



An Anthology of Personal Narrative Essays
By Seventh-Grade Students from
West Bronx Academy for the Future / 10x243
Bronx, New York

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INTRODUCTION

I Am Someone is an anthology of personal narrative essays and two collaborative poems by the seventh-grade students of West Bronx Academy for the Future. The title comes from a warm-up activity wherein all students participated in completing the prompts, “I am...,” “I was...,” “I’m afraid...,” and “I hope...” thus illustrating their hopes and fears and examining who they were and who they are now. Their collaborative efforts formed one of the poems published here, “I Am Someone.”

For ten days, students honed their writing skills in preparation for the college application essay. They learned about sensory language, paragraph structure, delicious details, vivid verbs, important moments, values, reflection, audience, outlines, revision, and voice. The students examined the poetry of Renée Watson and Daniel Beaty. They engaged with the artwork of Bryan Collier. They listened to performed personal narratives from *The Moth* and analyzed several sample college essays from Johns Hopkins University. Each author and artist studied served as inspiration for students to create their own personal narratives using imaginative language and their own experiences. The essayists of West Bronx Academy for the Future discussed poetry with sophistication and responded to writing samples with complex reflections and individuality. Art in its many forms spoke to the students – this is evident in their brave and vibrant personal narrative essays.

In this anthology, you will find two collaborative poems – “I Am Someone” (mentioned earlier) and “To Graduate from College One Day.” The latter poem was created later in the program as an opportunity to incorporate student learning combined with visions for their future. Working individually, each student developed their essays by defining their core values and identifying an important life moment wherein they recall utilizing those values. They expanded upon their essays through reflection and analysis, taking time to discover what they have learned from their experiences and how they might have changed. Whether you read an introduction or a completed essay, every student challenged themselves to step out of their comfort zones and push past what they initially thought they could achieve. All of the writing in this anthology, whether collaborative or individual, is revealing, reflective, responsive, and resplendent.

This anthology would not have been possible without the relentless commitment of all the teachers. Thank you, Ms. Petrillo, Ms. Santana, Ms. Wannamaker, Ms. Avila, Mr. King, and Mr. Morales, for helping us bring out the writers in these young leaders. This collection is a testament to what is possible when there is inspired collaboration amongst dedicated teachers.

Reflection and introspection, voice and self-definition, these are the skills the students developed during my time with them. Being able to define who we are and how we respond to and live in the world are timeless and powerful skills that will continue to support these students in their development of voice and growth of self. I could not be prouder of their work and dedication.

Samantha LoCoco, Teaching Artist
Teachers & Writers Collaborative



COLLABORATIVE POEMS



I Am Someone

A Collaborative Poem by the 7th-Grade Students of West Bronx Academy for the Future

I'm afraid...

of clowns, commitment, and snakes
rats, small dogs, and possessed dolls
heights, spiders, and darkness

I'm afraid...

of reading, fake people, and being fat
school, scary things, and big animals
of work, tests, getting left back
and the zombie apocalypse coming true

I'm afraid...

of Trump
of getting deported
of North Korea
 sending a nuclear bomb

I'm afraid...

that I won't succeed in life,
that I will put my effort into something
 just for it to fail

I'm afraid...

of myself
of God
of not passing to the 8th grade
and disappointing someone
 I care about

I'm afraid...

of the world ending
of death
of losing all the people I care about
like my sister, my mom, and everyone I love

I'm afraid...

of being alone
having no one on my side
or my parents splitting up
and leaving my siblings and me on our own

I'm afraid...

of my PS Plus running out
that I won't hit 90 overall in 2K17
that I'll lose my PS4
or it will be taken away

I'm afraid...

of things
of nothing
of something
of almost everything

I hope...

I get better grades
and pass the 7th grade
or go back to 702

I hope...

to have an amazing career
and that I'm successful in life
more successful than the people
 that doubted me

I hope...

to go to a good college
and get a scholarship
and become an astronaut
or graduate from Full Sail

I hope...

to move into a beautiful home
or buy my mom a house
and help my family live and lead a good life

I hope...

to be the best goalie
that I get taller
that I win the basketball game on Tuesday
and get sponsored by Microsoft or
 McDonald's

I hope...

I get Rainbow Six Siege
or get my PS4 back to play Fortnite
and that I hit superstar 3 on 2K17
 so I can be a mascot when I face people

I hope...

to become what I want
to stay the same forever
to be someone different in life
or that I can be less shy

I hope...

the day goes faster
that I make it out of the hood with my family
that I become somebody in life
that our community stops the violence

I hope...

to be a good friend
and not fall in the wrong path
to become an artist,
 and say hi to my crush for once

I hope...

to be happy
to be a better person
and to die with no regrets

I was...

IDK
irresponsible and immature
mean, selfish, disrespectful

I was...

short and wild and also nice
weird and confused
loud, a crybaby, childish
and very, very social

I was...

an idiot
so quiet and bored
innocent, a good kid
who wanted to succeed in life

I was...

determined, ambitious
judgmental
and a little stupid

I was...

loud and tired
smarter and important
lazy, happy, and hyper
scared and nervous
in the past

I was...

small and lonely
and really shy
and didn't talk to anyone
but always found something fun to do

I was...

without any thoughts of my own
an independent nerd
who always put doing work
in front of having a good time

I was...

a little brat, a 3rd-grader, a nine-year-old, a kid
one of the tallest people
the youngest in my family
always to myself growing up

I was...

in 702
a bad kid in school
awesome at rapping
and a safety patroller

I was...

born
judging everything I did
a clumsy person
but confident in who I was

I am...

big, tall, and outgoing
shy and one of the shortest
living life with no regrets

I am...

an idiot
bored, tired, and lazy
fat and irrelevant
sarcastic, very smart, and social

I am...

freakin' awesome, helpful, and artistic
trustworthy, nice, and caring
happy-go-lucky
melancholy, #woke, and soulful

I am...

loud, childish, strong, and athletic
happy, hungry, and funny,
a better person

I am...

disrespectful, crazy
a little less rude
full of attitude
and a temper
but a great person

I am...

a dribble god at 2K17
good at Call of Duty
better at basketball, skilled at games,
and a good soccer player

I am...

in 701
a student
a good boy in school
more into my education

I am...

someone who doesn't like being called on
or being center-stage
a loud person who loves to sleep
and keep negativity away

I am...

independent
finding a balance
between work and fun
shy in school, loud outside

I am...

a person
a 7th-grader
a writer

I am someone.

To Graduate from College One Day

A Collaborative Poem by the 7th-Grade Students of West Bronx Academy for the Future

To graduate from college one day,
I've learned to write the personal essay
that shows who I am and challenges I went through
and all the things I know that I can do.

But why do you need the personal essay?
To get into college one day, I say.
It shows who you are, who you want to be.
It describes how the author, in moments, feels free.
You need to write a personal story about yourself,
like how you're excited and nervous and worthy of wealth.
These essays are what show parts of your life
formed from hardships that taught you how to deal with strife.

I'll grab my life by the reins.
I refuse to be afraid.
Going to college is a dream
to get some knowledge in my bean.
I hope to make my momma proud,
and that I don't have to read my essay out loud.

I'm not sure if I will make it, but hopefully, I do.
After college is a career in Dominican food.
I want to be a doctor and graduate
from Columbia University or Michigan State,
Stony Brook, Harvard, or maybe even Yale.
It would be challenging, and I worry I'd fail.
But I won't back down
'cause I won't frown.
Life comes at you one step at a time,
but I'll be fine 'cause I know how to rhyme.
Even if I can't pay for college, I'll study all day.
I will show effort. Just kidding, I like to play.

High school is the mini version of college.
It'll be my road to tons of knowledge.
I'll be more mature in high school. It might be stressful.
To graduate will be exciting and extra special.
I think high school might be difficult, but great.
I might switch to MS 45 or MS one-one-eight.
There'll be Regents and hard work, especially tests.

But when I graduate, I'll be happy. I'll be a success.
I am going to college to get a good job
so that I can be a rich snob.
Because rich snobs can afford to give to charities
to feel a lot of clarity about their wrongdoings in January.
The real world is about taking care of yourself.
It's now your choice, relying a little less on help.

I think life in college is going to be interesting.
I'll meet new people, new teachers, new everything.
Getting into college is hard; my grades have to be high.
And there'll be lots more freedom between my parents and I.
I will be able to do everything for myself. That's my path.
And for those who said I couldn't do it, I'll laugh.

College is like your map to the real world, you'll see.
It brings with it a lot of responsibility.
Although college seems really fun,
I can't wait 'til I'm finally done.
When I graduate, I'll shout and cheer.
It's time to start my new career.
When I finish college, I'll get a nice job.
My family will be so happy, they'll sob.

Hi, future self, you finally made it!
I'm proud of you, hope you never fade from it.
I passed all the grades; I did all the tests.
I walked across the stage. My speech was the best!
I watched and heard everybody cheer.
Now, my future is clear, and I can focus on my career.
I hope you made lots of friends and achieved lots of stuff.
I know that college was challenging and tough.
But did my essay turn out to be good enough?

To graduate from college one day,
you need to write a personal essay.
You need to attend school every day.
You need to work hard and get high grades.
In the end, our futures will be bright
all day and all night.

Class 701



Robbing, Then Failing
by Joel B.

I stole money from my sister when I was seven years old. I was a person with sticky fingers. When I did it, I thought I was going to get away with it. I stole the money because I wanted to buy a toy car. I also stole the money to get revenge on her. At the time, it felt so good. But the reason I really stole it is because my sister had gotten on my nerves that day. So, that day was bad for both of us.

When I took the money, I made sure I didn't leave any evidence. But as soon as I had it, my body reacted strangely like I had robbed the most valuable thing in the world. So, when I touched the money, I felt nervous and scared, but I also felt successful.

I confessed so my sisters wouldn't fight (even though I think it's funny to see my sisters fighting). But I also confessed because my body was reacting to my thievery like I had done something really bad. I felt I was going to die when I stole my sister's money.

I learned that you shouldn't steal money if you know your siblings are crazy for two dollars. But also, if your body reacts negatively, you cannot succeed and should confess. I never stole anything from my sister again. I know that stealing can lead to failing in life and to feeling so guilty.



A personal narrative essay
by Ashley B.

