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Far from the continent of United States, I was born and raised in Shenzhen- a developing city at the Southside China. I began to speak and learn my native language, Mandarin, at a very tender age. Even before I entered the pre-school, I already recited hundreds of poems and idioms because my grandfather was a famous schoolmaster. Under his influence, I studied the quintessential literary works of the Chinese poets such as Li Bai and Bai juyi from the time I was able to spell words. I was endowed extraordinary talent and it was never difficult for me to write in professionally with a growing age. I could embellish the semantics in my first language. I easily topped in every Chinese writing competition in which I took part. Every time when the teacher gave me a topic, I always penned the essay with flamboyant words and idioms. All in all, for a long time, writing was as piece of cake for me and never did I face any hindrance.
Just after my 18th birthday, I packed up my stuff and embarked upon a new adventure. After an almost 14 hours flight, I arrived in a new country to start my college life. Now, for the first time in my life, writing seemed to be something beyond my realm of expertise. I had never got a chance before in my life to communicate and study in English. I felt like I am too naïve to pursue my ambition and the language barrier was a serious impediment. During the first couple of weeks, speaking English fluently was a big task for me, not to mention writing in the language. Although I had literally started to learn English from my 1st grade, the skills in every aspect of English were not compliant with the native speakers. Even after the 7th grade we struggled with the basic phrases such as “ How many is it?” Back in China, we used to write essays in some particular formats as instructed by the teacher. We had no intention to think about the semantics as our brain worked on a formulaic structure of writing. It was when I took class at Purdue, that I initially discovered how bad my English was, particularly in writing and speaking. I was determined to overcome the crisis and tread on the path toward my goal. To achieve this goal, I started to read English novel and fiction. My inception in reading in my second language was with ‘ The Harry Potter collection’. Then I continued with ‘ Twilight’ and finally read the more complex work, ‘ The Lord of the Rings’. After each time I finished reading a book, I could understand that my vocabulary was getting better and I was getting more familiar with the semantics. At the end of my freshman year, I got B in com114. Even though the grade was not good enough, it meant a lot to me. However, there still existed a big gap between me and the native speakers.
Leaving behind the success which I got from my native literary works, I encountered tons of difficulties during the writing process in English. Till now, the ways to properly comprehend the meaning and rightly choose the suitable words bothers me sometimes. Yet, writing is something I find extremely fascinating. It is during the writing process when I experience that I am thinking in two different logical systems in my mind. Through participation in writing in English, I shall achieve expertise over time and thus enrich my knowledge. I remember and take inspiration from an idiom which says ‘ We must learn to walk before we can run.’