

The underestimated importance of reading essay sample



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For thousands of years, reading was considered a worthy activity and books were highly valued. Books are carriers for ideas. This is the reason why, thousands of years ago, some books were praised while others were subject to be burned – often together with their authors. However, nowadays in the ever-accelerating pace of life, people experience lack of time for such a thoughtful activity as reading. They are content with the raw half-stuff provided by the television and other mass media. There is no need to mention the sort and quality of the broadcast information. In its turn, reading has always been an activity which contributes to personality development and is difficult to overestimate.

I remember one conversation with an acquaintance of mine. This conversation totally convinced me of the importance of reading, especially for modern youth. As we spoke, he only retold the content of popular TV shows, but he couldn't keep the conversation on other topics that I tried to start. Suddenly, it turned out that he was completely unfamiliar with the works of even the most famous authors in world literature. When I expressed my astonishment about this fact, he answered that he never read books at all. He said it was a boring and obsolete occupation. He seemed to be sincerely surprised why someone would want to read a book, when there were other ways to receive information such as from the Internet or television.

Of course this case is extreme, but to my mind, not too rare among modern young people. When perceiving information that is already processed and digested, one cannot develop crucial traits that reading induces, such as critical thinking, erudition and imagination. Critical thinking is, perhaps, the

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most important since it implies the ability to decide, what to believe and what to ignore. This skill is especially useful in the modern world where a surplus of information exists. Without critical thinking, a person is more likely to take everything that they are exposed to for granted. When reading, people start intrapersonal communication, constantly analyzing and reflecting on the material, applying it to themselves, and finally forming an opinion towards the comprehended data. At the same time, media often transmits information in a predetermined way, thus impeding individuals from interpreting it.

Erudition is another important trait that a person can develop with the help of books. Erudition means extensive knowledge. It is one of the key factors that make people interesting. Erudition helps to establish communication, since an erudite can keep a conversation on a wide range of topics. Being a polymath also means knowing how to act in unusual situations, or at least implies general familiarity with them. For example, a person fond of reading adventure novels may put on a bold face if lost in the woods, and from books, they can learn basic knowledge on how to survive in the woods.

Finally, reading develops and boosts imagination, which is one of those traits needed in all spheres of life. Imagination is a capability to form sensations even when they are not perceived through the senses. It is a form of creativity that is closely linked to the ability to prognosticate the consequences of making decisions, inventing something new or creating art work. Reading enhances imagination, since a reader has to envisage characters, places and events depicted in the book. Obviously, television

cannot contribute to this skill, since it transmits images that were prepared in advance; hence, depriving one's mind from mental food.

Based on the aforementioned arguments, the benefits of reading can be easily seen. Its role in the development of an individual can hardly be overestimated. People who have solid intellectual ability are more interesting to communicate with, more creative and they experience little or no difficulties when forming and expressing their own opinions. As for me, I prefer reading to perceiving already processed information. Of course, I don't mean that watching TV or browsing the Internet are worthless occupations. On the contrary, much interesting and useful information can be found by means of modern technologies. It is just a matter of balance. Watching only TV can make you dull and reading too much can turn you completely bookish. Personally, I would recommend that everyone read at least one new book per month and then, after a period of time, evaluate changes in the world outlook. I am sure that these changes will definitely occur and that they will be positive.

* Narrative/ story

My Unusual Vacation

Travelling has always been a passion of mine. Being a photographer, I find seeing new places, meeting new people and getting to know different cultures, exceptionally inspiring. By the age of 32 I had already been to the majority of exotic places: the Emirates, Ethiopia, Turkey, India, Laos, Thailand, Japan, Egypt, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia and Cuba. So, when a friend of mine who was working as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Ukraine

invited me to visit him for a couple of weeks, I thought: “ Why not?! I do not know what to expect from this country since I know very little about it. So, it will definitely be an interesting experience!” And I was so right about that.

Ukraine turned out to be completely different from everything I have seen so far. A post Soviet Union country, it is still struggling to build a developed society. But, being a photographer, I was far more interested in nature, people and sites, than in politics. Ukraine appeared to be a beautiful, even gorgeous country. Being slightly smaller than Texas, it is extremely diverse and is full of natural wonders that take your breath away. Kyiv, the capital city, appeared unexpectedly well-groomed, green and wealthy. Lots of bridges across the Dnipro River, a great number of beautiful parks, a couple of botanical gardens, and many, many flowers everywhere you go. A lot friendlier than you would think. Next we went to the western Ukraine with its own peculiar culture and atmosphere.

