecards to speak monologue to *classmates*
  7. Practice for peers, film rehearsals
  8. Enhance Speech/ Memorize/ Practice
  9. Perform Speech for *class*
  10. Self-Assessment/Reflection
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## INTRODUCTION

### THIS I BELIEVE: Reading and Writing Lessons to Create an Effective Personal Essay

From 1951 to 1955, Edward R. Murrow hosted *This I Believe*, a daily radio program that reached 39 million listeners. On this broadcast, Americans—both well known and unknown—read five-minute essays about their personal philosophy of life. They shared insights about individual values that shaped their daily actions. The first volume of *This I Believe* essays, published in 1952, sold 300,000 copies—more than any other book in the U. S. during that year except for the Bible. In fact, these Murrow broadcasts were so popular that curriculum was even developed to encourage American high school students to compose essays about their most significant personal beliefs.

Fifty years later, This I Believe, Inc., and NPR are again inviting Americans of all ages and all perspectives to examine their belief systems and then write a 400- to 500-word personal essay.

In order to coordinate activities in the schools with the new radio series, the following unit has been designed to help teachers seize this exciting opportunity to motivate students to write for an authentic purpose to real-world audiences. By utilizing lessons in this unit, teachers can guide students to produce a *This I Believe* essay appropriate **both** for inclusion in school writing publications **and** for possible broadcast on public radio, in newspapers, and on the Internet at [www.thisibelieve.org](http://www.thisibelieve.org).

These lessons were originally developed by Dottie Willis of the Jefferson County Public School System in Louisville, Kentucky, as pilot drafts of a *This I Believe* curriculum for eventual use by other teachers and students across the nation. Your feedback on this unit—any additions, adaptations, suggestions for useful resources, etc.—will be welcomed for future use and revision.

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

Drafting a personal philosophy of life is difficult—even when writers have lived multiple decades, such as those who collaborated to design these literacy lessons. I encourage teachers to attempt this thought-provoking assignment along with your students to discover first-hand just how challenging this writing task really is!

I also urge teachers NOT to bypass prewriting and guided discussion activities that prepare students for producing a quality personal essay. Proceed slowly. Invest ample class time in front-loading, soul-searching, and model-reading. Your students' first drafts will be far more effective and require less revision time.

Dottie Willis, Jefferson County Public School Writing Specialist  
and author of the *This I Believe* curriculum