

**Preparation:** Read the two selections by James Baldwin, “Notes of a Native Son” (in the packet) and “Stranger in the Village” (in the box outside my office). Think about the way events—products of historical, social, or cultural force, for instance—impinge on a life, i.e., Baldwin’s or yours. Example include laws, social practices you do or do not participate in, cultural climates that reveal your assumptions, and rights you unexpectedly receive or do not receive.

**Due Dates:** **Reading Notes** due Monday, 3/19. **Proposals** due Thursday, 3/22, 7 PM.  
**Revisions** of essay #3 due Wed., 3/21; **drafts** of essay #4 due after vacation.

**Length:** Proposals—about one paragraph, with a list of questions. Drafts: 3-5 pages.  
Revisions: 4-7 pages.

**Audience:** Those loyal magazine readers unfamiliar with our class as well as new readers; provide context.

**Purpose:** To examine the way that environment contributes to identity. Think about the specific familial, ethnic, regional, religious, socio-economic, educational, historical, national, and/or other environments in which you or Baldwin has lived. Consider strikingly different environments that you or Baldwin has visited.

**TOPIC:** Write about Baldwin’s or your social/historical/cultural background as it has contributed to his or your identity. How has this background shaped him or you with expectations, experiences, and events? (Did your hippie parents take you to demonstrations, did knowing someone in the Gulf War or visiting Costa Rica expose you to your own assumptions about identity? How have you stood out as different? Have you blended in when you felt you should not have?

**OR**—Analyze the way that Baldwin uses the (and his) African American identity to define American, and vice versa. He makes explicit statements about this; find them and go beyond them to consider any implicit points and ramifications about identity, the US, and context.