

ENG 102 (Stermer)  
Spring 2020

## Assignment: Your Own David & Goliath Story

**Due date:** Tuesday, February 25 by 11:59pm. *(Please use the link that will be provided in that day's content area.)*

**Required length:** 700 words. *(Yes, 695 is fine. No, 635 is not. Yes, you are more than welcome to write more than 700.)*

In his book *David & Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*, Malcolm Gladwell argues that the way we think of advantages and disadvantages is wrong. David did not defeat Goliath by sheer luck or a miracle, and it was not a matter of the weak triumphing over the strong. David defeated Goliath, Gladwell tells us, because Goliath's perceived advantages of size and armor hindered him instead of helped him, and David was able to use his skill with the sling to **exploit these vulnerabilities**.

By now, you've hopefully been able to think about Gladwell's argument and find some connections with your own life. Surely there have been times when you have battled your own Goliath, or force with a clear perceived advantage, and have been able to locate its weak points, exploit them, and emerge victorious. **For this assignment, your task is to write about just that: a time in your life when you were considered an underdog and still managed to find success.**

To start, you'll want to provide us with some **exposition** of the topic: the who, what, when, where, and why of what's going on. You'll need to **identify the perceived advantages and disadvantages** of both yourself and your Goliath, and then explain how you were able to **find weaknesses, use them to your advantage, and come out ahead**.

*Do not simply say that you worked hard or got lucky, and do not simply summarize your experience and assume your reader will make the necessary connections. Try to look at this through the eyes of Gladwell. Be sure to explain the forces at work and discuss the advantages and disadvantages.*

Finally, you'll want to explain the **bigger implications** of your story. What can we learn from your success? How can it be replicated, and **how can we change our perception of the advantages and disadvantages in similar situations?**

*Any experience from any point in your life will work as long as you are able to fit it into the assignment. We will not be sharing these with others in the class, but please make sure you write about a topic that you are comfortable sharing with your instructor.*

**You will earn an A and all 100 points for this assignment if you:**

- Explain your story in a clear and understandable manner.
- Use language from Gladwell's book to label and explain perceived advantages, disadvantages, and points of weakness.
- Have a well-structured paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

- Use proper grammar, mechanics, and word choice.
- Follow MLA formatting as best as you can.

No citations are required for this paper, though if you do refer to any sources, you will need to cite them appropriately.

If you have any questions or concerns about this assignment, please get in touch with me. I am happy to discuss topic ideas, look over outlines, and read early drafts. (Please give me a 24-hour turnaround time on drafts.) I encourage you to utilize USC Sumter's tutoring center if you are able to do so and want some good feedback on an early draft. Before you contact me for help with a topic, please spend some time brainstorming ideas. You know the particulars of your life better than I or anyone else.

***Please proofread carefully!***