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Writing and Reading

By Madison Peters

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My earliest memories of reading and writing are from first grade, which is when I learned how to read. I went to a Christian school for preschool and kindergarten, they did not teach us to read. I remember struggling when I moved to a public school, because many knew at least how to read picture books. I didn't start writing essays until middle school. These essays mainly consisted of two paragraphs summarizing a text we read. As soon as I went into high school they were having us read books during the summer and write essays during the summer. I did not like reading in high school because they assigned these books to us expecting us to read them, even if we didn't get into them at all. In turn of this, writing an essay for these books was very difficult. Reading and writing has never come easy to me throughout my years in school. This year, I hope this class will make me enjoy writing and reading a lot more than my past classes.

The very first book I ever had to read and write an essay on was *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. This book was the very first book I had read about the Holocaust. I did not even know what this historical event was before reading this. My eyes were glued to the book! I found out so many things about the Holocaust. I was able to read this book in two days, which was way faster than we were supposed to read it. After the class had finished the book, my sixth grade teacher told us we had to write an essay on it. Many of us had come from different levels in our writing. She had showed us the basic five paragraph essay. From this essay on to the end of middle school, I used this format as a crutch.

When I entered high school, I took and Advanced English course. This course consisted of two -summer readings before we entered the class. The first reading was *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. I, personally, could not get into this play because of the format of it. We had to do many things with this play, such as writing our own play that mimicked it. I have never been able to get into writing poems or plays for some reason. The other reading we read was *To Kill a Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee. I didn't mind this book either because it was required reading, or because I don't like reading fiction novels. We wrote four essays on this book, which I did not think was even possible for one book.

Writing has been pretty complicated for me also throughout my life. My school district was very relaxed when it came to writing papers. Our papers consisted of the basic five paragraph essay, which included an introduction paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph. After we started writing these in sixth grade, they had us use this format clear up to eighth grade. My teachers didn't teach us how to cite any websites or any form of reading we got information to back our statements up on. When I reached freshman year it was completely different! I decided to take advanced English, which was way harder than I thought it would be. Our first writing assignment was for a book we were assigned to read over summer. She wanted us to write a four paper summarizing it. I had no idea how to reach that many pages. We were also required to quote and paraphrase. This was a completely new thing for me!

As I mentioned before, quoting and paraphrasing from a book was completely new to me. Learning how to give credit to the author was very hard to learn because of the specific order you have to put them in on the work cited page. After learning how to do MLA format, I was able to

make sure the author was given credit for all that they had written. Finishing high school, I was taught how to write both MLA and APA. Settings up these papers are way easier now than how they were freshman year.

Reading has never been my favorite subject just because I was so far behind. I have always struggled with writing essays, because my school lacked good English teachers. Writing papers that were more than five paragraphs was a learning experience for me. After completing this English course, I hope to have a better knowledge on how to make an essay flow without any errors, or at least minimal errors. I also, hope to pick up good reading and writing habits, because as of now I hate reading and writing!

Reflection:

1. *When writing this essay, I read the prompt and thought back to my past experiences as a reader and writer.*
2. *I struggle thinking of examples from my past writing experiences, and continuing to talk about myself as a writer.*
3. *This essay approximately took me 3 hours to complete with the revisions that I did and writing the essay.*
4. *I added a few more examples to my paragraphs to back up my statements. I also got told to vary my sentence structure, but I may need a little help with that in future essays.*
5. *I used six out of the eight habits of mind. I never realized that I had used these before being introduced to them in this class.*