One of the funniest moments of my life that I will never forget is the day my friend fell out of a swing. It will never fade from my memory. It still crosses my mind every once in a while, the sound of laughter, joy, and happiness all in one. Like children on a Christmas morning. A moment like that, you hold the laughter with you as long as it's in your memory.

It was a long, hot, sunny day when my group went on a trip to the zoo. The trip was fun, but that's not what I'm focusing on here. The moment happened after the trip when we were walking back to school, and we passed a park. Since it was still early, Ms. Tyson agreed to let us play in the park for a while, mostly on the swings. But there was

this specific swing. It was like a baby swing that you could put your whole body into. So, one of my friends got in, and my other friend started to push him. But the swing wasn't secure, so he ended up falling out and hitting his jaw. He was okay, but it was hilarious! Everyone started laughing.

Someone even got it on video. I was laughing so hard tears were coming out of my eyes. It was the same for everyone else. You had to be there to understand how funny it was. Imagine the video in slow motion – 10 times funnier. But you're probably thinking, how funny can a fall actually be? Well, this is just one of those moments you had to be there for. It makes me happy now to look back on it because it was a good, fun moment. Maybe even one of the best days of my life. What I learned about my life from this experience was that you should always enjoy good moments. Also, make life as fun as you possibly can.



The Annoying Sibling by Starsky B.

Hey there! I'm an essay, and my writer, Sparky, has an annoying little sister. I know because I saw her rip up one of my little cousins, a piece of looseleaf. She ripped him up and threw him in the trash. When I told Sparky, he avenged my cousin and threw HIS SISTER in the trash! Then, he picked me up and asked if I was okay.

The next day, Sparky was finishing up writing on me to hand into Ms. Petrillo because he had to finish an essay on *Tangerine*, which was four days late and he had to hand me in, or it would be a zero for his grade. But while he went to get something to drink, his sister came out of nowhere and was about to rip me up, but Sparky was ready for her thankfully. He put a bucket of water on top of the door, so when she opened it, the whole bucket of water fell on her head. That's when he came in and laughed. "That's what you get for being annoying and messing with my stuff." Sparky finished writing me and handed me into Ms. Petrillo.

Bottom line, sisters are annoying and disrespectful. You always have to be ready for them and think one step ahead.

Evolution of Life

by Marvin B.

From the day you were born to today, you must “evolve” a lot. Learning lessons on the way, solving problems, with important moments that might affect how and who you are. One specific part of evolution has happened to me (well, it happens to everyone). It has changed me forever.

The older you are, the more you will understand this. You will have felt all of the things I have. But if you are nine years old or younger, you won't get this. When you turn 10, you will learn the truth of the real world. Like puberty. Puberty means big changes in your life. Growing up is hard because the people you love leave, you are alone from now on. You have to face the real world instead of your world. You will learn pain and health. Closer and closer to death and farther away from your childhood.

Evolution is really you growing up into new ages. It has to involve you learning throughout many stages. Many people (if not all) hate this particular stage. It is the worst part of life, and many people will agree with me. It happens to people who are about ten years old and older. At this age, you will face puberty. Puberty is when boys become men and girls become women. Basically, growing up is horrible.



The Void

by Leezbeth C.

Writing. A million tiny words carved into paper. Written in blood, in ink. Substitutable. Vague words strung together into complicated sentences. Fragmented as if they were shards of glass. Every emotion poured into a single letter from the swirl of an author's mind, regardless of which language it is in. Hopes, dreams, and fears scribbled onto scraps for thousands to read. Abandoning that mask. Writers telling fantastical stories so far away from reality. But we feel as real as our created worlds; for writers, they are real. The evil dragon represents a hidden fury. Our characters mirror us. Exhausted, scribbling those thousands of words onto fresh pages, staining through. Through unto skin. Stories are the embodiment of us.

Staring through into the void. It gazes back; our pleas echo into its darkness. Writing to remember and be remembered. Pages longer lasting than a photograph. Eternal. Eternal thoughts, eternal fears, eternal dreams. Entire worlds at our fingertips. We build inside this void. It is chaotic, yet at the same time, it is peaceful. Skyscrapers crumbling at our say so. Children born as we wish them to be. Creation, destruction. They work in harmony together to sustain this realm. Even still, the scales tip. Tipping, tipping, tipping to the edge. Until they fall into the darkness and our realm...is destroyed.

Tearing away at myself as pages consume my being. Tears smudge the words I wish to speak, blurring my truths. Afraid, as tar oozes onto my fingers from my chapters. My safe haven crumbling around me, threatening to bury me alongside it. The walls warp in and out of existence, taking with them my beloved creations, torn to shreds. Who am I? What will I become? Breath catches in my throat. The faces that stare at me from the outside full of thick hatred. It curls around my neck. Red blurs my vision. Hot rage boils my blood. It fizzles out as quickly as it came. Exhausted, I fall to my knees, I curl into a ball, the hatred envelops me. Alone in the void that has now become my hell, at the mercy of my own thoughts that have all left me. Those who I've shared my secrets with. Those who read my stories, heard my truths. Those who ignored my cries, my pleas for help. I am defeated. Why can't I improve? Why am I stuck? Blaming myself, staring out at the faceless crowds who will **never** remember my name.

Through chance, through luck. A light shines in between the crowd, it pushes itself towards me, towards the void I have become trapped in. I wish to grasp it, but my body is too weak to move any longer. The light will burn my hand, the voices hiss beside me, their words filled with venom. My words. A switch is flicked. My eyes close and I leap into the unknown using the last of my courage. I'm falling, but I have never felt more free. The light surrounds me; it is warm, it is calm. My mind is cleared of the hatred. Everlasting memories made as the light guides my hand to the pages. Ideas rushing through my skull, a smile gracing my lips. A feeling of joy, running through my veins. I will improve, I don't need to rush. My work isn't awful. Everything will work itself out in the end.

Change of View

by Michael C.

When I was seven years old, my house was like a playground. I say this because I had a variety of things to do such as being able to go outside to the park to play games, also to go to an arcade, and explore places I had never been before. I also had many toys as a kid like Legos, Hot Wheels, action figures, and Nerf guns, which made my home feel like a playground. It made me feel kind of free.

But after I got older, my house felt sort of like a prison because I had to do chores around the house and my mom didn't give me an allowance. I wasn't allowed to go outside or to new places, and my mom would ground me for a week to a month; and to make it worse, there was nothing to do to pass the time.

Now, my home is like a combination of both because my mom is finally letting me go to the park again to play basketball. She also lets me play on my PS4 all day long. But I still have to do chores, but this time I do get an allowance for doing them. It shows me that I am very energetic, and it also shows me that I aged. By getting older, I started to follow the rules better. But I still have fun.



My Serious Seizure

by Charles C.

Unable to sit still. In a constant state of motion. All aspects of me as a young kid. A four-year-old unlike the others, plagued by curiosity, an explorer with an entire world to discover. To my family I was a pain to deal with, unable to stop moving and running around, whining whenever my family tried to stop me from moving. For my inexplicable urge to strive for exploration and satisfy my curiosity overshadowed my ability to follow instructions.

In a constant state of motion, it became clear that I lived in too small a space. Living in a two-bedroom apartment with my mother, father, and sister, I was always running around the apartment, always trying to have fun, making do with what little

space I had. I was like a car in a parking lot with no parking, always driving around hoping he can find a spot, hoping someone will move out. The pain of trying to keep me still became too much for my family. At some point, my parents gave up and allowed me to run around unencumbered. They had accepted defeat.

Since I didn't heed my parents' warnings, I would have to learn the hard way to stop running around. One day I was jumping on my bunk bed that I shared with my sister. Suddenly I developed the idea to jump from my bed to a chair. Eventually, I found myself jumping, but not far enough, falling to the floor from five feet down, a very big fall for a small child. I don't know what happened after that. Next thing I knew, I was in a hospital bed, my head in agonizing pain. It was only later when I realized what had happened. I fell onto the floor, trying to jump to a chair. The pain was so bad I had a blackout and a seizure. But I survived, thankfully. I scared my family to death. My mother was already screaming and running to me as soon as I opened my eyes.

After that, I learned to keep still. Either that or my mother forced me to, as she never wanted this to happen ever again. My inability to stop moving almost led to my death. And since then I never had a blackout again, and I learned how to follow instructions. I became a different person on that day, a more mature person. A person that has discipline.

Popeyes Brings Good Taste and Good Feelings

by José D.

Popeyes is so good and delicious. The tenderness of the chicken with that crispy skin. Juicy inside and crunchy outside. They have delicious side orders like fries, mac and cheese, and cheese sticks. They have shakes, smoothies, and amazing beverages. They also have delicious biscuits.

Popeyes can satisfy anybody. Some have a drive-thru for people who are in a rush. Popeyes also has food combos and deals that save massive amounts of money. They also take credit and debit.

Popeyes also has great service. They have different types of chicken flavors and a great variety of sauce. Popeyes is amazing. If you ever see a Popeyes, go to it. Eat at Popeyes today for an amazing meal.

Loving Popeyes taught me that I love fried chicken. I learned that there are some places with amazing food. Taste is important to me because good taste brings good feelings.



The Sad Story of the Pumpkin Pie

by Andy F.

Mmmm...pumpkin pie, it's so good. I love the taste of it. It has a cinnamon taste. And I love cinnamon. Pumpkin pie has a very distinct taste. I love when it has the right amount of sugar. Depending on the person who makes it, it's always moist. When I smell cinnamon, it reminds me of my Aunt Mariposa because she always makes pie every year.

I've personally loved pumpkin pie since I was two years old. One day, my mom did not allow me to have pumpkin pie. My aunt had made the pie. I was really disappointed because I really wanted that pie. But apparently, my mom felt that I was too young to eat the pie because it might upset my stomach. But my mom saying that honestly made me want the pie even more. Then I threw a very bad temper tantrum and

started throwing things around and yelling. My mom still did not allow me any pumpkin pie. She just sat there and laughed at me.

I finally ate pie when I was four years old. I really liked it. It was moist, and it tasted delicious. What I have learned from this experience is that I am determined to get what I want.



The Desire to Get a Phone

by Elvis G. R.

When I was ten years old, I really wanted a phone, yet there was a huge problem. I couldn't have a phone based on my age. Ever since I have always been eager to have a phone. Since that day, I realized that you can't always get what you want.

I was interested in getting a phone because most of my friends had phones. So when I asked my parents if they were willing to get me a phone, that's when they told me I was too young for the responsibility of having a phone. I started to do chores, trying to convince my parents to get me a phone, but it didn't go the way I wanted.

