

Hong Kong Public Libraries

2021 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition Winning Entry

4D1 Ashly Carel Vega Acuna

My Journey with Reading

When you see the word, "reading", what's the first thing that pops up in your head? Maybe you think of your favourite book, or a news article you read online the other day. Whatever it is, there's no denying that it is an integral part of our day-to-day lives, especially when it comes in many different forms.

Reading is, in fact, everywhere in our daily lives. From street signs to text messages, it's something utilized regularly. Reading isn't only restricted to visual comprehension, it can be tactile like Braille, commonly used by the blind and visually impaired to communicate. Reading is the key to interacting with other people as you can express how you feel to others. Have you ever felt the excitement of receiving a text message from a loved one? It's amazing what a string of symbols can do to the human brain. Other than that, it is also vital in increasing general knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

I used to read a lot of books as a child considering it was highly encouraged by my parents and teachers. I would get a National Geographic Kids magazine in the mail each month, and I loved reading them from cover to cover. A few magazines grew into a collection, and then on my 8th birthday, I received a National Geographic Almanac as my birthday gift. I was so fascinated when I flipped through the pages and explored its contents, ranging from wildlife facts to new technological innovations that year. My interest in science was piqued, and my curiosity only began to grow. I started to appreciate the little things in life a bit more since the book made learning fun.

Whenever the new school year started, I would frequent the library and borrow books that caught my attention. The reason was that my primary school enforced a reading award scheme to motivate students to read. You'd win prizes if you read a certain number of books. This scheme not only pushed me to read more, but it also allowed me to explore different genres. Little by little, reading every day became more natural to me. I would finish five books by the end of each week and have plenty of time to read more. You would always see me holding a book as I roamed the school grounds, and thus, I earned the title of being a bibliophile.

As I grew older, I began to hear the people around me say, "I don't read", and the typical excuse was, "I don't have time". I couldn't understand it at first, but regrettably, I started to relate with them before I knew it. It was admittedly never because of my tight schedule, but rather my unwillingness to sit down and pick up a book. In the span of a few years, the way I viewed reading changed completely. I felt alienated from reading when my passion for it died down, and I, along with others, took reading for granted. Countless hours spent on playing video games and other forms of entertainment only lead me to believe I would be wasting my time on books.

Only until very recently have I been reading more often to make up for the lost time. One book that I read is "The First Phone Call From Heaven" by Mitch Albom. Some citizens in a small town started receiving phone calls from the so-called afterlife. It quickly drew the attention of the public and made headlines. When the unusual happens, there is bound to be sceptical individuals lingering with suspicion, and one of them was a man named Sully Harding. Upon his release from military prison, he

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made it his mission to find out who or what was behind the phone calls from heaven. Whether you believe in the afterlife or not, you would find the book quite thought-provoking and a little emotional. It makes you think about the concept of miracles and whether they happen. Frankly, I was not the type of person to read this kind of book, but my friend offered to lend it to me, and I saw this as an opportunity to get back to reading.

If fictional stories or informational books are not your cup of tea, then maybe comics are. Just by searching “comics” online, you would be provided with many different websites to read from, depending on what you want to read. The best part is, there are hundreds and thousands of reading materials online that are free of charge. If you prefer physical versions of books, you can head over to a website called “Book Depository”. You can buy almost any book you want with free shipping! Reading is limitless, and there is bound to be a book out there just for you.

Despite the many reading materials to choose from, instruction manuals are among them that the majority chooses to ignore. Manuals are too complicated at times, and sometimes you just want to jump right in and skip all the obvious steps. Even so, you might be skipping crucial information that you would need in the future. I can say I have undergone these happenings in the past, but gratefully I have learned my lesson. Reading manuals tell you more about the item, and if any assembly is required, it can go much smoother than without reading. Safety also plays a big role here, as you can take precautionary measures to avoid injuries or accidents that may happen in the future. So whenever an instruction manual is included, make sure to read it!

The possibilities with reading are endless, as you can involve reading with anything. My experiences with reading have not always been positive, but it has been unforgettable, to say the least. My perception of reading changed from time to time, but the result came out the same way as the beginning. The various reading materials I explored enabled me to become a more open-minded and knowledgeable person, and my horizons have expanded far and wide.

Comments from the Adjudication Panel

Student's experience with reading is well documented. Well written with fluent language.