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### The Story Behind The Words

I can't speak for many other people, but personally, I don't tend to read or write a lot for pleasure. When I read or write it usually means it is an assignment or something that someone suggested to me. After having read these essays, and having watched the video, I actually have begun to approach reading and writing differently. Each of the different materials has taught me a different way to approach literature.

LaMott actually helped me get started on this essay response. She helped me to just throw words on the page in whatever order, and after a revision or two, it may be something I am proud of. Even the best writers struggle at the beginning of their work. I always used to try and write my final draft while I wrote my first one. I have come to realize, thanks to LeMott, that it is okay to have a poor first draft, because it gives meaning to the other drafts. Without a poor first draft, there can be no improvement.

When I was a junior in high school I had to annotate a whole book as an assignment. I learned next to nothing from that experience. After having read *How To Mark A Book* by Mortimer J. Adler, I learned the reasons behind doing so from a personal perspective. His reasoning behind annotating makes more sense and productive than what I was taught in high school. I may even start carrying a pencil when I am reading something in case I want to jot a note down or underline a sentence.

In high school I read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, but didn't really take much away from it. I learned more about the background of the book, and far more about the author having watched the video. I don't write stories or novels, and probably won't ever write one worth publishing, but the way Bradbury goes about writing a story is not a way that I would think is possible. He says, "The characters speak to me ... they come to me and tell me about their lives." How is that possible? How does a character, which a writer makes up, come and talk to said writer? If that is true, I find that fascinating. This speaks to the great imagination writers have to have, and I respect every single one of them for that. I remember an assignment that I had in junior high of which required me to make up a short story with characters and a plot. All I remember is that my story did not receive a good grade, probably due to my lack of imagination.

These sources all have a little something to do with each other. They all show slightly different ways of beginning a paper or a story. I liked how they all pretty much said that it was their personal way of thinking, and that the reader should find what is most useful and effective for them. After having read the two essays and watching the video I have decided that I will look at literature a bit differently from now on. I will no longer look at it as punishment, but as pleasure. I will read for pleasure more often, and maybe even make a few annotations along the way. I will no longer worry too much about my illiterate first draft, but focus purely on how I can improve from draft to draft. These critical response readings have actually made me look at literature differently, and I will happily approach it with an open mind in the future.