



Composition 1 Final Portfolio

Statement of Submission

Dear Reader,

I hope that by writing this letter, you can see the a little overview of the papers I have submitted into this portfolio. This portfolio is being created for my English 1301 class at Collin County Community College. In this portfolio, I have submitted the following four essays: a literacy narrative, an article analysis essay, an informative essay, and an argumentative essay. Below, I have written a brief overview of each paper, along with what I feel my strength and weakness is within each paper.

My purpose in writing the literacy narrative “The Escape” was to give the audience a background on why I love reading as much as I do. I believe that this essay could be improved in terms of my vocabulary. The words I use throughout are probably not up to college level, and I hope, in time, I will be able to overcome this. I do believe, however, that my strength is providing a very detailed description of the event which shaped the way I feel about reading. I do believe that by reading, the audience will be able to put themselves into my shoes and fully understand why I love reading.

My purpose in writing the article analysis essay “Death by Dignity” is to show the audience how the author uses different strategies in order to get her point across. I believe this article could be improved by more clearly providing the names of each of the different strategies the author uses.

Analyzing articles is not a strength of mine. I believe, however, I correctly examined her writing and was able to provide a clear picture to the audience as to why she used each of the strategies, and how they helped her article overall.

My purpose in writing the informative essay “Batman: The Truth” was to inform the audience of how a well-known superhero became a superhero. I believe that my weakness for this paper is that it is not quite long enough. I wrote it in a rush, and I know I didn’t fully go into Batman’s background. However, I believe that I still provided the audience enough information about Batman for them to understand why he came Batman. My strength in this paper is that I stayed plainly informative and did not turn this paper into an argument.

My purpose in writing the argumentative essay “Batman’s Impact on Society” was to argue that Batman is a positive role model for children. My weakness on this article is that it doesn’t fully show every reason Batman is positive or counterargument people make towards him. However, I believe, as my strength, that I clearly provided examples of how Batman or the idea of Batman is positively affecting people across the country, and how the counterarguments do not hold up.

I have put a lot of time into each and every paper. While, I am still not completely satisfied with all of the papers, I am satisfied with the overall project. I hope that this letter has given you a little insight into the papers provided below. I am satisfied overall because these papers reflect me as a writer right now. Although I need more experience, and will get that in time, I hope you see the hard work I have put into each essay. I hope you find each paper interesting and informing.

Sincerely,

Samantha Mendez

Enclosures (4)

Essay 1: Literacy Narrative

The Escape

I'm sitting at my grandpa's dining room table, feet dangling above the ground, eating the first meal I'd eaten all day: bean soup. My brother and I were quiet as we shoved spoonful after spoonful of soup down our mouths. I had just shoved another overflowing spoonful of soup in my mouth when my grandpa's front door burst open. There stood three furious adults: my uncle, my dad, and my grandma. They ran in, grabbing my brother and I and dragging us out to my grandma's little blue Thunderbird, buckling us in, before turning to yell at my mom. I watched them from the back window trying to understand why they were so angry, why my mom was crying, and why we were locked into the car. Before I could start to answer these questions, my uncle, grandma, and dad, were climbing back into the car. As they started it up, I kept watching my mom wipe tears from her face. And as we drove away, I kept watching my mom cry, her figure slowly fading into the distance. After that, everything changed. Papers were signed saying my mom had no legal rights to me, my aunt or uncle would listen in on phone calls when she called, and I really only saw her on holidays and birthdays. I became so angry at my aunt and uncle, infuriated at them for taking away my mom, that I wanted nothing to do with them. I wanted to pretend I lived in a different world, one where I had my mom, I wanted to escape reality, and I wanted to have some excuse- at least for a short amount of time- not to have to talk to them or any of their kids. That is why I started reading.

