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***UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE***

*ENGL 1405-01 World Literature - AY2024-T2*

*Learning Journal Unit 1*

*Instructor: Ugwu Lawrence*

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I derive immense satisfaction from the act of reading. Studies indicate that people who read regularly have greater knowledge and better physical and emotional well-being versus those who do not make reading a habitual activity. As a result, avid readers are generally more successful in societal roles and endeavors compared to non-readers (Stanborough, 2019).

Reading has a profound ability to transform and enrich an individual. Immersing oneself in the pages of a book provides exposure to ideas, places, people, and viewpoints one might not encounter in their day to day lives. This opens their mind, fuels their imagination and curiosity, and helps develop empathy by getting a glimpse into the lives and struggles of others. Recent studies have even found reading literary fiction can enhance a person's social skills and ability to identify complex emotions in others.

Beyond the individual, reading has the capacity to positively impact society and culture on a larger scale as well. An informed, literate, and thoughtful population helps strengthen democracy and civic discourse when citizens can draw upon knowledge and understanding from books to form their political opinions and engage with complex policy topics. Reading also unifies groups of people across boundaries of geography and time periods. Book clubs, libraries, and literature festivals provide community gathering spots to come together around a shared joy of reading the same materials. And stories stand the test of time to give people a sense of connection across generations – for example, the way Shakespeare's tales of love, tragedy, and triumph still resonate with audiences today.

Most importantly, the information, creativity, and innovation conveyed through the written word drives forward progress on societal levels. Nearly all major advancements can find their origins in books, research journals, and other texts that have allowed information to be widely disseminated to spark new discoveries. Milestone scientific breakthroughs side-by-side

important cultural works have been preserved and spread because of the power of literature. From philosophers of Ancient Greece questioning how to live a virtuous life to modern pioneers merging innovations of the Digital Age and technology to tackle today's problems – the treasure trove knowledge channeled through reading serves as the foundation for the way societies have developed throughout history. Although intangible, the insights, wisdom, and cutting-edge breakthroughs emerging from books and reading have undoubtedly propelled advancement more than any other human endeavor.

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Reference:

Stanborough, R. J. (2019, October 15). Benefits of reading books: For your physical and mental health. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-reading-books>

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