

H1 English Sample Answer | Personal Essay

‘Write a personal essay on your passion’

‘A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies... the man who does not read lives only one’. I think this quote by George R.R. Martin is an accurate summation of why I enjoy reading so much. It is a passion that was instilled in me at a young age by my parents and relatives. Be it Morpurgo or Hawking, I have never read a bad book, or at least never regretted reading it, for each story tells a different truth or teaches an unseen lesson. Be it ‘The Art of War’ or John Grisham, reading about the lives and legacies of other men and women, power and corruption or valour and cowardice has undoubtedly unlocked facets of my imagination that would otherwise be undiscovered.

I began reading at a reasonable age, nothing superhuman. From my best memory, the first book I read cover to cover was called ‘Ribbit Ribbit’. It was such an awe-encapsulating book; I was afraid to read another incase it would sully the experience. Eventually, I moved on in the world and stumbled across Michael Morpurgo. Through Morpurgo’s writing I experienced war, peace, love and hate, all by the age of 7. That is where reading became a passion and when the real fun began. Next, I was reading about James Adams and the CHERUB programme - a child espionage unit. The stuff a 9-year-old me dreamed of, and for a few hours each day these dreams came to fruition. Each book brought a new experience, moulded by imagination and manifested by aspirations.

To imagine a world without books is like envisioning a grey, monotonous society where all we do is exist. In other words, a very boring world. My personality comprises of a thousand different characters, one-liners and quotes. If you were to retract one of those books, the person I am would be irreversibly altered. The same rule applies for every single individual in our world. If you were to take away a single book our world be

irreversibly, perhaps even irreparably changed. Books are, in other worlds, essential for life. They ignite our imaginations and fuel our dreams. This is what excites me about books, the fact that the recipe for success, the missing element, the meaning of it all lays waiting for me in a book I haven't read yet. I hope that one day I will stumble upon that book like I stumbled upon Morpurgo, Sun Tzu, Mark Manson and Terry Hayes, and that things will become as evident to me as the future to Yuval Harari.

I am not a picky reader, I enjoy science-fiction as much as factual history. I must emphasise that each book grants a subtle insight into the complexity of our existence. This is probably the most fundamental reason why reading is my passion. As I grow older, I realise that the book genre means very little. Be it black-holes or Waterloo, I am granted a way forward through the hazy uncertainties of Leaving Cert life. In a year permeated with pressure, 20 minutes of reading before bed can ephemerally alleviate all of the trivial frets and deadline stresses. It is a way to blow off steam; a way to let my imagination run wild and free after sledging through an hour or two of Maths or Geography. Reading grants me the ability to spend hours gruelling at the desk in a dim-lit room because it acts as an incentive. Every minute spent doing something I don't like is a minute closer to something I do. This might seem totally idealistic but that's the value of my passion. That's the value of reading.

I've spoken quite a lot about the value of reading to me and the significance it bears on my day-to-day life. But what about the authors? To me, every author is like the teacher I never had. They are invaluable educators that are selfless enough to share a little piece of themselves in attempt to make someone else's life a little better. In Mark Manson's bestseller, he teaches the unorthodox methods of surviving the modern world. Through his life experiences of opinions, job offers and travelling, I was afforded a moment of lucidity that has altered my thought process since. On the other end of the spectrum, Stephen Hawking entertains the ideas of life beyond earth. These writers have taught me to think outside of the box. Each author encourages their readers to

realise a previously unseen potential. These writers lead the way on the road less travelled.

In conclusion, reading is my passion not because of any character or environment but because of what these characters and environment stand for. Reading allows me to explore deeper facets of my imagination and to alleviate any burdens from the bores of day to day life.