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## The Way I Learned to Read and Write

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# The Way I Learned to Read and Write

## **Writing Process**

In order to write this narrative essay, I began by brainstorming, and I thought about my early experiences of reading and writing. After I wrote the first draft, I took my paper to the Write Place and made some corrections based on what they told me. I also met with my professor and revised my paper again in order to create stronger transitions between paragraphs.

## **Course**

ENG100

## **Semester**

Fall

## **Instructor**

Prof. Xiamara Hohman

## **Year**

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Dang Jing

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ENG 100

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### The Way I Learned to Read and Write

Remember the bedtime stories your parents read to you? Have you ever read books to your grandmother? Well, I used to read books to my grandmother. My grandmother can't read and write because she never went to school. She lived in a dark period of China, "The Great Culture Revolution," which caused people to believe that studying is not a good way to live. People all went to do farm work in the fields. My grandmother's parents didn't allow her to go to school. She really admired the children who could go to school. She expected to read books and write words. As a child, I could feel her sense of urgency, so I always read books to her, and sometimes, I even taught her some simple Chinese characters. My grandmother enjoyed listening to the stories from the books. While I read books to my grandmother, I also learned lots of words. My point of view is that the ability to read and write could be changed and improved by family and friends.

When I was a little girl, my mom asked my brother and I to write in our diaries everyday. People who have the same experience may get the same feeling as I do: it's really boring. My brother and I didn't always know what to write because we believed that everyday was no different for us. We ate, studied, played, and slept over and over again. So we usually wrote: "Today I ate... I had 7 classes and my teacher told us... What a wonderful day!" Our mother was very angry when she read our diaries the first time. She told us that we had to recollect the details that occurred in our daily lives. She stressed that every day is different. Therefore, we had

to think about the particular scenes in our daily lives. Everyday when my mom came back home, we had to read our journals to her, and she always laughed when she heard our stories. Now, I laugh at the stories too. I often feel amused and can't help but laugh when I read my diaries today. However, our "journal experiences" did not end so easily.

At that time, our parents were always busy; therefore, my brother and I would be lazy if our parents didn't urge us to write dairies. When my parents went back home, we would be punished by being forced to copy paragraphs of the text about ten times. It was impossible because the lessons in our textbooks were too long. Although we were afraid to be punished, we didn't really learn a lesson. We had our "strategies" to avoid being punished: finish several days of journals quickly in one night. Of course, our parents caught us by the obvious mistakes we made, such as the dates and content. They told our grandparents to push us to write in our journals everyday. I really didn't understand my parents at that time. But now, I feel grateful that my mother made me form a good habit. My diaries record my precious memories: times that made me laugh, when I missed my family, and times when I felt upset or had some trouble. It helped me a lot. I still keep this habit now, and I love to write in my diary at present.

In addition to writing in my diary, my best friend when I was in primary school, Zhao Xuefeng, a girl who was also my pen pal, was also very important to the development of my writing skills. We studied in the same primary school, but we got admitted to different middle schools. Neither of us had our own cellphones and computers at that time, so we decided to write letters to contact each other. Actually, she came up with this idea. I never thought I could contact her again because she changed her address. One day, I received a letter from her. I hadn't heard from her for about one year after we both graduated from primary school. I was very happy and almost jumped for joy. Quickly, I opened the letter and read the letter excitedly. After reading

every word of the letter carefully, I determined to write a letter to her and tell her that I really missed her: “Dear Xuefeng, I miss you. How are you? Don’t worry about me. I’ve been adapted to the new situation. I heard you are studying at 26 Middle School now. Have you adjusted to the new environment?” She wrote back, “Dear Jing, I also miss you. I’m fine, and I made new friends. I study very hard now and I want to get admitted to your school, so we could play together again.” Sometimes, she even wrote the letter in English because I studied at a foreign language school. I also tried to write letters in English. Although we both had grammar mistakes, we were very happy. We told each other our troubles and some interesting stories. I also practiced calligraphy hard at that time because Xuefeng had beautiful handwriting, and I admired her. We continued to write to each other until we both graduated from middle school. Although we lost contact for various reasons after we went to high school, I always recall this unforgettable memory.

Every time I write diaries or letters, I always remember the original beautiful memories. My family and friend helped me to read and write. I learned to read loudly because my grandmother couldn’t hear the stories if I whispered. Sometimes, I even acted for her because the performances could make her feel the plots. Writing dairies helped me to learn that writing can be used to record the details of our daily lives. I thought about the particular life scenes day by day. I tried to write down my experiences like stories to tell them to other people. My writing skills improved a lot after several years of diary writing. When I wrote letters to Xuefeng, it was different from writing diaries. Both my family and my friend Xuefeng all influenced my literacy. All of them were positive literacy sponsors. I keep the reading and writing habits to this day, and those reading and writing strategies really help me a lot. At present, I read books very fast, and I can get the accurate main idea after I read a book. In addition, I have neat written work, and I can

use the details in my life to support my point in my paper now. In general, family and friends really played important roles to change and improve my literacy.