Smith, 1

Thor Smith

Mrs. Rutan

**Directions: While reading, highlight things I do that are worth stealing or mimicking in your own 6 Things Research Paper…**

English IV

22 November 2013

Six Things You Should Know About READING.

Reading is a dying art form; once one of the foremost forms of entertainment, expression, and exploration, books are being quickly replaced by technology galore. IPODs, computers, and the television are part of the modern age. However, the fact of the matter is reading is a social issue of global proportion. Reading should be a skill everyone possesses and enjoys—one way or another—whether it be browsing newspaper articles, or cozying up with a full length novel, and we need to help change how adolescents look at reading in their world today.



1. Reading is a privilege and often undervalued.

We don’t realize how valuable reading really is, and often times we under appreciate it. In 2011, a 98 year old man named James Arruda Henry had “one goal: He wanted to learn how to read” (Newcomb). He was illiterate and in six years time he not only accomplished that goal, but he wrote a book as well. Every day we read things including signs, school work, powerpoints, posters, etc. *What if we couldn’t read?* What if we were in a position—like James Arruda Henry—when our illiteracy challenged our everyday life? There were times in our not-so-distant past when reading was a sign of social and economic status and a heated source of conflict. Slaves weren’t allowed to learn how to read and write; in fact, “the slaves themselves often suffered severe punishment for the crime of literacy, from savage beatings to the amputation of fingers and toes” (“In their own words”). Today Americans need to understand our ability to read is a talent, an opportunity, and a freedom we should never forget—and especially—neglect.

1. Reading is a skill that takes practice

Reading starts in elementary and needs to happen **every** **day**, including in adulthood. Why? Because reading—like many other activities—is a skill that takes practice. To put it in perspective, Louanne Johnson—a published educator—“offered the analogies of basketball” and compared reading to the classic American sport. She would tell her students, “‘You can’t sink a free throw if you never get on the court’” (Johnson), and she is right. If you want to participate in the Olympics, you can’t just walk on their field after sitting on the couch for years—and it’s the same with reading. People need to read ***a lot***, and as much as possible if they want to get good at it. Johnson argues that while “practice doesn’t make perfect…it certainly makes improvement” in the way people read. If you haven’t read in months or years, it shouldn’t be a surprise if it’s a hard or slow process. So get reading!

1. Reading is a national crisis for American students.

This is a social issue of continental portions. While other countries are making huge gains in education today, America is faced with some somber statistics, such as, “only three out of 10 U.S. eighth-graders meet current standards for reading proficiency” (Jones). That’s 30%. *Ouch.* To make matters worse, “The American Institute for Research reports only 13 percent of American adults are capable of performing complex literary tasks” (Gallagher). If students can’t read in eighth grade, they could be in a constant—almost epic—battle to keep up with the reading expected of them in high school, college, and even in their future jobs. America needs a change so we can be proud of our reading skills into our adult lives.

1. Reading should be personable.

Reading has become a chore for many kids today. Often times, students are forced to read books they don’t enjoy, but “struggling readers will blossom if you give them material that is so interesting they can’t resist reading. That’s the trick: finding something so compelling that students forget they are reading” (Johnson). Books are like people, and they have their own personality so it is important to find reading that ***you*** enjoy. Many people agree, “the right book at the right time can ignite a lifelong habit” and reading can “be like a drug in a positive way” (Rich). But, you have to look around and find a personable book that connects to you; you need to “find that book that you really identify with” (Rich). Go to the library, Barnes’n’Noble, Amazon.com, talk to teachers, librarians and friends. Don’t be afraid to choose a book you don’t like and move onto a new one. It may take time, but find a book you are willing and **WANT** to commit to.

1. Reading takes many forms, many genres.

Reading has evolved into so many new mediums, especially with technology, but the important thing is to mix things up. In order “to become a lifelong reader, one has to do a lot of varied and interesting reading” (Gallagher). A little bit of reading everyday—online news articles, printed newspapers, blogs, short stories, poetry—can make a huge difference and can make reading diverse and exciting. However, it is also important to include “a mix of reading experiences, from longer, challenging novels and works of nonfiction to ‘lighter’ recreational reading” (Gallagher), so we can expose ourselves to new forms of reading every day. If you don’t like novels, then start small—read a couple articles online, or read a poem, then maybe you can move onto something bigger.

1. Reading is for life.

If you think your reading career will end in high school, or with your college graduation, you are sorely mistaken. Reading is still going to be a part of your life, whether it is important for your job, or something you use for personal entertainment. Yes, books, literature and other forms of reading are competing constantly with our evolving (often visual) world, but “books have outlived many death knells, and are likely to keep doing so” (Rich). Sometimes TV, music, movies, and Youtube may not cut it, and you may get bored and a good book could help. Plus, like it says earlier, “reading takes practice”(see #3), and if you need to read for your day-to-day job, your career, when you go back to college, or just so you can teach your future children—reading lasts a lifetime.

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Another Introduction Paragraph Sample:

**6 Things You Should Know About WORLD HUNGER.**

Some people enjoy limitless, succulent dishes multiple times a day, while others pray to receive crumbs. Some people have an endless number of options for healthy, nutrient packed sustenance, while others go deprived of essential vitamins. World hunger is still around. The human race has made many advances in technology, science, and medicine, but there are still people starving world-wide. There are misconceptions about world hunger; in order to solve world hunger, people need to know the facts. The population needs to understand all that contributes to world hunger, and they need to make solving it a priority.