As time went on, I decided to try and find a job so I could save up for my phone and get it quicker. Yet I was not able to find any jobs. My mom found out about me searching for jobs and going on some interviews. In the end, my parents told me it wasn't safe to go alone in search of jobs because anything could happen.

Since my parents didn't allow me to get a job, I was impatient, not willing to wait. I attempted to steal a phone in the park because there was a woman's phone laying free on the seat while she was looking away. Back then, I was a kid, and I didn't really think very well about the consequences. But I realized that it wasn't right to steal from others. So that's when I thought about what my parents said, that "you can't always get what you want." That's why I forgot all about wanting a phone since that day. I was so eager and impatient to get something that I couldn't have. I would rather be a good person in this situation because it shows that I am not a selfish person who is only out to get what I want by any means necessary. I learned patience is the key.

The End of the World

by Hayley G.

I come from a family of four. My two older brothers and my little sister. I will only be talking about one of them who is also my best friend. My sister. She is my literal twin; if you put us side by side then you wouldn't see the difference. She can be understanding when she wants to be, but she can be a troublemaker if she doesn't get her way. She is a very quick learner, yet when she gets something wrong she doesn't want to try again. I love her and if something were to ever happen to her then... Let's not go there. Yet, when a shocking moment happened, I was frightened. It was shocking to me, even though it might be a little thing, but, to me, it was the worst feeling. (Don't worry, everything is OK in the end.)

It is Wednesday. I come out of school and wait for my bus. I feel a buzz in my right pocket. I lift out my phone to check who is calling by looking at the picture. It's a dog with glasses looking at a vision board. It's my dad. (The reason I chose that picture for him is because he has glasses and I couldn't find something else to go with him.) I pick up the phone and hear his husky voice. He's calm. (He always is.) He says, "Hay, Yaday came out early of school." I ask, "Wait why?!" He can hear me panicking through the phone. "She fell on her face playing jump rope," I heard my dad say. I think of how it might have gone down. Does she have something on her face? Is she bleeding? IS SHE OK?!

The select bus hears my call of panic, and I'm the first one to get on. I take a seat and think and think and think... I see Fordham roll away, and I just see houses all the same. They are red, white, or brown, fire escapes, and air conditioners. It's all the same. I get off the bus and walk down the street. Once I see my aunt's house, I run. I knock on my aunt's door, and I see a woman who is not my aunt. I ask her where my sister and my aunt are because I don't know if they are at my grandma's house or somewhere else and she says they are at school. I run out and see two figures: a tiny person wearing all pink like pink hat, pink coat, pink shoes, and pink pants. I know this isn't my sister because she hates pink and she would never wear that much pink. Next to her is a woman wearing a brown coat and camo pants that are pajamas. I just think they are random people, but the more I run up I see them, my sister and aunt. I check my sister, and I ask her if she's OK and she says that she just has a headache and she is fine except some red

on her head. I bring my sister home, and I call my dad. He says that he's parking his car. So once we get home, I give her an ice pack and she takes off her coat, and we relax. The minute I sit down my dad comes through the door, and everything's OK. The day went on as normal.

At the end of the day I learned a lesson: stop overreacting and relax. Also, I learned to remember that as an older sister, I need to be there for my little sister. No matter how little the problem was, I took it like it was the end of the world. To this day, I'm not sure why but I guess that if she's hurt some sort of reaction comes out of me like a feeling of worry/panic. But I think it's because all my life, my family told me family is important, so I guess that's what I reacted like this. But the thing I could walk away with, with my head held high, is that family is important. More important than your friends, partner, or anyone. No matter if it's your aunt, your cousin, or your uncle. They are your family. They are your blood. They raised you and helped you along the way. They know you better than anyone else in the world.

A personal narrative essay introduction

by Nicole G.

Swaying side to side to music, a book in one hand and a water bottle in the other, I start my summer mission to be the most boring kid in America. Instead of running in playgrounds and going shopping with family or friends, I spent my time...reading. Always equipped with music ranging from Drake to Maluma, Bruno Mars to Rihanna. At first, I started because I had nothing better to do with my life and my sister had a whole shelf of books, so I just thought, *why not?*

Days at noisy and, at times, crowded Target with family turned into a scavenger hunt for a new read. Usually, I would go with my sister. We would wander through the aisles reading blurbs of random books seeing which interested us. Of course, my sister, being the hopeless romantic she is, would get anything that remotely has to do with romance. Me, I chose poetry. In the end, we ended up choosing two books in total.

The weird thing is, I can concentrate better with music, so with my earphones plugged in, I continue my journey and read away. Yes, I took breaks of course... that consisted of finding new good books. Favorite books included the romantic and cute *Just Friends* by Billy Taylor, the mysterious and unnerving *The Cellar* by Natasha Preston, the curious and incredible *Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling, the poetic and hilarious *Adulthood* by Gabbie Hanna, and plenty others.

With summer over, I definitely still read, but I found other interests, too. Interests go in phases, and they eventually leave. But you don't have to follow the "status quo." Not everyone "cool" needs to do a specific thing to be qualified as "popular." Be happy with what you truly want to do. And sometimes you just have to *make your own fun*.

Finding My Way with Family

by Kimary H.

Have you ever felt like nobody cared about you? Were you feeling left out? As a little innocent three- or four-year-old, I felt exactly the same way. I know I was too young to feel this feeling, but I felt like I was not worth it. I thought there was nothing ahead of me. Everyone would pay attention to my older sister. She needed new clothes, new shoes, new everything. In my perspective, I felt like I was not needed. Sometimes I think I'm still not needed. But that's not the truth. I am needed. Everyone is. Even you.

One day, something really surprising happened. It was very confusing but very exciting to know. Everyone finally paid attention to me. It was during the holidays. To be more exact it was about four days before Christmas, so it was during December. My mom had a camera in her hand, and I asked her why. Her reply was, "Get ready to film a Christmas Three Kings Day story." I asked who for. She said it was for my grandparents. They were not celebrating with us since they were in Mexico, and I was in N.Y. This was why we had to film something for them. My mom said, "Hurry up and put on some nice appealing clothes. No more wasting time." After filming the story, we ate some delicious food and had a normal, boring day. My grandparents were very happy with the film. They could actually see what I looked like. I haven't visited them since I was born in N.Y.

A few years later, my brother, Avery, was born. We would take him many places and film more videos with him. Another few years later, my little sister, Ana, was born. The fascinating thing was that she was born on Christmas. I began to love filming when I saw one of our performances, and I got inspired. I would take the camera and film our day. Sort of like vlogging. My parents bought me a camera, and I began to film my little sister. We would go places like the Bronx Zoo, arcades, and the park. It was her first time seeing animals at the zoo, so I had to record her reactions. It was a "must record" thing. As life went on and I grew older, I realized filming was something I love to do. Up until this day, I still do some filming. Thanks to my family and bonding with them, I found what I love to do.

I Know I'll Get Through the Night by Roxanna L.

As we look around, we don't know how others feel or what is going on in their life....because everyone wears a mask...a mask to hide their pain...the pain that they're feeling is trapped inside. To not be seen, we wear the mask to seem like we haven't been hurt, although we all know that's not true. Everyone has fallen once. Sometimes hard, sometimes soft. But it's our choice to know if we will get back up again or if we will stay down because life is like a war. Like an ongoing war that doesn't end. Well, does not end until we are dead. Until we die, until we rest. But until then, the war keeps going unless we decide to end it sooner than it was supposed to, but it's not the best option. Some fight hard and get through it, but they all fall at one point and get up. Although there are others, who play it safe. But it's usually these people who don't really enjoy life. The war keeps on, but we just have to keep going and fight because, during this war, we learn new things and just become stronger every time we fall.

Say our goodbyes as this year passes by
Faces filled with sadness and sorrows and the tears they cry
Time to rest and take a break
Changes we wish to escape
Put on our masks as we head our own ways
As night falls our tears are swept away
And our dreams begin to play
Until the new day

She cries all night as she wishes to see the light of day
Surrounded by darkness and failures that begin to replay
Stuck in a pit that's filled with snakes
As she lets their poison get into her veins

In the world, there are bad people, but, hey, we've all committed sins. To them, let's call them snakes because their words are as poisonous as venom. In school, there are many snakes also known as bullies. They're fake and don't care about their fate. They act without thinking and hurt without caring. Just like a snake's poison, they're deadly because as I said before, life is like a war. And if you let the venom get to you, it could kill you.

Angels come to the rescue
And defeat all bad angels
The snakes disappear and
all that's left are scars from that gone year
Oh, yes, we get closer to the gleams of light
That changes our life
This time, not bad, but good
And the good yet to come

When we're stuck in the dark, we need to find a way out. Although, yes, at the time, you can't see. But the light is there. There are many people who are willing to help. I call them angels. Because just like angels, they're special, nice, and caring. I've met many angels in my rough journey, and thanks to them, I can say I see the light at the end of the tunnel. If you ever meet one, then you're surely blessed because they're rare and amazing.

That light at the end
that shines so brightly
A sign that the darkness says goodbye
An angel beside it, oh, what might
I feel stronger and know to keep on my fight
A true blessing to have that gleam of light
Well, it's time for me to say goodbye
for my war keeps on, I know I'll get through the night

Being an Uncle by Robert M.

I think I'm a role model. Sometimes my mom yells at me when I don't do what she asks. But I'm still a role model. I don't like to do work or homework. Basically, I'm just lazy. But in my niece and nephew's eyes, I'm the greatest.

My nephew copies me a lot. Mostly what I say. Sometimes, he punches me and says, "See, I'm strong." But he can be annoying. But my niece is just lovable. She's sweet and adorable. My niece attacked me with love by trying to get on my back. My nephew is a savage because when I told my sister (his mom) to get me a Hot Pocket, my nephew then said, "Get me a Hot Pocket," to his mom and he got in trouble. I laughed, but my nephew was mad at me. Also, while I was playing Fortnite, I got killed for a stupid reason, so I cursed. Then my nephew went around saying what I said. He got slapped. I was sorry, but then he played Fortnite with me. So, it was a happy ever after (but he got banned from his Xbox).

I should act more mature around them, but I don't do it often because that's not who I am. I'm lazy and crazy, but I'm still a role model.

A Little Goes a Long Way by Pamela M.

