

Student sample draft

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The fine line between feeling at home and belonging to that place

Does sense of belonging come with a sense of being at home? Many people experience a sense of loneliness when moving into a new country even when they may feel at home. The Article "Last year, Canada became my home. Feeling like a Canadian will take a bit longer" by Sindhu Mahadevan, was published by CBC on January 29, 2023. In this article, the author familiarizes the audience with the problems immigrants like herself may face when moving to a new place.

She also establishes the difference between feeling at home and a sense of belonging.

Mahadevan's article is well written because it is relevant, has concrete evidence, and is accurate.

Summary

Mahadevan says that whenever someone asks about her being a Canadian, her mind jumps straight to the description of her immigration status, although the question may be one of belonging. She moved to Canada in late 2021 but still struggles to find a natural attachment to the country. She contrasts her experiences in America with Canada and feels that even though the Americans were welcoming, the American Immigration System alienated her. Moving from America to Canada changed her life significantly, even if the process was nerve-racking. Mahadevan finally feels at home in Canada but still struggles to shake her anxieties of estrangement. In the end, however, she seems confident and hopeful that someday she will leave her worries behind and will finally be able to feel a sense of belonging.

Critique Response

Accuracy

This article is well written because it is very accurate. The author describes the hardships and the culture shock that many immigrants may go through immaculately with good use of her personal experiences to justify her claims and establish the difference between a sense of belongingness and a sense of being at home. For Example: Mahadevan says:

I befriended many warm, generous Americans and invested effort to understand American culture, politics, social issues, and history. But while the Americans I met made me feel welcome, the U.S. immigration system never let me forget that I was not an American. In its words, I was a "non-resident alien" — and if the terminology alone wasn't sufficiently alienating — the system's policies, politics and my interactions with various agencies provided regular reminders of my outsider-ness. (Mahadevan, 2023, para4-5)

The great use of such official terms to explain her experiences makes this article accurate and very interesting to read. The readers get accurate information without any bias and makes them trust the author's writing. This also reflects in the social and economic report article "Self-Reported loneliness among recent immigrants, long-term immigrants and Canadian-born individuals" which reports that:

A previous study argues that longer-term immigrants may become more accustomed to the cultural norms and customs in their destination-country but may also experience

weakening ties with their country of origin, contributing to feelings of loneliness (Wu and Penning 2015). (Stick et. All, 2021, para7)

This shows the readers that getting accustomed to a culture does not provide a sense of belonging. This helps the reader to understand that it may take several years to get accustomed to the new culture yet lack a sense of belonging. Moreover, it helps potential immigrants to know what to expect. It also helps the host countries introduce changes for the immigrants to make them feel more welcome, making this transition smoother. These similarities between the primary article and the research show that the write-up is exceptionally accurate and provides readers with a clear and unbiased view of the situation. Good accuracy increases the author's credibility and prevents widespread misinformation.

Appeal to Emotion

This article is engaging because the author makes good use of appeal to emotion. The author herself is an immigrant and uses delicate details and examples that relate to the readers and hence appeal to their emotions. For Example, Mahadevan says:

The pandemic compounded the frustration, leaving no shortage of pensive days. I would open Google Maps and trace the route from my own blue dot in Bloomington, Ill., to Toronto. The promise of freedom and belonging felt distressingly out of reach.
(Mahadevan, 2023, para4-5)

From my personal experience, I can approve that this is a feeling that a lot of the Canadian Immigrants may have gone through after the COVID-19's impact on immigration. To further build upon this connection, the author uses an example of celebrating rituals and festivals.

Mahadevan gave an example of a house-warming ritual she performed in her new house in Canada. According to 'Alone in Canada' a self-help guide by the CAMH, celebrating festivals

and performing rituals can help reduce the sense of loneliness(para11). Festivals and occasions being very inclusive tie a community together, hence being very emotionally appealing. The author's idea of using them in her article further boosts the attractiveness of the article and helps the readers feel represented. This ultimately strengthens the reader-writer relation, exhibiting superior use of appeal to emotion.

Relevance

This essay is also effective because it is relevant. Canada is one of the most desirable destinations for immigrants, making articles such as Mahadevan's of great relevance. In this essay, Mahadevan talks about her move to Canada from America and the nuances that came along with it. She says:

I went from living in a country with which I had forged a relationship but resisted accepting me to a country that I wasn't emotionally connected to but had already accepted me. (Mahadevan, 2023, para9)

This is of great importance to the potential Canadian Immigrants and the Canadian Government. Examples such as the author's is a testimony to Canada's friendly attitude towards its immigrants and provides the reason why Canada is a top pick amongst immigrants. A peer reviewed article "The Foundations, Limits, and consequences of Immigration Exceptionalism in Canada" states that:

The decision by the current Liberal Party government to further increase immigration targets over the next three years, from 401,000 in 2021 to 421,000 in 2023, met with almost no criticism from the opposition Conservatives and New Democratic Party (NDP), despite having been announced in October 2020, in the midst of the “second wave” of the COVID-19 pandemic (Harris 2020b). (Triadafilopoulos, 2021, para2)

This essay resonates with the author’s statement and proves the relevance of her article to the readers while attracting immigrants to Canada. This may also help readers to decide what country would be right for them in case they had to migrate. Therefore, the article is relevant and hence is a worthwhile read.

Conclusion

The difference between a sense of belonging and feeling at home are not easy to make sense of. The author, however, is successful in establishing this difference in her essay with quality use of appeal to emotion, good accuracy. Her essay is also relevant to the desired audience and the Canadian government, and her article is truly a worth the time read. This article helps the readers to get an insight of the Canadian immigration experience and finally establish the difference between a sense of belonging and being at home. The sense of belonging comes from within and can take time, but feeling at home only requires a person to get used to the culture, accepting the changes. However, the community can have a great influence on the sense of belonging and can change the experience drastically.

References

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