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# Self-reflection on My Experience as a Writer in My English I Class

## Self-Reflection

English I was more than I expected. When you come from middle school with all A's and the confidence that you will reach the stars, you would think that English I in high school would be a breeze. But I was wrong. It seemed like a dream in the first few weeks of school, but once the first quarter ended, the paperwork started piling up. I would have never foreseen the work and the feeling of failure that would come to pass. Every paper seemed like a brick wall, a standing obstacle between me and my academic success. As each assignment became increasingly harder, I felt it more difficult to climb over these "walls," whether it be a simple reading question or a critical analysis paper. When you analyze the works that I included in my portfolio, you will notice that I have not been able to climb over all the "walls" that I encountered. But I've realized that my success has always been dependent on my feelings on the assignment, the difficulty of the task at hand, and my skills as a writer. My writing skills seem to be premature, but the more works I complete, hopefully my writing abilities will grow. (If I may, I never really understood how to establish a thesis statement.)

My experience as a writer has grown quite a bit over this school year. I have never written a critical assessment paper, self-reflection, or other papers that demanded more deep thought than a basic story synopsis. I have answered critical answer questions, but not a whole paper. I feel kind of foolish not having that kind of experience before going to English I. But as the final days of English I fade away, I can at least look back in some dim sense of achievement.

I was introduced to a wider array of topics and ways to write a paper. I reestablished in myself the basic fundamentals of writing, including making specific connections, being less vague, etc.

A prime example of my experience at the beginning of English I would be my first common assessment on my summer reading book. Comments show that I was not effective at making specific connections, and that my argument on the topic was simplistic. My experience as writer shows a sign of growth in my essay for Pre-CAPT. Comments show that I was more thorough and more specific. Overall, my experience as a writer over these ten months has improved my writing capability, but honestly I haven't made as much progress as I wanted.

To tell you the truth, I felt as if I haven't made much progress. Based on all the "red-ink" on my papers—the correction ink wasn't necessarily red; it's just an expression—I don't feel like I

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made a lot of, if any, progress. For example, on my paper on facing adversity in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the main comments included misplaced or a lack of supporting quotations, as well as vague material and a poor conclusion. Later on in the school year when I wrote a paper on the duality of power in *Animal Farm*, I still made the same mistakes. I don't understand why I made the same mistakes, and I'm not quite sure how to fix them.

As you may know now, I had some difficulty in English I. The assignments here and there were okay, but there was this one assignment that especially gave me trouble. The piece that was the most challenging was a paper on facing adversity on *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. It seemed very challenging to me because it was rather difficult writing a paper that required me to think critically about a book I disliked and couldn't "sink into." I found the book tedious and uneventful, with no offense to the author, Maya Angelou. When I feel out-of-sync with the book I have to write about, it is hard to come up with ideas. That was what made that piece extremely challenging.

My time in English I wasn't "a walk in the park," but there were some pieces that were actually agreeable. My favorite piece was the Pre-CAPT Question #2. I enjoyed it greatly not because of the grade, but because it was straightforward. It demanded critical thinking, but it balanced that aspect with a linear answer. Basically, it was easy. It was probably the best work I did all year. I must have had a great amount of motivation.

I've learned so much throughout this school year and in English I. I've made some improvements, but I've realized from my experiences and paper comments some areas I can improve. Most of the major areas include making specific connections, inserting better supporting quotations, and establishing strong conclusions. I somewhat enjoyed English I; and I know that if I put more effort in my writing and fulfill these areas of needed improvement, I will hopefully succeed and find more enjoyment in English II than English I.

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