For as long as I can remember, I have loved reading. It was one of my favorite past times. Now, looking back, I realized how much my mom getting taken away has affected me. When I was younger, I loved reading princess stories. These books I could lose myself in and pretend that I was that princess, going away to live in a faraway kingdom and getting my happily ever

after. In the books, happily ever after always ended with a prince. In my mind, happily ever after always ended with my mom. The more I read, and more storylines I chose, the more I could escape. I just wanted a book that had a life that seemed so normal for my friends- a mom and dad, or just a mom, maybe just a dad at home with them. Why wasn't it that simple for me? I could read and finally have that life. I could open up a book, and in it I would find myself in a house where my mom was in the kitchen cooking, where my dad was in the living room reading a paper. And I'd follow the drama of the book, but I'd be stuck on the image of this picture perfect family, one that I'd never had, and I'd dream and I'd pretend that if I just escaped enough from the house I lived in, if I just escaped enough to another world, then maybe I'd come back to reality, and my reality would finally be the same as my pretend world.

I didn't live in some terrible way. We weren't always wondering if our next meal was going to be on the table, and I didn't have guardians who beat me, yet somehow it just seemed so terrible to me. I hated that I would go to church and have to hear over and over how great my "mom" was at G.A.s or how awesome my "dad" was at the sound for the sanctuary. I wanted to scream at them that they weren't my parents. That my mom lived somewhere, for a long time I didn't know where exactly, and that my dad lived in Dallas, and I got to see him on weekends most of the time. Instead I had to politely tell them the truth and then answer the same question over and over: "why don't you live with your parents?" Could I tell them that my "great" aunt and "awesome" uncle had taken my mom away from me? Could I tell them that my dad was an alcoholic who couldn't keep a job and so couldn't afford us? Or do I just give them a broad statement? I'd usually just say, "It's a long story" and move on. Because, really, how could I explain that without getting the sympathetic looks that I hated getting?

Instead of trying to figure out how to accept that maybe my aunt and uncle were more of a mom and dad figure than I'd ever allow myself to believe, I'd just read. Reading was like opening a world where anything was possible, all I had to do was pick the right book. I could be a princess, an astronaut, a witch, anything with the turn of a page! It was exhilarating! The possibilities for my life were endless! I craved to thrust my head into a book. I was addicted to the thrill that I could be anything I wanted. I could have my mom and my dad, I could have my happily ever after, I could have anything!

And I could escape. My face in a book was the ultimate sign to not bother me. My aunt, uncle, and their three kids knew that if they interrupted me, especially if I was on a climatic page, I'd scream at them to leave me alone. They knew to wait until I got up to refill my drink or grab a snack to actually talk to me. It was the ultimate relief. I didn't have to talk to my aunt or uncle who I saw as monsters for what they did. I didn't have to talk to their kids who were so much younger, more annoying, and who I was constantly jealous of because they had their parents, and no one tried to take them away. Even if I was surrounded by all of them, I could be alone in my book, living this life I always dreamed about.

As I look back, my aunt and my uncle were not these terrible people. The more members of my family I talk to, I finally realize that my mom wasn't able to raise us correctly. We would have probably turned out a lot worse if my aunt and uncle hadn't intervened. Now, looking back, I'm thankful they did. I'm thankful they took me into their home instead of allowing me to go to foster care. However, I'm also thankful that I had felt they had wronged me for so long. If I hadn't felt this hatred towards them, I never would have dived into books the way I did. I never would have let a book consume me inside and out. I never would have been able to lose myself completely inside of a page and feel a true understanding and attachment to the words on the

page. My imagination may have not been as strong as it is now because I would have never needed to imagine myself as the character in the books I read.

I wish I hadn't spent so long hating them. I wish I had given them the benefit of the doubt. I wish I could have seen how what they did truly was in my best interest. On the other hand, I'm truly thankful that my hate and that my messed up life has truly helped me appreciate and cherish every book I've ever read and every book I have yet to read.

