For this essay, you will write a narrative about yourself borrowing the “WE” (collective) style used in *Anthem.* This assignment is adapted from the website [Thisibelieve.org](http://thisibelieve.org/).



This I Believe: “Based on the popular 1950’s radio series of the same name hosted by Edward R. Murrow, This I Believe is an international organization engaging people in writing and sharing essays describing the core values that guide their daily lives. Over 100,000 of these essays, written by people from all walks of life, are archived on the website, heard on public radio, chronicled through our books, and featured in weekly podcasts.”



Requirements:

* Between 1.5-2 typed pages (no more than two)
* Double-spaced
* You need a creative name for yourself. Include your name at the top of the page.
* Do not use the personal pronoun “I”.
* Essay should have a thesis-your belief statement should be one sentence.
* Read several examples of “I Believe” statements from the website.
* Write your first draft in first person: I believe. This will be easier, and then you can go through and change all of your pronouns when you are finished.
* Also, consider submitting your essay to thisibelieve.org (The *I believe* version, not the ‘we’ one☺)

# This I Believe Essay-Writing Guidelines

We invite you to contribute to this project by writing and submitting your own statement of personal belief. We understand how challenging this is—it requires such intimacy that no one else can do it for you. To guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions:

**Tell a story**: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

**Be brief**: Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That’s about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

**Name your belief**: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

**Be positive**: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. ~~Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.”~~ [except for this assignment, “we” is all you are going to use.] Make your essay about you; ~~speak in the first person.~~ [Speak in the collective.]

**Be personal**: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

For this project, we are also guided by the original This I Believe series and the [**producers’ invitation**](http://thisibelieve.org/1950s/invitation/) to those who wrote essays in the 1950s. Their advice holds up well and we are abiding by it. Please consider it carefully in writing your piece.

In introducing the original series, host Edward R. Murrow said, “Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent.” We would argue that the need is as great now as it was 50 years ago. We are eager for your contribution.



Here is an excerpt of a “This I Believe” from a famous skateboarder. I changed all of his personal pronouns to the collective “we”.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

We believe that people should take pride in what they do, even if it is scorned or misunderstood by the public at large.

We have been a professional skateboarder for 24 years. For much of that time, the activity that paid our rent and gave us our greatest joy was tagged with many labels, most of which were ugly. It was a kids’ fad, a waste of time, a dangerous pursuit, a crime.

When we were about 17, three years after we turned pro, our high school “careers” teacher scolded us in front of the entire class about jumping ahead in our workbooks. They told us that we would never make it in the workplace if we didn’t follow directions explicitly. They said we’d never make a living as a skateboarder, so it seemed to them that our future was bleak.

Even during those dark years, we never stopped riding our skateboard and never stopped progressing as a skater. There have been many, many times when we’ve been frustrated because we can’t land a maneuver. We’ve come to realize that the only way to master something is to keep at it — despite the bloody knees, despite the twisted ankles, despite the mocking crowds.

[By Tony Hawk](http://thisibelieve.org/essay/22870/) (click here to read the rest of his statement)