The Carpathian Mountains are gorgeous and very authentic, with small distant villages and little country houses that seem like the progress will never reach them. An amazingly romantic place! I had been there in late May, but my friend says these mountains are beautiful all year round – a great hiking spot for spring, a beautiful tent camp landscape for summer and autumn, with tiny fast mountain rivers that amazed me with their pureness, and a couple of perfect skiing resorts that do not yield to the Austrian or Canadian ones even a tiny bit. People of Western Ukraine amazed me as well, especially the elderly – very smiley, very positive and very active.

The west was basically the first place to which my friend took me, and it made me fall in love with the Ukraine completely. From the Carpathians we travelled to Lviv - a gorgeous medieval city that is somewhat similar to Prague yet is very special in its atmosphere: 800 year old castles, wooden churches, gothic catholic temples and palaces, flowers at every corner and on every window seal, original block pavement streets of the Old City (Stare Misto), and lots of people in beautiful national clothes - vishivanki (embroidered white shirts). Lviv is a magical city and it fueled me with inspiration to see the rest of the country.

Next my friend took me to Zaporizhzhya - an Eastern city with an impossible to pronounce name and two thousand years of history. The city is built on two banks of the River Dnipro, and has an island in the middle - Khortitsa - the biggest river island in the world. The place is very spiritual - no wonder that so many centuries ago the wild tribes of skiffs and sarmates, and later the cossaks (famous Ukrainian soldiers of 1400-1600's, that had a long moustache, a long forelock and wore wide red trousers), built their fortifications on the Khortitsa Island. The City itself seemed to me to be still very Soviet-like in its spirit and atmosphere, so it was interesting for me to take photos of their famous dam with the huge Lenin statue pointing at it, and the factories that were once the pride of the USSR and, amazingly, still successfully function for export purposes nowadays.

Our next stop was Crimea - a big heart-shaped peninsula that is washed by two seas - the Black Sea and the Azov Sea (the shallowest in the world, by the way), has beautiful mountains, fantastic crystal caves and scenic deep lakes. It's a very picturesque place - so green, so virginal, so unlike anything

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I have seen before. The pictures I took at the Crimea I consider to be one of the best series in my photo collection. We also attended a wine festival in Koktebel, where they make pretty good local wine, visited Askania Nova – a marvelous biosphere reserve sanctuary established in the nineteenth century. A great chance to get a scope of what the country's nature was like some twelve hundred years ago, still very much unpopulated and virginal.

There was one thought that didn't leave my mind, even for a second, during the whole time I spent in Ukraine: "I cannot believe that this country and its fantastic nature, history and culture are so unknown to the rest of the world!" Ukraine was a true discovery for me, and one of those times when your expectations are nothing like what you really see. I have visited this country two more times over the past three years, and every time my impression got fuller and fuller. If you should ask me what place I can recommend to those avid and blasé travellers who seem to have seen it all, I'd say without a second of hesitation: "Go to Ukraine! Whatever you will expect – this will still amaze and astonish you!" Speculative

* Nature

I remember lightning

I remember lightning.

I remember lightning and I remember fear and trembling, light and dark, rain and earth, terror and awe. Here, under this tiny wooden pavilion protruding conspicuously from amidst a wide expanse of trimmed green, I am insignificant; here I am nothing. Expendable. I remember birds at my feet, grass and rain and thunder and misty fog and I remember fear, afraid that at

any moment a spear of burning hot white glass would cause my heartstrings to break and shatter into 4 thousand and forty four pieces while I cried my eyes out into the rocks and mud. I remember the pavilion slowly becoming a hiding place where I imagined myself being found and struck at any moment, and I remember searching up into the vast grey-blue-purple-black sky and asking God who He was and how much power it took to create such an orchestra. How much power He might then graciously bestow upon me to move my legs towards a place far away and never look back; taking my time in a sort of awestruck worship, yet frantically screaming with the same sighing breaths.

I remember looking down at someone's sliding, muddy feet as they shook and slipped and attempted to run, and I remember realizing that they were mine and that my flip flops were going to break any second if I didn't take them off. I remember the rivets of water falling into my blinded eyes and on my cheeks and my tears and my faltered heart and my stomach that was steadily decomposing into a meager pile of potatoes and hamburgers and whatever else we had last night for camp dinner. I remember the smell of burning wood everywhere, enticing my dry mouth to water and my runny nostrils to cease; causing my eyes to widen and my ears to open upon every crack of drumming thunder. I remember miraculously finding my way to the edge of the green ocean, only to fall back down once more in a new, less dangerously close area, and open the Word of the Lord. My fingers somehow found their way to the pages, shaking and dancing; attracted to the pull of Psalms full with praise and wonder-filled admiration.