Essay 2: Article Analysis

“Death by Dignity”

Doctor prescribed suicide, or assisted suicide, has been a major controversy for many years. Suicide in itself is looked at as someone just giving up, and there are many hotlines in order to help prevent the rate of suicidal deaths each year. However, some people claim that assisted suicide is not a problem; that it is, in fact, to be considered dying with dignity. Whether the person chooses to die dignified because they feel they are too much of a burden on family or they have some tremendous life-threatening disease and see no other alternative. Rita Marker writes a passage about assisted suicide that leaves people breathless and wondering if it really is “dying with dignity” or something worse than suicide-something people may feel they are forced into. By analyzing Marker’s passage about assisted suicide, we can gain insight into the controversy around assisted suicide, the difference one sees between assisted suicide compared to suicide, and a possible effect of legalizing assisted suicide in all states.

Marker starts her paper off with a story: you are at the pharmacy waiting to have your prescription filled when you overhear the pharmacist say “Open each of these capsules. Put the powder from them into a glass. Then mix it all into a sweet beverage and drink it very quickly to cause death” (Marker, “A Deadly Campaign Masked as a Personal Decision”). The story helps captivate the audience’s attention. Her use of vivid details puts the audience into the pharmacy hearing the pharmacist say this. She uses the story and details to convey to the audience how unbelievable and unimaginable it would be to walk into a pharmacy and hear the pharmacist telling another customer how to kill themselves. She then uses the question: “unimaginable?” to clue in the audience on the fact that this type of prescription has been “available in Oregon since 1997” (Marker, “A Deadly Campaign Masked as a Personal Decision”). The question is used to

show the audience that they are not alone in their thoughts of disbelief, and she immediately responds to the question to let the audience fathom the idea that this type of prescription has actually been legal in at least one state for years.

Next, the author talks about a young lady with terminal brain cancer by the name of Brittany Maynard who was planning on using one of these prescriptions to end her life. However, she doesn't bring up Brittany in order to make the audience feel sorry for her or hate her for her decision, she brings up Brittany to talk about the amount of media that has been covering her story even though she is just "one of the more than 40,000 people who commit suicide each year in the United States." She goes to talk about how the media is blowing up around her story in order to legalize this "doctor-prescribed suicide" in every state. There is even a Brittany Maynard fund in order to help raise money to legalize this type of assisted suicide. The author points out the media coverage and the fund to show the audience that this coverage isn't because they want people to know about this tragic story in which a person feels no other choice but death, the media is instead using her story to help them raise money so that more people can get assisted suicide in every state.

To further prove this point, the author talk about how these campaigns are saying that "her death is not a suicide," it is instead "death with dignity" because this "law works well, is abuse free, and contains rigorous patient safeguards." The author points out how this law could be beneficial according to the campaigns in order to show her audience the arguments against her point, in which she quickly counters. Her counter argument includes a story about one Barbara Wagner who was diagnosed with cancer and given a prescription that would slow the cancer's growth. However, her insurance wouldn't cover the "life-extending prescription but that it would cover assisted suicide." This is just one of many cases. The author counters the previous claims

of the campaigns with this to show the audience that although they may think this is a safe choice, it is actually becoming a problem in which insurances are trying to force people into the assisted suicide instead of trying to give them a few more years to live. She then counters the claim that there are “safeguards to protect patients, including the requirement that the patient must knowingly and willingly request the drugs” by saying that there is no way of knowing, after the prescription is provided, that the patient wasn’t tricked or forced into taking it. She counters by saying that to show that these “safeguards” only last so long and that there is no protection once the drugs are provided.

She then ends her article by asking the audience how they would feel if it was their mother who was going to take this prescription because “she was worried about being a burden on you” or if it was their daughter or son. She ends with these questions in order to pull at the audience’s personal feelings. To show them that this may seem like a good idea up until it’s happening to you. Her last sentence in her conclusion is really what pulls everything together and what sends a shiver down her audience’s spine. She uses this line to show the audience that it isn’t about Brittany or anybody else when figuring out to make this law legal or not. What it all boils down to is “whether the laws will be changed to affect how you and your loved ones could be pressured into taking a deadly overdose under the label ‘death with dignity.’”

