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Personal Literacy Statement

I have a love-hate relationship with writing. I’ve always liked math and science because they felt concrete to me. In math, there are rules to follow and formulas to remember and it just makes sense. Sciences can seem a bit less concrete, but still, it makes sense. English on the other hand is subjective and has all sorts of rules that contradict each other and may or may not be rooted in a method or formula. Maybe the guy who came up with the word “weird” forgot about the “i before e” rule, but who cares, it stuck! As time progresses, I enjoy writing more than I used to though. Perhaps because (for the most part) the writing I do is either some sort of lab report, or I’m only writing for myself.

I used to despise English class. As a middle schooler, you never have anything unique or particularly insightful to write about. Even the idea of writing a piece that was self-aware, cutting edge or meta would have gone right over my head. I think part of my lack of interest in writing stemmed from my incredibly boring life, and dull imagination.

In high school, I found labs and research papers to be fairly interesting. I liked that there was a set structure to them, and that it didn’t matter as much how they were written, as long as they contained the appropriate content. My teachers also started to introduce ideas like theme, motif and symbol. I could never seem to recognize when a color was just a color, or when it was really an underlying motif.

Now I can at least appreciate some of those silly grammatical rules, and maybe even a touch of symbolism in a piece. I think proper grammar, which is probably hard to find these days, holds value in its ability to create unambiguous meaning. Spelling, word choice and structure are equally important in my eyes. Then there are the more subtle things, that sometimes escape me. Niche cultural and historical references along with those dreaded motifs can be hard to identify, and even harder to come up with. At times I even feel as though the author used a thesaurus to use abstruse words which are only meant to befuddle and obfuscate the meaning of an already labyrinthine sentence. Despite the challenges that English poses to me personally, I hope that I can gain more appreciation for it and become a better reader and writer in the process.