

Essay by Colton Kroon

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I know this essay is supposed to be about how improving my literacy has positively changed my life. The truth is I've had a natural way with words and have always been a competent reader. My mother claims to have read to me since I was nothing more than a mere blastula. Apparently, an English teacher told her it would give me a leg up and it seems to have been a genuinely accurate suggestion. Since I've always been quite proficient at reading and writing, I would like to explain how it has positively impacted me over the years.

Writing has always helped me unwind. Even as I sit here now after a long and stressful day I can feel my body becoming calmer and my mind becoming more relaxed with every word I write. Perhaps writing brings back memories of my mother's calm voice precisely going over every last word of my favourite children's book, or the many novels that transported me to another place where none of my problems even existed. In any case, as a person who suffers from anxiety it's always nice to know that I can sit down, start writing and almost instantly feel better.

If I really want to lose myself and completely omit what's going on in my life, reading a good book has invariably been my preference. Don't get me wrong, writing certainly does calm me, but when I need to absolutely shut out what's going on around me, nothing beats picking up a good novel. I honestly don't know how many times I've sat down feeling completely stressed out and frankly overwhelmed, only to be transported to a place where none of that matters. That to me is the true power of reading. It gives one the chance to so vividly paint a picture in your mind that you somehow forget where you are.

Reading and writing have always provided me with an escape; a quiet place in my mind where I can find peace. Literacy has given me the ability to both express myself in a meaningful way and understand others just as clearly. I would encourage anyone who can not fluently read or write to pick up a book or start writing more frequently. In my opinion, the ability to competently read and write far outweighs any time you might spend learning. If you're lucky, it might just provide you with life long solace. I know that's been the case for me.

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