I was an annoying five-year-old. In the comfort of my own home, I was very active. Around my sister, whom I followed like a duckling, I was very loud and confident. I could tell the whole following her thing annoyed her, because she told me loud and clear.

I started to become who I sort of am in the fourth grade. Compared to third grade and any other grade before it, I lost motivation to complete my excessive amounts of work. I would get assigned two or three pages of homework almost daily, each with about 20 questions. This caused me to grow into the unexplainably lethargic person I am today.

I wondered if doing the homework was even necessary with the amount of classwork we did. Although, I still did the homework. Even considering that doing school-related work wasn't worthy of my attention would be like Voldemort to my younger self. (It should never be thought, EVER.)

Now, comparing that mindset to my older one would be like comparing trash to gold, and that was putting a certain weight on my shoulders that made work feel like death (inevitable and very bad). This stress would continue until the fifth grade.

When I moved up to the fifth grade, I expected the workload of the fourth grade but two times worse. Now that I look back on it, I feel conned. My fifth-grade teacher gave us simple notes and assignments, had reasonable expectations, and one sheet of homework or a reading response. Fifth grade was way easier than fourth grade for me. I understood the stuff I learned in fifth grade way better than the stuff I learned in fourth grade.

Since the stress was finally lifted, I was more motivated and energized. My friends and I joked around often, so there were a lot of inside jokes. I was the carefree five-year-old again. This revealed that simple really is sweet, and stress really can change a person. So now, I make sure to manage work and free time and not stress myself out. I offer myself breaks and simplify the ideas presented to me, so the stress doesn't just stack up like a brick wall.

My Death Story

by Michael M.

This is the story of how I (almost) died, but hey, don't worry though. This story is meant to be funny, and I'm not dead, so enjoy.

So, my sisters went to my brother's house, and I was bored at my house all alone. And I'm like, "Hey, sis," (because my oldest sister didn't go) "let's go to the park and have a lit day." So, we're at the park, and my sister says, "Go play with those kids around your age." But I didn't care enough to remember their names so let's call them Blaise (a girl), Aidan (a boy), and Cryo (a boy).

We all started playing tag and thought it was smart to hide from Aidan by going up above on the monkey bars. But Aidan was twelve, and he was speeding towards us like a freight train. We jumped off the monkey bars, and all I could think was – well, nothing because I blacked out. My sister says she carried me.

I went home to bed, and my sister came and said, "Wake up, drama king." She told my dad what happened, and he started yelling and laughing, "HAHAHA, now my son is an acrobat!" I asked him to stop, but he wouldn't take me seriously because I was a nine-year-old in their underwear walking around like, "Where are my clothes?"

All in all, I learned this: **DON'T JUMP OFF OF THE MONKEY BARS UNLESS YOU ARE TRAINED. YOU WILL GET HURT.**

A personal narrative essay
by Sean N.

Have you ever listened to a rapper? Well, on YouTube, you can listen to many rappers, like 69, 96, Lil Uzi Vert, Drake, Jake Paul, Logan Paul, Ricegum, Wolfie, 21 Cabbage, Post Malone, God's Plan, Lil Peep, Lil Zane, Lil Shrimp, and LiL Gucci. My favorite rap is the Fortnite rap.

On YouTube, you can watch plenty of types of content, but you're probably wondering why I chose to talk about rap. Well, I chose rap because rap is an escape from stress and when I'm doing chores and homework.

Music isn't the only thing I watch on YouTube. I watch YouTube a lot because my family can't afford cable and I don't have access to my PS4. I don't have a life outside of school, so I'm mostly at home if not at school. But it's very interesting to watch how people live their lives because pretty much everyone has a more interesting life.



A personal narrative essay introduction
by Jaylin O.

You have to live life to the fullest. Each day you should write down something you would like to do in the future or someplace that you would like to visit. You can also try something new each day. Maybe you can try being nice to someone or try to get to know someone who you see as an outcast.

Mario Kart

by Diane P.

SLAM! My older sister throws her cards onto the table. “I WIN!” It is our fifth game of “three and two,” and my sister won again. “Hey! That’s not fair! You cheated!” I yelled, putting my finger in her face. “No, I didn’t,” she said, pushing my finger to the side. “I’m just better.” I stormed off, pouting. At the end of the day, I would come back for another round because maybe she was just winning out of luck.

It wasn’t until my family got a Wii that we started to get really competitive. Our favorite game to play was Mario Kart. I always went up against my sister, after a while of playing on my own, trying to strengthen my skills for our next championship. “Boom. I just won again!” The same thing happened every time we played together. “Yes! I got a 95% in English!” “Yes! I win again!” This was when I realized something should change. My sister was starting to get pretty cocky about her winning streak, and it had to come to an end.

I practiced playing Mario Kart on my own for weeks. I played card games with my younger brother until my way of playing was faster and more efficient. And finally, I participated in class and asked and answered questions to make sure my grades would go up at school. After a while, I begged my sister for a rematch. This one match decided everything for me.

I was using my extra-special, super-lucky controller with easy access and controls. I had to have all the odds in my favor for this one game. I MUST WIN THE HUNGER GAMES – I mean Mario Kart. I NEEDED to win this one game of Mario Kart. It wasn’t a “want” anymore; now it was a need. If I didn’t win this game, it could’ve been the end of my self-confidence and how much I actually believe in myself. As you can probably tell, these five races of our competition meant a lot to me.

The race began; we both got that beginning “secret” boost even though it’s not really a secret anymore since it’s all over the Internet for the Mario Kart wizards and such. Even so, we were off. I had the advantage this time because I started in 11th place whereas she started in 12th place. With that boost, I managed to get in front of two people into 10th place since my sister made her way ahead of me. As the game went on, I managed to make my way to 8th, then 6th, all the way up to 3rd. I was on a roll! I made it to the beginning of the third lap, and I made my way to 2nd place, and my sister was

still so far ahead of me! As time went on and we were getting close to the finish line, we were neck and neck! So close to the finish line and each other. I got a boost from a mystery block while all she got was a coin. We were right about to cross the finish line...and I used the boost...but it was too late...

For her to beat me! Because I won! The first win of my entire life!

I have a very close connection to that game now, and it's all thanks to that win. After I won, I felt like the entire music video for "Victorious" by Panic! At the Disco with everyone dancing around.

It may seem very weird to write about a Mario Kart competition or even getting excited about it. But this experience changed the way I think. It made me realize that you can't accomplish anything without working hard and that your self-confidence is very important so that you can succeed. I learned that I had to believe in myself, even though it sounds extremely corny to say, but it's true that I feel that way when I think back on that day.

The Xbox Day by Dylan R.

Enthusiasm is how I feel about this scene. This happens when I get my Xbox One. I feel the excitement. Feel the need to jump all over the place because of the opportunity I am getting. I am fooled by my mom when she gives me Xbox 360 stuff, then BAM!, there it is. A white Xbox One. I am so happy.

When she first says she “made a mistake” and she wanted to get me 360 stuff instead of Xbox One stuff. When this happened, I felt disappointed. I felt sad that I didn’t get what I wanted, but I didn’t feel the need to cry. When she said this, I was clueless. I didn’t expect a thing. I just wanted to go eat pizza to make myself feel better, but then, I get it.

My mom pulls the Xbox One from under that bed, and I am totally stunned. I felt like I couldn’t move. I stood still for two minutes. Even my cousins knew about this. I had the feeling just to hug my mom longer than I ever have. I wanted to run around the block for a solid two hours and thirty minutes because I did it! I finally have the Xbox One.

This happened at exactly 12:00 AM on September 1st, 2017, so it was technically my birthday. I run upstairs with joy to my mom and cousins singing “Happy Birthday” to me. My mom shows me an Xbox One game and an Xbox One controller. I say, “Oh my gosh, yes!” Then, my mom says, “Oh, I meant to get you 360 games.” I feel sad. Then she pulls my Xbox One from under the bed. Then my cousins laugh at me because I got fooled. As soon as she gives it to me, my cousins and I rush downstairs and begin to play. The Xbox 360 was sitting in the corner not being used. Nobody looked at it or even wanted to play with the Xbox 360. This was because I had an Xbox One. We stayed up all night playing it until we fell asleep. It felt so nice to unbox the new console. This was a scene of happiness. I felt so happy that I wish I could just relive this one day over and over again. The day I got my Xbox One and learned my mom is a trickster.

Invincible by Melina R.

Have you ever had a person make you feel invincible? Well, I have. My mom makes me believe I can do anything. This happened when I was eight or nine, and it happened right before I had to go to school. I had woken up and felt like I had to make up a lie so I wouldn't have to go to school and take the state test. The reason I didn't want to go that day was because of my older brothers. My brothers thought it would be funny to scare me into thinking that I wasn't going to pass. You might be thinking, why did you listen to them? Or why didn't you tell them to stop? I didn't do those things because deep down I knew that I really didn't believe in myself. On the practice tests, I either failed, or I didn't do as well as I wanted to, so I gave in and just started believing that I wouldn't pass.

I felt pressured to pass and make my family proud. I also felt doubtful and anxious. I felt that I had to pass and had to show my brothers that I could do it. And it turned out I could. I passed with a 3. Not the grade I wanted, but I was really close. I felt happy with myself. I knew I couldn't let doubt and anxiety take over me like it had.

When I think back to that day, I feel disappointed with myself because I let the doubt take over me. Normally, I never let things like that take over me, but I just couldn't stop it in time. Now I feel more confident and learned how to revise and look over my work until I feel satisfied. I also know that I can't let anyone make me feel like that. I can't let people pressure me or let doubt consume me.

Back then the most important thing to me was to pass and show my brothers that I can do it. Now the only thing I really care about is taking my time and believing in myself and making my mom proud since she helped me realize that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. My mom made me feel this way by helping me, by showing and telling me that I can do anything.

Everything Happens for a Reason

Liasselis R.

Performance has always been important to me. Starting in fourth grade, my mind was piqued from watching ballet rehearsal, choreography videos, and any type of dancing video I could find. I believe performance lets other people know who you are and who you want to be. In performance, you could express yourself. You can showcase your talents. But most importantly, it's fun. Therefore, I joined my afterschool dance class. It came the time for the most exciting performance of my life.

During a performance, you get the chance to express yourself. Dancing is one of the best ways to relieve stress and show your feelings. For example, you could make the choreography your own. During practice in our afterschool program, we will put each of our styles into our choreography. We will put new steps or take steps that we didn't like out. The purpose of our dance is to make us feel comfortable.