In conclusion, I think that the author showed the controversy around assisted suicide with some thinking it’s horrible and others trying to claim it isn’t suicide at all, how some see it as ‘death with dignity’ other than suicide, and how a possible effect of legalizing assisted suicide in all state could personally affect her audience.

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Essay 3: Reporting Information

Batman: The Truth

Batman is a well-known superhero. But who is he really? I'd like to take a look at the past and describe how Batman became who he is, and how he continues to be Batman today.

Batman's tale begins with two tragedies. When Bruce Wayne, Batman's secret identity, was very young, he "fell through a hole in the grounds of his ancestral home Wayne Manor and found himself in a cave system that ran under the house full of bats" (Kane, "The Unofficial Batman Biography"). From that moment on, Bruce was terrified of bats and kept having nightmares about one particularly large bat he had seen. The next tragedy happened when he was a little older, and witnessed the death of both of his parents. They were shot in front of Bruce and left to die by a mugger one night on their way home from the theatre. It was at their funeral where Bruce swore to avenge them.

He spent his years after school travelling the world to study from masters of different "crime-fighting skills, including chemistry, criminology, forensics, martial arts, gymnastics, disguise, and escape artistry" (Unknown, "Batman (Bruce Wayne)"). He then returned to Gotham City to set out on his journey of crime fighting.

However, his first attempt failed. He got into a street fight and was seriously injured. It was later that night that he realized he had to disguise himself as something that would cast fear into these criminals. The idea for dressing up as a bat came from his own fear of bats. He overcame that fear and Batman was born.

He partnered up with his first Robin in his second year of crime fighting. They ended up splitting up because Batman didn't want to endanger Robin anymore. He then teamed up with

another Robin who was killed by the Joker. His third Robin, Batman had him get trained by the people he was trained by. In the more recent takes of Batman, like the Dark Knight 2, he faces Bane and ends up retiring to lead an ordinary life.

Batman is different than most superheroes because he has no superpowers. He instead relies on the training he received and gadgets he keeps in his suit such as Batarangs, smoke grenades, throwing blades, grapnels, and so on. He also has a batmobile which can drive itself to meet him and transform into a plane, and a motorcycle.

Another way Batman is different is that he doesn't kill his victims. At least that's how it is in the more recent stories of Batman. He goes out of his way to put the criminals in a position in which the police will find them and handle them the way the law says to. Although this is very righteous in some ways, it could also be the reason why he has so much trouble with his criminals like the Joker, who seems to always get away and come back even crazier than before.

Batman is an ordinary guy who decided to become a hero. He faced a tragedy and then overcame it, and his fear, to protect the city of Gotham from criminals.

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Essay 4: Arguing a Position

Batman's Impact on Society

He's been around for years. He has his own comic book series...a few actually, his on T.V. show, and multiple movies made about him. His name is Batman, and he's a superhero without any powers; a regular guy named Bruce Wayne who runs Wayne Enterprises during the day and saves Gotham City from criminals at night. But what is Batman's impact on society, mainly the younger generation who idolizes superheroes? Is Batman someone we should encourage our kids to learn about by watching movies and reading comic books, or is he a figure that may be putting the wrong idea into children's heads; a human who seems almost inhuman? Batman is a positive influence on our society because he brings encouragement to kids, helps make kids' dreams come true, and is an everyday positive role model for both kids and adults.

Batman has been around for many years, in both movies and comics, as the hero of Gotham City, a fictional city that resembles New York City. He's human with no genetic mutations or superpowers who captures criminals, but never kills them. He's been a hero to many kids and adults worldwide, and, while some may say that he shouldn't be a hero and that he shouldn't be a role model for children, he should continue to be a positive role model for children across the country for many years to come.

The positive role model of Batman can be seen in the life of Lenny B. Roddinson. Lenny B. Roddinson is just an ordinary guy, one you have probably never heard of and probably has not ever affected your life, but for many sick children across the country, this man is their hero, even if they only know him by his alias. Lenny dresses up as Batman and drives around the country in his 'Batmobile' (a black Lamborghini designed to look like the Batmobile, plates and all) and visits kids fighting cancer and other life threatening diseases. He spends approximately \$25,000

a year and signs every boot, hat, and backpack 'Batman' (Haley, "The Cultural Impact of Batman"). Roddinson is these children's hero. He's showing them that there is someone who cares about them, and he's showing them that the person who cares is Batman- a hero in all his movies and comics. A hero who shows these kids that he cares and gives many the hope that they may be losing while they lay in a hospital bed, fighting for their life.

Another example of Batman's positive impact can be seen in San Francisco's 2013 Make-A-Wish project. Around 12,000 volunteers came together to cheer on 5 year old Miles Scott, a boy in remission from leukemia, as he "rescued a woman from cable car tracks, then busted the Riddler's bank heist" (Haley). Miles Scott had an "obsession with comic book heroes" (Cava) and the city helped turn his obsession into a real life story, starring him as Batman. The way the city came together really shows they know how a child's hero can affect him or her. Batman was Miles' hero, and they helped him become Batman for a day to 'save the city.' The city came together and helped make a boy's wish come true for a day, as he became his hero, Batman, for the day.

The last example of Batman's impact on society can be seen through the actions of Christian Bale, the actor who played Batman in the Dark Knight movies. He talked on the phone with 8 year old, Zach Guillot, who had been fighting cancer since he was 5. Guillot's hero is Batman, and a friend got ahold of Christian Bale. Bale talked to Zach as Batman on the phone for 10 minutes, and then sent him a package containing Batman toys, a shirt, and coloring books. Bale saw the impact of Batman on this boy. Batman is Zach's hero, and now, because of Bale, Zach got to talk to his hero during a hard time in his life.

The main question people would ask is why? Why would Lenny spend thousands of dollars to visit sick kids dressed up as Batman? Why would Christian Bale, an actor who played

Batman in *The Dark Knight*, talk to a cancer fighting child on the phone for so long and then send a package? The answer is simple. Batman, unlike any other superhero, is someone these kids can relate to. He's human, unlike Superman who's an alien with superpowers that kids can never relate to. He went through something horrible, and decided to fight. The kids Lenny visits are the same: they're fighting for their life. They can look up to Batman because he's human, and they can relate to his pain, and take in his strength to fight back. It's the same with the boy Christian Bale talked to. Zach had been in the hospital since he was 5 fighting for his life, it's no wonder he looks up to Batman.

However, there are some who think that Batman can have a negative impact on children. One article talks about how Batman could be damaging to boys' self-esteem just as Barbie can negatively affect a girl's self-esteem. Batman "ripple[s] with muscles" (Campbell, Ashley, "Batman Affects Boys in Similar Manner That Barbie Does Girls") which could be showing boys they need to be "strong and tough, and that in order to achieve masculinity, they need to have the unattainable bodies that their favorite superhero does" (Campbell, Ashley, "Batman Affects Boys in Similar Manner That Barbie Does Girls"). However, this depends on the kind of relationship that child has with the superhero. If a child has a parasocial relationship (a relationship in which "one person extends emotional energy, interest and time, and the other party, the persona, is completely unaware of the other's existence.") with the superhero, he may actually feel better about himself when shown a picture of that superhero. However, it has the opposite effect on people who do not have a parasocial relationship with the superhero.

Another article says that encouraging children to watch superhero movies and shows at a young age could be problematic because they may not know the difference between watching

violence and the enacting what they watch. However, it only states that this would be the case for a preschooler around age 3 and 4.

The question remains: is Batman truly a hero that children should idolize? As these articles have shown, Batman could possibly have positive and negative effects, however, he is a hero children should idolize because he's someone we can all relate to since he's human and has been through hardships he has had to overcome. However, maybe Batman shouldn't be introduced until your child hits elementary school and can tell the difference between simply watching violence and enacting what they watch. Parents and society, in general, also have the responsibility to make sure that when discussing Batman as a role model, they should make sure to emphasize his other qualities besides strength that make him an exceptional role model.

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