I remember opening my mouth to dryly read the inked lines and I remember hearing the sound of wet, soaring music emerge instead. Fighting to sing louder and louder the words on the pages, to hear David's cries in my own mouth, on my own lips on my own tongue in my own heart. Crying and smiling, laughing and weeping, worshipping yet hiding and taking in everything around me with wide mermaid eyes. I remember lightning and rain and fog and thunder and grass and burnt treetops and mud and earth and scripture and singing and crazy laughter, but most of all I remember the line that was crossed as I fell in love with the Creator of the Universe the Author of Life the Beginning and the End and this was proof to me that perfect love drives out all fear.

* Critical

Is It Ever Too Late to Study?

Ninety-seven years old - this is the age of the oldest university graduating student in the world, who has just recently received a Masters in Clinical Science - 76 years after attaining his first university degree. Australian, Alan Stuart, already has four degrees and is a qualified dentist, surgeon prosthodontist, lawyer and general practitioner. And it does not look like the man is going to stop at that! Some will probably say he is crazy, and might have a point. However, as extreme as this example may seem, the question remains highly debatable: "Is it ever too late to study?" This essay aims to investigate the issue and analyze possible obstacles that may come in the way of one's desire to study in the latter stages in life.

Studying is one of the main tools used to get to know a variety of things, notions and the world around us in general. It is the basic channel of perception of reality, which we otherwise would be unable to understand. So, ignoring the opportunity to study would basically be equal to ignoring the whole world that surrounds us. Therefore, it stands perfectly to reason that furthering one's education after graduating from high school is a common tradition in the American society - and one that is highly encouraged by the community too.

Higher education in the United States is viewed as a wise choice to invest in your future and gain an asset that will always be your strong-hold when climbing up the social ladder. At the same time, college and university education in the United States is extremely pricey, so many high school graduates simply do not have an opportunity to continue their education right away. Therefore, when a person has already achieved something in life, is standing on both feet and knows exactly what it is they want to deepen their knowledge in, they have all the right to continue at the point they once stopped at - and become a university student.

With the American education system being arguably a very flexible one, you do not even have to become a full-time student any more to learn more about the things that interest you. You can simply take a few courses at a certain university, pay the fees and attend the classes for your own purposes. Sure, you will not receive a full-scale diploma for finishing a few courses, but if what you are looking for is the knowledge and the practical use, not the little piece of paper proving you are worthy of something, then this option is exactly the right fit for you.

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Nevertheless, it is believed that after some point in life, it becomes too late for things like being a student. A student in the US is a certain social role that is closely associated with a lot of things other than the actual studying – dorm life, campus activities, student parties, academic honor societies, dances and many more. Choosing to be a student in many cases means that you are willing and able to take on the whole package, or otherwise you risk feeling like an outcast and dropping out of school, even if the classes are interesting and the professors are great. When you consider applying to a specific university after a certain age, when the above mentioned things become of a lesser value to you, look at those institutions that are more flexible and do not require living on campus and fully engaging in the academic and non-academic sides of university life.

Another thing that might get in the way of effective studying after a certain age is your capabilities. Sure, if you decided to finally (or once again) become a student, it is implied that you have the required desire to learn, listen and absorb the knowledge. However, unfortunately, sometimes just the desire itself is not enough. It is a known fact that with age, our memory, attention and ability to learn may decrease greatly, so studying may become a much bigger challenge than it could have been once, when you were younger. At the same time, if you have the dedication, motivation and persistence to become a student at a later stage in life, I suppose these traits will greatly help you to achieve your aim as well.

All in all, studying is a necessity rather than a privilege, so it should never be too late to study, if a person really wants to. There is no doubt that setting an expiration date on one's opportunity to learn and follow their dreams <https://assignbuster.com/the-underestimated-importance-of-reading-essay-sample/>

would be wrong. So, despite all the analyzed obstacles that may possibly come in the way of studying, they should not become an insurmountable barrier in the path of one's self-actualization.

* Didactic

* Periodic

A Memory of Things to Come

by Robert Albright

We move, wandering slowly through a dance of self-reference, Past ancient territories of light and shadow.

Here branches a corridor,

Beckoning our tentative steps with glimpses of a memory of things to come.

Familiar as only the startlingly new can be,

The way requires our attention and revives a sense of wonder that recalls endless vistas of possibility.

Ancient rhythms well up from places long forsaken or seldom acknowledged.

The way ascends as it descends to the depths of shared meaning. Blinded by the intensity of new-found sight,

We improvise the universe, externalizing our perceptions

And forming creation with each breath and tear.

Beauty finds and redefines its definition in metaphors of analogies. Joy dances its illusive gavotte.

Moments approach, have their infinite meeting with us, and depart like

time's arrows. Our actions merge into the symbolic landscape,
Imparting and acquiring meanings tacet and unbidden.

A violent calm penetrates surfaces and appearances,

Raising images and structures from deepest wells within.

Weyoul encompass the infinite and begin to plumb its self-similar depths,

Finding archetypes' mirrors in our unity.