The day finally came. I woke up at 6:15 AM and went to PS 58 earlier than ever. When I went there, the whole dance group was already changing. So, I changed into my black leggings and tank top. When we were all done, we went to Ms. Rose, and she put the shiny glitter wrap around our shoulders and upper body. We then went to the big, cream and blue auditorium and decided to practice. When the clock hit 1:15, the mini coach bus finally arrived, and we started to board. During the ride, we were singing and enjoying ourselves to the fullest.

We finally arrived at a college campus in Queens, and the organizer of the event greeted us with pleasure. He led us to the auditorium. The auditorium was huge. It had a ginormous stage and room to seat more than 3000 people. It took two floors because there were also seats on the upper floor. The lighting was purposefully placed to highlight all the most important places and the whole stage. After seeing the auditorium, the planner led us to the room backstage where we could finish getting ready.

The moment I had been waiting months for arrived. We were all walking to the stage, shaking, wanting to do every single move to perfection. But as they say...Nothing will ever be perfect. When the performance started, we noticed that the music wasn't the one we were dancing to. But there was nothing we could do. We continued with our

choreography with the wrong music. While dancing, tears started coming down all our faces. Once the miserable dance was over, we returned to our room and cried the rest of the time. We were so disappointed.

After all of this, we returned to the school without saying a word. We all learned nothing will ever be perfect no matter how much effort you put into it. We also learned everything happens for a reason. But this event will always stay in my mind. I don't think I will ever try to perform again.



Family Is Important by Joel S.

I remember I was a calm and collected kid. My life back then was basically normal. I lived in a good-sized house with my dad, mom, sister, and my two cats, Wendy and Oreo. Life was all good at that point. I always believed that life always had a happy ending.

My two cats, Oreo and Wendy, lived there for more than two years. Wendy is still alive, but Oreo is not with me.

How would you feel if you lost a family member? You would feel depressed, sad, disoriented, and destroyed. You would feel like you are incomplete without that family member; you would feel like you're not yourself. It's like a jigsaw puzzle, and that family member is a piece missing from your life. Of course, you would have memories of them, but it's not the same as having them in front you. You would cry a lot every time you talk about, think about, and remember them because you love, care, and adore them. In the end, you would have to accept that they have departed, perished. It may hurt, but eventually, you must move on.

Serious Injury by Angel V.

Everyone has been a kid at one time. Whether you were a responsible kid or a little rascal, it doesn't matter. It's a fact. We all make mistakes as kids. But it's how we grow from these mistakes that actually counts. Me, as a kid? I had good times and bad times. But this one incident changed everything.

It all started on this one fateful day. It was cloudy outside and looked like it would rain, but it never did. It basically looked like a miserable day. It was reaching the last few days of winter break. I was usually a calm kid. But this one day I had a lot of stored-up energy. As I looked at the weather outside though, I lost all my energy. I felt a little empty inside. To fill this void, I got some cereal with milk and turned on the TV. I was always the first one up out of my family. I was only eight. I was enjoying the peace and quiet because in my family it is never quiet. Even if there are only three kids, we produce a lot of noise.

The first one to wake up was my brother. I prepared for the worst. I was getting ready for the noise to come. But to my surprise it never did. I was getting bored. I thought to myself, *What to do, what to do? I know! When Dad wakes up, I'll ask him if we can go to the park.* It was still early in the morning though. My sister woke up 30 minutes later. My brother and I were preparing for the worst, and again, nothing happened. It was pretty uneventful and really quiet and peaceful for our family.

Finally, my mom woke up. We immediately asked the question in unison, "What are we having for breakfast?" My mom asked what we wanted, and we each wanted different things. But we came to the conclusion of pancakes. As my mom was finishing up the pancakes, my dad woke up. I quickly saw an opportunity to ask him the fateful question, "Can we go to the park?" But I don't think he heard me because he didn't answer. While we were eating, it was silent. I decided to break that silence with the question again, "Can we go to the park?" This time both my parents heard me, and my dad answered yes, but my mom didn't want to go. So to resolve this, my mom stayed with my brother while my dad and sister and I went to the park.

When we got to the park it was totally deserted; there was no one left on the playground. So I went to the playground with my sister (she was only three at the time, so I couldn't play many games with her). When my sister left to go on the swings, I

started getting bored, but I didn't want to go home just yet so I created many different types of challenges for myself. Instead, what happened was really dumb and funny.

There was a piece of glass hidden under a leaf. No one noticed it because it looked so natural. As I jumped off the little mini wall, I landed knee first into the glass. I screamed in agony. My dad came to find out why I was screaming and crying and to his surprise, he saw blood gushing out of my knee. He quickly took action and called my mom to come and pick up my sister. Luckily, the park was really close to our apartment. My mom arrived relatively quickly, and as my dad saw my mom, he carried me to get a cab. We finally got a cab after five minutes and rushed to the emergency room. My mom met us there. We waited until they finally told us we could come back to an exam room and they put me down on a table.

They told my parents the procedure needed and my parents said yes (obviously). They started by taking an X-ray to see if there was any glass left in my body, but there wasn't. After they were certain about this, they started stitching me up. I got no painkillers. Remember, I was only eight at the time. I kept telling my mom to tell them to stop. That was the most painful time of my life. I saw tears in both my mom's and dad's eyes. When they finally stopped, they put a cast around my knee, and I had to stay in the hospital for a few days. During those days, I had to take many tests, and I was in a wheelchair because I couldn't move my leg. After four or five days in the hospital, I was finally able to go home. The doctors told my parents that I would stay out of school for one week. I didn't even have any crutches to help me walk. Instead, I had to waddle around.

When I finally came back to school, people were surprised by my cast. They kept asking me what happened. Since I couldn't walk, I had this person come and take me on the elevator every day for a few weeks. After two or three long weeks, she magically disappeared. So, I had to go down the stairs. It was hard at first, but I eventually came up with a system. I had the cast for two months. But while I had the cast, I tried to bend my foot little by little, so it didn't feel weird when I could finally walk again. Gradually, I could walk normally, and I got rid of the cast. But this incident left an ugly scar on my left leg that I don't like.

I learned from this incident that there might be danger lurking around every corner. And that I have to double check everything before I do something challenging.

It's Just Fortnite

by Sean W.

Have you ever heard of a PVE game called Fortnite Battle Royale? This game has become so popular; it's blown up worldwide. Over 40,000,000 people play this game in just the USA alone.

This game has taught me many things and helped me with many life lessons. For example, I got killed by the Storm, and two of my friends who were also playing didn't even want to come save me. They said, "You're on your own." That right there taught me to always treat your teammates the way they treat you. In this game, your teammates' littlest actions can affect the whole outcome.

Fortnite raised my sense of awareness in many ways. If someone is walking near you, listen for the direction of their footsteps. If I'm looking for someone, their footsteps will guide me. This also showed me that if you hear shooting, either run away or engage in the fight. If I join a war, this tactic will help me. One last thing Fortnite taught me is if I'm dancing with someone and they kill me, they're not a good friend. Some people don't enjoy my dancing skills so they will be rude and walk away.

If somebody's starting with you, some people will just fight, some people won't engage until it comes to a certain point. I play like that because you don't draw as much attention to yourself. I play stealth. You don't bother anybody until it's you and someone else. You can camp in a bush or hide out. When you see someone, you don't kill them because you want them to live life. Don't bother others because you come first.

In conclusion, Fortnite is a really fun game, but it also taught me some things. But I don't live in the game; it's just a big part of my life. Parents might think it's addictive, but playing this game is better than being out on the streets.

Class 702



The Best Moment of My Life

by Jayden A.

I am a person that still believes that anything is possible if you don't give up.

When I was six years old, I started to play soccer. When I was ten years old, I joined a soccer team. I was a midfielder and made good passes. Then, when I was eleven years old, everything changed. I switched my position and became a striker.

I was nervous playing my first game in my new position. In my debut game as a striker, I was playing forward, and I scored my first goal. It felt nice when I kicked the ball, and I saw the ball going top left. I celebrated my goal with all my teammates. We were playing against a strong club; the final score was 2-1, and I scored the second goal. If I never scored that goal, it would have been a tie, and we would have gone to penalty kicks and would have lost because they had a good goalkeeper. However, I was there and scored the second goal, and now, we were going to the finals. I was so happy that I had done something amazing for the club. However, my teammates and I put our happiness to the side and trained harder because we needed to win the final in order to be even happier.

I started to score more goals, and it felt nice. I got used to it, so I was not nervous. I could score more goals and not be that nervous. Now, I am calmer when I'm playing matches.



My Life at Six Flags

by Taira A.

When I first went to Six Flags and rode my first ride, I was ten years old. I went with my mother, my brothers, and my grandma. The day was really sunny, and it felt like all the happiness in the world entered me when I walked through the gate.

I didn't have to wait on line for the first ride. I got on the ride with my mom beside me and my brothers behind me. When I buckled myself in, it was really tight, and I felt like I couldn't breathe. It made me nervous. I felt scared, and I almost left but didn't.

When the ride started to move, I felt relaxed. Then, it started to go fast. My heart pounded, and my stomach felt like it dropped down my leg. When the ride was over, I felt dizzy. Later on, when the dizziness stopped, I burst into happiness. The ride was like I was flying to heaven. When I saw my brothers and my mom get off the ride, my brothers had smiles on their faces. My mom looked scared but happy. My grandma went to only three rides. I don't know why but she was brave because mostly I didn't see people like my grandma on the rides. She was brave because she was the oldest person to go on the rides, even the scary ones.

What I learned about myself after I went on those rides was that I was also brave. I do things that scare me, and I go for it anyway.



The Day I Played 2K by Johan A.

Finally, the day has come that I waited so anxiously for. It was Christmas Day. I was waiting for all the money that I knew I was going to get. My mom spoiled it because she told me I'd be getting a lot of money for Christmas. That day, I did get a lot of money. And the next day, I bought PS4. With time and practice, I got better because I eventually bought VC, which is virtual currency.

It wasn't always like that, though. Three months ago, when I first started the game, I was a 60 overall. I just stayed and did not upgrade my character. I lost every game. When I played against an opponent, he dropped me almost 50 times, which means he crossed me or broke my ankles. He laughed at me and didn't stop. But all that changed one month ago when I improved my skills by upgrading my character and bought VC.

