



# Slave Diaries

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## Focus: Epistolary, creative history-based writing

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### Objective

For this assignment you will be writing an epistolary short story about the life of an early nineteenth century slave in the United States. An epistolary novel is a work of fiction that is a collection of documents such as letters, diary entries, newspaper articles, memos, even modern communication means such as email, blog entries, or audio files.

Your final project will consist of at least five diary entries, typed in MLA format (no Works Cited), total word count between 1,200 – 2,000 words. You will earn a Criterion A grade based on the skill by which you tell a historically accurate but also compelling tale about a fictional slave.

### Procedure

1. Copy and fill out the character background information sheet, titled “Character Background,” found at the end of this document. In diaries, the “voice” of the character is critical to a successful work of fiction.
2. Your diary entries must focus on some crucial dramatic moment for your character; for example, a chance to escape, a possible loss of a loved one, or a threat of discovery or retaliation. Apply the plot diagram to your story – introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion. (This may easily be the five diary entries.)
3. Format: Calibri or Arial, size 12 font. Double spaced. Standard MLA heading and page numbers. Title of the story centered under the MLA heading (not italicized, not underlined). No Works Cited page. Dates that head a diary section are underlined.

### Grading

Your paper will be graded for Criterion A

Name:

Character Background

1. Name of character:
2. Age of character:
3. How does the character know how to write? (illegal at the time):
4. What kind of household does your character live in?
5. What kind of person or family owns your character?
6. What kind of work is your character expected to do?
7. What relatives does your character have?
8. Does your character live with any relatives?
9. List any other important details: