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## Learning to Read Was Great

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# Learning to Read Was Great

**Writing Process**

This project was written with the intentions of telling the story of how I learned to read and the effects of my reading skills flourishing.

**Course**

ENG100

**Semester**

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# Learning to Read Was Great

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*Alyssa Mims*

The first book I can recall is *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch. My mom would read the blue pages to me and my sisters in her gentle motherly voice. We would all lay in my parents' bed under my mom's arms, and she would have one of us turn the page for her when she finished the last sentence. We loved how the last sentence on each page said, "but I will still love you forever." *Love You Forever* is the only book I actually remember being read to me; however, my dad had shelves of books in the living room that I never touched. One book on his shelf that stuck out to me was *Who Moved My Cheese?* I thought the book had a funny name, but my four- or five-year-old self never thought to actually read it. The book would always stare at me from our blue couch, with the holes on the cheese getting bigger as time ticked by. Having my mom read to me and my sisters at a young age, being sat down around the table with my dad teaching us to read, going to speech therapy, reading competitions in grade school, and many authors such as Beverly Cleary, Nikki Carter, and Stephenie Meyer sparked my interest in reading.

I did not start reading until around the age of four. My dad would come home with a stack of books from the library. He would gather my older sister and me around the dining room table to teach us how to read. My dad would have us use our index fingers to guide us along each word. If we messed up on a word, he would make us go back and sound out each letter until we got the right pronunciation. Sometimes reading was extremely hard, not because I did not know the words, but because I struggled with saying words whose prefixes were sh-, th-, and ch-. My struggle led to me to speech therapy with Mrs. Salue and some other classmates. I would greet Mrs. Salue with my hand above my eyebrow at attention as in salute because her name sounded like the word "salute." After

multiple sessions with Mrs. Salue, my pronunciation got better, and I did not have to meet with her anymore and I was ready to read aloud efficiently.

In grade school, there was a friendly reading competition called “Book It!” Each student had to read a total of ten books to receive a free personal pan pizza from Pizza Hut. My mom would take me to the library to pick out books I liked. I often picked books with lots of colors like *The Rainbow Fish*. Sometimes I would read multiple books in one sitting to fill up my Book It! sheet. Getting a free pizza from Pizza Hut was motivation for me to read more books. As soon as I had my parents’ signature on the tenth line, I knew I was going to get my Pizza Hut coupon and was eager to turn in my sheet the next day.

In the third grade, I started to venture into chapter books, and my love for reading started to develop. I enjoyed longer books that had intriguing plots. My favorite author at the time was Beverly Cleary. I read *Ralph S. Mouse* and became hooked on her writing. A mouse riding a motorcycle was the coolest thing to me at the age of nine. On my trips to the library, I would search Beverly Cleary’s name on the catalog computer, and all of her available books showed up. The next book I read was *Beezus and Ramona*. I loved this book almost to the point where I wanted to squeeze a tube of toothpaste out into the sink just like Ramona did, but I knew doing that was not an option because of the consequences that would follow. Reading chapter books opened a new world. Books allowed me to explore different places without actually going there.

When I was in fifth grade, my mom came back from the library with a stack of books. She had picked out books for me and my sisters to read while we were on spring break. After judging many books by their covers, I settled on *Step to This* by Nikki Carter. The book was green and had a girl on the cover with two big Afro puffs. The main character’s name was Gia Stokes, and she was a high school student. I was intrigued by Gia’s high school status since I was only in fifth grade. Gia’s friends often did her dirty, but she would always tell them about themselves in a feisty manner which I enjoyed. When I finished reading *Step to This*, I searched Nikki Carter’s name on the catalog computer because her writing had captivated me. I was stoked to find that *Step to This* was a part of a series called *So for Real*. There were three more books in the series! I read them all within a month and anticipated another novel to be published because the last book ended with a cliffhanger. I did not know if Gia wanted to be with Ricardo or the new boy she had met on the plane to college. Again, I found myself back at the catalog computer searching Nikki Carter’s name. Around this time, I

discovered the joy in finding book series. After I read the *So for Real* series, I had to find another series because I had become a book fiend. I always had a book in hand; I would sometimes read my book for enjoyment over the book I was supposed to be reading for class. My parents had to turn my light off without my approval because I would continue to read throughout the night, not caring how late it got. Reading had become my favorite pastime.

Seventh grade is when I stepped into the big leagues. I read a book over 300 pages long. I read *Twilight*. Bella and Edward captivated my whole life. I became obsessed with each character, losing sleep trying to retain all the details Stephenie Meyer provided. Her descriptive writing made me feel as if I was actually in Forks, Washington, going on adventures with Bella Swan. After reading *Twilight*, I had to read *New Moon*, then after *New Moon*, there was *Eclipse*, then finally *Breaking Dawn*. The periods in between each book made me gloomy because I did not know what was happening with Bella and Edward. I was let down this time by the library catalog because every copy of the *Twilight* saga was in the hands of another reader. While I waited for the library to email me that my requested book was in, I would read other single-story books. I was an avid reader, so I had to have a book in my hands at all times.

Reading has become something I love to do. Although my parents influenced me from a young age, it was actually a pleasure of mine to read. Whenever I was out, there was a book in my hand. I would read day and night without skipping a page. I got a thrill out of each book I read and went on many adventures through the characters I read about. Reading never seemed like a tedious task that I was forced to do. Reading is one of my favorite forms of entertainment and has opened doors for me to travel to places without actually leaving my bed.