When I play 2K18, I'm a 6'5" shooting guard. I like a challenge, so I play with random. Playing with random means playing with people you don't know. I'll play on their teams or against them. I'm better than everyone, so I'm a ball hog. This works for me because I don't like losing. If I ball hog, I win every time.

A personal narrative essay
by Jazidy A.

I woke up Saturday morning feeling great. I brushed my teeth and hopped in the shower; then my friend called me to play volleyball outside. After we finished playing, my mom called me and told me to come home. As I was walking home, I had a feeling she wanted to talk to me about my grades. I got nervous and worried she was going to tell my dad about my report card.

When I was almost home, I started to sweat. My hands were shaking. I walked inside and heard my mom scream, "COME OVER HERE NOW!!!!!!!" Then, I got scared. She had seen my report card and showed me I was failing four classes. I told her I was sorry for lying about how I was doing in school. She said, "It's too late now. I showed your dad. You have to go talk to him now."

When I talked to my dad, he told me that lying is not a good way to solve the problem. I said I knew that. I just didn't want to get in trouble. He told me, "Next time, do not lie. I am giving you another chance, don't ruin it." When I talked to him, I felt like I was going to get everything taken away. After I talked to him, I stopped feeling butterflies in my stomach, and finally felt great like I could get back on point with my grades.

The lesson that I learned from this experience is that lying won't get you anywhere. It will just bring you more problems, and it won't fix anything. But telling the truth can help you, and not make the problems worse. When I talked to my parents, they also gave me advice to raise my grades. After the next semester, I told the truth, and I only failed one class. I learned from my mistakes and lying stopped happening in my life.

Moving

by Alexander A.

It was a sunny Friday afternoon the day my dad told me we were moving to the Bronx. I had many questions in my head like, “Why are we leaving? How is the Bronx?” And more questions. I was moving from Brooklyn to the Bronx. Brooklyn was colorful and wonderful. I felt a little mad because I didn’t say goodbye. Little did I know the Bronx would change me for the better.

The next day, I looked out my window and saw a moving truck. In my mind, I thought, “Oh, we’re moving.” So, I packed my soccer ball, my shoes, shirt, and my pants. It took me 35 minutes. Then, I looked out and saw my dad put our luggage inside. I ran outside to give my dad my luggage, and we left as soon as the moving truck was packed.

When I arrived in the Bronx, there were a lot of stores on Fordham. I was like, “Wow, Foot Locker! Rainbow! Gap! And more.” My family and I slept in my aunt’s house while our apartment was getting fixed and painted. My aunt’s house was nice and big. The next day, I had to go to school in Brooklyn since the school was still going on. So, every day, my mom and I went to the 4 train to Brooklyn. Luckily, I passed the grade and went to 2nd grade in the Bronx.

One month later, I saw my apartment, and my mouth was open in shock. I said, “OMG,” out loud. It was on the 6th floor. The rooms were all white. One of the rooms was medium-sized with five closets. There was a big living room and a medium kitchen. We moved our stuff in the next week, and we had nice people next door. It took almost three years, but now the Bronx feels like my home sweet home.

Going to Pre-K by Daniella C.

When I went to Pre-K, it was great because I got to meet new friends. The school was pretty. So neat and clean and shiny. The lunchroom was next to the bathroom, and it was neat and clean, too. We got to play outside, and there were games: basketball, soccer, and tennis. The school looked like a barn, and it always smelled like muffins. Everything was so big because I was short because I was three years old.

My best friend was named Arianna. On the second day of Pre-K, I slapped her. We had been playing a game where she had to be the dog, and I was the person. I never knew why I slapped her, but I got in trouble.

Later, when we were in sixth grade, Arianna reminded me that we were playing that game. I realized that even if it's a game, you shouldn't hit someone because you can always get in trouble. But when we grew up is when she told me, and everything was fine.



Changes in Mood by Jordan C.

I was a young boy in second grade who used to like school. I stayed to myself. I used to love to go to school. I enjoyed it because I would play games and have fun. But then, I had a test to do, and it wasn't even fun. So, eventually, I got bored because there was nothing to do but lay there like a log.

I would play and learn at the same time by doing *Jeopardy*. It was fun, but I didn't realize that I was also learning at the same time. After I had fun for a little while, I had to do a practice state exam. That's when all the games were not there anymore. It was like they vanished off in the distance. So, then the test began, an hour or two passed by, and that's when I finished the test and laid down and fell asleep.

Dreams and Peace

by Enelynn C.

One of the things I most enjoy doing in my free time is sleeping. Right after eating, of course. It is my favorite thing to do because it's the one time of day when I can close my eyes, lay down, and relax, not thinking of anything, and I feel peace. I can get my blanket and lay down and put my head on a comfortable pillow. My blanket is like a shield, a head-to-toe barrier from the cold.

I have a special process for going to sleep. Doesn't everyone? First, I take a nice warm, steaming hot bath with some baby soap because it helps me relax and smells like a baby. Then, I get my jammies (I prefer the fluffy kind because I can get cold). After that, I put my pillows in a specific order: one pillow at the foot of the bed, two on each side of me, one at the back of my head, and one on top to cover up well. Then, I pull up my blanket – actually, I use two because I like getting warm – and I move around to find a comfortable position. I get my fluffy animal friends. Then I lay back, close my eyes, and fall asleep to have wonderful dreams.

Be careful of sleep, 'cause it can make you weep
from a bad dream that can make you leap.
No nightmares, I'm fine, just right.
In my dreams, it's my time to dream, shine, fly,
and go sky-high.



A personal narrative essay

by Aaliyah D.

It started when it was dismissal and Lisa needed to go to the newspaper. She wanted me to come with her. I called my mom and asked if I could stay. My mom asked to talk to Ms. Petrillo to confirm that I was at after school. Then, every Monday, I started going. I never knew what to write.

I wound up writing about music. Lisa and I made a Top Ten list, and we used different genres. We put it in a secret order because Lisa picked some songs that people hate. I felt good that I did something. It was stressful because I had to think really hard to find what people like.

In the end, my hard work paid off. I was a part of the newspaper.

A personal narrative essay
by Ali D.

One Sunday, in May 2016, two years after the PS4 came out, I finally decided to get it with my dad. The playoffs, first round. Overtime, one minute on the clock. On the ten-yard line. The QB drops back, throws the ball. Interception. That was what the Seahawks felt in the Super Bowl. And it is what I felt in one of my own football games. The broken, heartbreaking pain lasting until the bus. It got worse when we were on the bus. People were blaming each other, some blamed me, but it was a group effort. The coaches tried to break it up, but the players were right back on it.

The thought of the rough, rigid floors. The people on the court arguing about a foul. Before the training camps. Before the hard-hitting tackles. Before I ever laced up my first pair of cleats. There were the sweating sounds of the ball swishing into the net. And finally the funny and insane memories. On top of it, all was a seven-year-old little boy on the big boy court. Like a baby with the adults drinking beer.

It took a while to get used to it, but the team has grown on me. The laughs, the memories, the jokes. And most importantly the season. The feeling of the shaking hands behind the gloves was thrilling. And the first game was, as you young people say, not “lit.” Our team merged with a different team, and the new faces were weird but adaptable.

To think that a person like me who in the beginning only liked the NBA later found out that I had a love for the NFL. I never thought I would’ve had enough love that I would’ve gone out of my way to actually play real football. With pads and everything. But here we are. And this all started when I wanted to get a PS4.

The Basketball Gym

by Mamadou D.

My favorite sport is basketball. I play it almost every day with my friends. I even go to the basketball gym on my block on weekdays because of a program called “Teens to the Top.” I’m also usually invited to come and play on Saturdays and Sundays. It’s a Community Center with a gym. We have tournaments there, we run fulls, and all with other people. Everyone I know goes there, including my friends and cousins.

These kinds of activities get me better offensively and defensively. When I participate in tournaments, it’s like a real basketball team. We do warm-ups, layup drills, and shooting drills. We do plays in the games for offense and defense. We also have subs. Sometimes we play with people from Highbridge, Webster, Claremont, Tremont, and more.

We also have basketball tryouts for 14 and up, 14 and under, and more. I can play with people my age and get better so I can develop my skills more and more. Until I hopefully go professional in the NBA. This basketball gym is not only a basketball gym. It’s also a community center; it’s a place for a special celebration such as Black History Month, Christmas, Hanukkah, and community get-togethers. When we have community get-togethers, we talk about gun violence awareness, racism, drug awareness, and basically everything that is happening in the America we call America today.

A basketball gym shouldn’t always be a place for only basketball. It can be a place shared by the community. We don’t need to pay for memberships; it’s all for free. It helps kids to get away from the streets so that they won’t fall into the wrong crowd. This can also prevent a lot of negative air around where we live. The basketball gym keeps me and others occupied and eventually off the streets. I learned that basketball can actually help people from going against other people.

Excited

by Greymy F.

Have you ever seen people get sick while riding on the craziest rides or felt sick yourself? I know I have. When I was 11 years old in the 6th grade, I went to Rye Playland for a school trip. I was so excited, while on the other hand, my best friend felt like having an anxiety attack once she saw “THE DRAGON RIDE” from the bus window. I was so nervous when we got out of the bus. I looked up and saw “THE SKYFLYER,” and it looked like it was going to fall on me.

Waiting in line, you know how that goes. So, my friend is still about to have a real heart attack or something. (I kind of wanted to join her.) As we get closer, my heart starts beating faster and faster. In front of us, there’s another class, so we know not all of us are going to fit on the ride. When the person that works there opens the door, everyone literally runs to the seats. My friend and I get separated – she ends up with a boy in a different cart, and I end up with a girl I was cool with.

When the ride started, it felt like when you go up a little road hill with a car. It felt like a big swing. We were halfway around, and I looked to the other carts. I saw people scared and they got sick. When we went fully around, my feet were in the other person’s face. We went around and around. It was incredible.

After, I saw my friend crying, pouring. Her face red, tears still on it. I felt bad for her, but I also felt great. I felt like I was untouchable and fearless. It taught me that I want to be free and determined, even if I’m scared.

Semi-Finals

by Alexis F.

Before I started playing soccer, I thought I could never get hurt. All the games I played before, I hadn't gotten hurt, and so I thought I couldn't get hurt. I started playing soccer two and a half years ago.

Right before I was going to score my goal, the goalie came at me as well as the defender, and both kicked my leg. I flew and started bleeding. I could not play for two weeks. I had trouble getting back on my feet, but I did well. I felt sad since I couldn't play but I knew that I would play again. So, I didn't worry too much.

We faced the team again because we had to play two games in the semifinals. I tried my best. We ended up winning, and I had fun playing.



Day of Accomplishment

by Angel G.

It was just a regular day when one of my teachers asked my friends and me if we wanted to sign up for basketball tryouts. I signed the paper, and a couple of days later, tryouts started. I started to run my laps. I ran quick and swift and ran up to five laps in very good time. Then we started the layup drills. I made most of my layups, learning from my mistakes. We started a box-out drill. I did great. We started a scrimmage, and my team won and lost. I was learning from what I did wrong and progressing from what I did right.

What I was thinking during tryouts was: *What can I do to win? Am I good enough?* But all those thoughts didn't matter as long as I tried my hardest. Finally, the day to find out who made the team had come, and we were waiting in the classroom to hear the results. We all felt nervous and had a burning will to play basketball on that team. The coach came into the room and announced the names. The first thought that popped up was, *of course, the 8th-graders made it.* I felt anxious to know who made it but finally, he announced my name. I made the team. I felt happy, and I felt like I accomplished something.

My New Job by Gavin J. G.

In 2017, I was playing on my Xbox, and my friend told me about this app called “Mixer.” It’s an app that lets you record your gameplay, and you get paid by the viewers or company that enjoy your content. So, when I live-streamed for the first time, I played “Life is Strange,” and in less than an hour, I got my first five viewers.

I started to enjoy playing the game even more. I enjoyed playing games even more because I had people giving me tips and compliments about my gaming skills. I felt bad about getting no money, but I felt better after I got new followers. Sometimes I get the same ones, and sometimes I get new ones.

I got more viewers each week but no monetary donations. Hopefully, I’ll get paid one day, and people can give me money for new games to stream. Maybe I could even get sponsored by a game company. But for now, I mostly do it for fun, and people still enjoy my content even though I don’t get paid.



Gaming and Life by Javier G. *Dedicated to my family*

When I was about four years old, my brother was playing on this strange device called a Game Boy, and he let me play something called “Kirby.” This was my first introduction to video games. I was thinking to myself, *what is this pink thing and why does he eat so much?* The game was advanced but so mechanical. But I broke it by dropping it on the floor by accident. I guess I was really clumsy.

Over the course of years, the game consoles kept evolving and so did I. The game consoles kept evolving in this chronological order: Game Boy, Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, DS, DSI, DSI XL, 3ds, 2ds, 3ds XL, and 2ds XL. The difference between all of these is that the technology advances. But the similar thing between all of them is that all of these have a special place in our hearts. I evolved as a player/person because I kept getting older every year, but as a player, I have to memorize the keys and controls.

These are the reasons why I am the gamer and why I am the person I am today.

34,000 Feet by Charles M.

It was the day I would be 34,000 feet in the air. My little six-year-old self was insanely nervous as we were ten minutes away from Las Americas Airport. My heart raced, and my tears fell from my eyes as I said goodbye to the place I used to call home and a family I used to see every day. I was a nervous wreck as we left security. My heart started beating, my mind knowing where I was going – 34,000 feet up in the air.

We were literally two miles from the airport, and I looked at all of the beauty of my city one last time. I could see the street signs: “1 mile – Las Americas Airport (sd9).” The palm trees looked so amazing as the sun set. I just looked at my grandma and grandpa and my aunt as if it was the last time I would see them until God knows when.

Well, I guess it's time to get on that monstrous machine called a plane, I thought. My heart was beating faster than the flash. I could already see the ginormous creations. They were so cool I couldn't take my eyes off of them. But for some reason, the planes were taking off at an angle. I almost fainted. Seeing that was insane. I couldn't believe I was going to get on that thing. I mean, I was only six.

As my heart started beating – *pum, pum, pum, pum* – I was getting closer to the plane's door. I was past the gate, inside the gate tunnel, a couple of feet away from the plane door, and I heard the propeller or the engine. Then, I saw it. I stopped still as if I was paralyzed. I said to myself, “It's time.” It felt like it was the event of the year. Like if I was going to go to space or the edge of the world. I walked to my seat. My mom had the window seat, and I had the aisle seat. As I heard the pilot say something about takeoff (I was six, so I didn't know what it was), the plane started moving, and I said to myself, “3, 2, 1.” Then the pilot flew the plane up towards the sky.

At the time, I had no clue what a plane was so it was very terrifying. But now, I have a better understanding of what a plane is. Now, I have grown to like planes, and I am going to fly on a plane by myself this summer.

The Invincible Foot

by Gabriella N.

Who was the person that made you feel invincible? Well, the person that made me feel invincible was me. Actually, my foot. Yes, I said my foot. I know, it sounds really weird, but it's true. I've gone through a lot and injured my foot so many times, and it's still in good shape, so it makes me feel invincible. My foot has been impaled, sprained, and badly twisted.

All right, let's talk about the impaled incident. I was five years old, and my brother was eight. So, I looked up to him and did anything he would do. One day, there was this weird thing in the building courtyard. It was a really big, sharp thing that looked like one of those construction poles that come out of the ground. My brother kept jumping over it, and I thought that he was really cool and I wanted to try, too. So, I got up on the big step and stared at the shiny object. I closed my eyes and jumped. I landed on the floor and was so happy that I was able to do something my big brother did. Since I was able to do it once, why not try again, right?

As I got on the step the second time, I rushed to jump over it. Sadly, this time I did not land on the floor. I felt a very sharp pain in my foot, and I started to cry. The big sharp thing went through my entire shoe! I was so scared, and I blamed it on my brother. My parents pulled me off of it, and my shoe was really bloody, so they rushed me to the hospital. I was terrified because I had no idea what the doctors were doing. When I left the hospital, I got to be carried home which was really fun for me.

About the foot sprain – it's kind of the same thing. I copied my brother. So, one time, when my mom and dad asked us to help with groceries, my brother was skipping steps. So, I did it, too. On the third floor, I tripped and fell on my ankle. I yelled and just sat there. I was 12, so I was a little scared because I had never sprained an ankle before. My brother came back up and started laughing at me. My dad called an ambulance, and two very kind girls had this weird chair and put me in it and carried me down the stairs.

In the hospital waiting room, there were a lot of people. But I got to go straight into the X-ray room. They took about seven X-rays. When they told me it was sprained, I felt worried. They gave me pills and a brace. When they said I was good to go, my dad gave me a piggyback ride until we got a cab to go home. My little sister kept making fun of how I hopped around on one foot.

From these two incidents, I learned to stop copying everything my brother does. And that my foot is invincible.



Lost Ticket

by Lisa O.

Have you ever been on a plane? Your heart drops. You question your life. If it's even worth it. Sometimes you wonder if a little moment like going on a plane can affect everything in your life. Sometimes you have to value the little things in your life when you do not know what's going to happen.

The first time I ever went on a plane, I honestly don't remember, so I'm going to tell you about the second time I went on a plane. It was last summer. A lot of things happened that day. It was crazy. We lost our plane tickets for our flight, and we were waiting in line for almost three hours in the airport. I just wanted to go home and didn't feel like traveling anywhere.

I was worried. I thought we weren't going to make another flight. I thought we wouldn't even make it on a plane. I thought the hope was over. But then, our hopes came true. We re-booked the tickets for our flight.

We finally got on the plane, and we sat there for a few minutes. When we were about to take off, I started screaming. I was so scared. It felt like the plane was about to fall. My mom was looking at me like I was crazy. After I was in the air, I calmed down, and everything was fine.

I learned that there are some things that are valued more than others and you need to experience them all in life. Especially going on a plane. It's an event you would like to attend.

Love

by Serena P.

People always say love is fake and love is never true.

Well, I disagree.

Love is whatever you put in and whatever you make. When you are walking down the street or just walking, and you just see a cute couple, or you are just saying you want a girlfriend or a boyfriend or when you are in school and you have a crush on someone, or you like someone in school or in class? Well, you see that love, right?

No matter how old you are or where you are, love can be found everywhere. At any time or any place.



Fortnite

by Christopher P.

My favorite game is Fortnite. I play every day now. I used to play WWE 2K, Minecraft, Mortal Kombat X, but that was before I had an online account. I'm not the best Fortnite player. I'm good but not the best. I did get the battle pass for the first time. And I got the Rust Lord. You get skins in the battle passes. There are tiers in the battle passes to unlock stuff. And you can buy tiers with V-bucks.

When I play Fortnite, I play with my friends every day. But before I played Fortnite, I played Minecraft by myself. I play Fortnite with Angel R, Angel S, Johan, John, Jesse, Charles, and my cousin. We play online by joining a party.

When I die in Fortnite, I get so MAD!!! I throw stuff at the wall. When I win, I get so happy. But that happens sometimes.

Basketball Team Tryouts

by Angel R.

Have you ever made the team? A basketball team or any other team? Well, if you have or haven't, you will want to read this. It was on a Wednesday. The day was bright. We were playing a game, and I was just feeling myself. The sun hit me and told me I could make it. And when I jumped, I scored a three.

Before I made the team, I thought Coach was going to pick all eighth-grade boys, but he thought some of us seventh-graders were good, too. And he needed 15 players to be able to compete. So, he picked me and some of my classmates, and we did layups, shooting, and other drills. I felt good about myself. I was as proud as if we'd won a ring.

On the wood floor with my Nikes on, I feel good. In my shooting guard places, I play defense, I shoot, and I feel confident about shooting. When I jump and shoot, I hear the net slash. We scored a three!

I feel good playing basketball. One day, I want to be a coach and help others, but for now, I'm just trying to make a college team then go to the NBA and do me.

Two Sides of One Story

by Amanda R.

How many people still have their fathers in their lives? If you do, then you are very lucky. I miss my old life when I was happy. When I lived a kid's life. When I was little, I used to peep at everything he did. I just don't know why he kept it from me. I always depended on my dad for everything. He was kind of my light when I felt dark. I always thought I would have him by my side.

It was two days after Thanksgiving 2013. It was me, my parents, my brother, my two sisters, and my nephew. We were just eating and having fun. Then, my father got a phone call. He had to step out to do some "business." I already knew what he was going to do. Before he left, he and I had gone to the store to get soda. As we were coming back to the house, I said to him, "Dad, don't go out. I feel like something bad is going to happen." He didn't listen to me and went out anyway.

Now, this is where things go wrong. So wrong that it changed my life. That same night at around 9:00 PM, my mother got a phone call from my father's friend. He told her my father had gotten "locked up" for robbery. Once he said that my mother started crying. I was lost. I didn't know what was going on. I burst out in tears. I never knew what life was like without my father until that day and every day since.

Having to live with that day in the back of my head just killed me even more. When I went back to school, it was the worst day ever. While I was in school, I just couldn't stop thinking about what had happened. I was just so shocked. I didn't do much work that day. I just felt like staying in my bed all day long. As time went by, my grades started to drop. And my behavior started changing. In a good way, but also a bad way.

But that moment bettered my life. If my father hadn't gotten locked up, he was going to end up dead. Not only that, but I learned I have to be independent in life. It's hard to live life without him. I have a lot of hate towards him because of this. This ruined my life because I feel so hurt inside. I may not show it, but I do.

From his point of view, he was doing it for his family. But from my point of view, he was doing it for the money and fame. As I'm getting older, I do understand why he did it. He just should have been more careful. I thank God for this happening because my father was going to end up dead one way or another. But I also don't thank God because he took that one person that meant the most to me.

My Sadness to Your Happiness

by Anonymous

My life before anything happened was so good. I was happy. I had hope. Everything I had is gone because of that one person who left. I really wasn't ready for him to walk out the way he did. It all started when I was in my room laying down on my bed. My dad came in my room, telling me how much he so-called "loves" me. (I believed it since I was just a little girl.) My mom was in her room, cleaning. My dad went to the living room. Then he left. Later that day, I heard the keys in the front door. My brothers and I were already home with my mom. I knew it was my father. He went to my mom's room and called my brothers and me in there. He had a conversation that I will never forget.

It makes me mad the fact that I could've told him to stay but I let him walk away from my life. But he also wanted to walk away. You could say that my dad broke my heart way before any boy had the chance to. I know he said he loved me. But how can I believe that if he left? When I close my eyes, I feel heartbroken, depressed, unhappy. If this had never happened, I would gladly say, "I'm proud of my life." Now, all I really have of him are the two rings he gave me for Christmas. Those two rings he got me meant a lot to me because he gave them to me. But now I just hate seeing them because it reminds me of him. It hurts to see him. Every time I see him I want to tell him to come back home and that I miss him. But at the same time, I can't forgive him for what he did.

He knew he was going to change everything once he walked out those doors. I was crying to myself. I didn't get any sleep for that whole week. It's about to mark two years, and I'm still not over it. It hurts but it's okay because now I'm used to it. I hate that I lost all my hope. I don't depend too much on anyone in this world. Even your shadow leaves you when you're in darkness. I don't feel strong. The only reason I show up to school is because of my friend, Amanda. I told her a lot of stuff about my darkest point, and she gave me good advice. She tells me to come to school every day. Amanda understands me because she doesn't have a father, too.

I will see my father in the future, but only if I still want him in my future.

Fortnite Winners

by Angel S.

Have you ever won a game on Fortnite? I have. Before I won my first game on Fortnite, I thought I was not good at it and that this game was not for me. Now, Fortnite is my favorite game.

Fortnite is a good game, and I like it a lot. It keeps me entertained all day. This game is good for me and bad for me. It is good because when I'm bored, I play it a lot. It is bad because I play it too much. It's good that you can play with friends. If you play it too much, you won't get bored. And I feel good playing this game.

When I started playing this game, I was really bad at it, so I kept playing it, and I got better. Now no one can beat me. Practice made me better at the game. When I first got Fortnite, it was a Sunday. I got the game, and I was feeling happy. When I started playing, I kept dying, so I asked my friend to teach me how to play. He did, and I got better. He showed me how to build and collect things like wood. My friend told me how to play like this on the Internet.

Fortnite has taught me that if you keep trying, you will get better. And not only Fortnite. The same is true for other games or sports or anything. As long as you keep trying you can get better at anything you want. It just takes practice and asking for help.

A personal narrative essay
by Benjamin S.

It was a very hot summer day in the middle of August, and we had no school. We were on vacation, so I had to go visit my family in Mexico City. I was so excited to go, and when I got to the airport I saw the big planes, and I got so amazed. I got on it, and it went up, and my stomach was hurting, and it felt like I died. And when we were on the flight, the food was bad, and the drinks were nasty. The plane was shaking a lot. I could not go to sleep. We were so high in the sky that I thought that we were going to fall.

When I finally got out of the airplane, I forgot everything that I had been through because when I saw my family, I was so happy. If I had to do it again, I would do it because I will do anything to see my family.



Happy Death Day
by Alex T.

The day I first tried swimming, I almost died. I was with my cousins for a whole week. It was a hot summer day. A Sunday. So, we decided to go to the pool. I felt happy and excited.

When we arrived, I already had my trunks on, so I went to the locker room and got my sandals and towel. When I saw the pool...I felt drained. I got so scared I thought I was going to pee. I heard bubbles. Nobody encouraged me to go in the pool. Stepping into the pool for the first time was scary. My cousins knew how to swim, and I was the only one who couldn't swim.

I was holding onto the edge for a long time. I was scared. When I let go of the edge, I was standing. LOL. The lesson here, kids, is not to think. Just do it.

The Best Day Ever!

by Roy V.

The day I went to Hersheypark, I was so happy. It was the summer between the fifth and sixth grade. I went with my brother and my cousins. I was so excited to go. It was a hot day, and we were in a big rush. It was 6:00 AM, and I was ready to go downstairs. I said bye to my family and went to the car. I was really tired but happy, and we drove away. I fell asleep in the car for the rest of the ride.

My brother woke me up because we stopped to eat. The place was small from the outside, but when I entered, it looked so big. After I ate, I saw a candy claw machine and tried it out. My brother got some candy, and we ate it. Then we got on the road again headed to Hersheypark.

We parked and bought our tickets. Once we were inside, it was an amazing experience. We went to the water area of the park, which is where I went on a lot of rides: the wave pool, the lazy river, the water dungeon, and a lot of water slides. Then, the park was closing so we went back to our hotel. I saw a pool outside and got in. I was so happy. Then I took a shower and dressed up nice because we were going out to eat at a fancy restaurant. The food was really good.

The next and final day of Hersheypark, I went on the same rides again, but I was sad because it was my last day. But I had the best time. Then it was time to go. We stopped to eat at Burger King on our way home. After a long ride, we arrived home at 11:00 PM and everyone in my family was waiting for us. They were happy to see me, and I was happy to see them.

I learned that I can have fun everywhere I go with the people I really love. The trip changed me because I know that I will go on many trips like that again, and I am going to like it a lot.

Class 703



A personal narrative essay introduction

by Deo A.

I realized that life was not fair when I was seven years old. A girl hit me, so I hit her back. Then, I got in trouble for hitting her. I said, "She hit me first." But the teacher said you should never hit a girl. I really didn't know what to do.



A personal narrative essay

by Tyrece A.

By playing soccer, I realized that you can't always win. Some people win, and some lose, but I lost at a time when I didn't expect to. I have played soccer almost my whole life. I haven't won every game. I play left wing and sometimes right wing. I am excited when I play soccer.

On this day I was about to play soccer. I knew I was going to win. I knew I was going to win because the other team looked young. The other team was really good, though. All of a sudden I lost and that taught me a great lesson.

You can't always win in soccer. Soccer is something that disappoints people just like it had disappointed me. Soccer is one of my favorite sports, and I always expect to win. But you can't always get what you want.

How I Got Into Basketball

by Yahia A.

I wanted to be better than everyone in basketball. I watched plenty of videos on YouTube about how to dribble a basketball and play basketball. My cousin had asked me to play him, and I did. I ended up winning 12 to his 9. He was surprised because he was 100 times way better than me offensively, but defense-wise, I was dominating him. I was “saucing” him up, and 12 baskets for a beginner is pretty impressive. I felt amazed and proud of myself because that was my first ever 1v1 basketball game.

Since then, I’ve improved a lot. I can dribble the ball, shoot the ball very efficiently, and CLAMP UP (defense for short). I would watch Mr. Professor, and he could dribble the ball very well, almost like an NBA player. He would do weekly tutorials on how to control the ball and get past defenders. He currently has 5.3 million subscribers. I’m one of them, and I still watch him sometimes.

I usually practiced in my local park called Reservoir Oval Park. The park has a large soccer field, basketball courts, playgrounds. It was always very rare to see the courts empty, and if it was, best believe we were there. If it was packed, we would detour and go somewhere else. My cousin had challenged me a second time and knowing me, a Real Man never backs down, so I accepted it. He was winning, his 8 to my 5, and that’s when I had to go into beast mode. We ended up tied, 10 to 10. Once I had the ball in my hands, I just shot it, and as I was aiming at the rim, this was a nail-biting moment so I was very nervous because if I missed this shot, I would LOSE.

But being the amazing basketball player that I am, the ball went straight through the net. I won the game. I had shot a three-pointer which would mean a two-pointer in a 1v1, so I won 10-12. I was so excited because I started out being trash at basketball to being known around my neighborhood because of how good I am at basketball. I felt very proud of myself, and I walked home that day feeling accomplished.

Hurt, But Found Support at Last!

by Godlove A.

Ugh! I am going to die from all this work, I thought as I was working on a math problem. But then my teacher said, “Pencils down. Let’s have free time.” *YES! YES!* As I screamed it out to my friend, who was barely awake. My friend asked, “What is going on?” I told her that we could play any game we want. While I thought of a game to play, my teacher asked if anybody wanted to play a dance game where we get in line, hold on to each other and dance until she says stop. I was young, so I didn’t know how to decide for myself. So, I followed my friend where she went which was to play the dance game with the teacher. Everyone, even the teacher, got in line so we could start the game.

As the game started, I felt my friend behind me dozing off. She pushed me out of the line into a table with a loose nail on it. My right eyebrow scratched against the loose nail on the table. I started to see blood bleeding from my right eyebrow to the floor. I started to cry because my right eye felt like a thousand nails were piercing through it. My teacher saw my eyebrow and told one of the good students to tell the staff to watch the classroom. After one of the staff came in the class, my teacher hurried me into a car and drove me as fast as she could, cars honking behind, until she got to the hospital.

When we got to the hospital, it was really empty, so the doctors checked on me fast like they were finally happy they had something to do. It turns out that they had to sew my right eyebrow but, like the warrior I am, I didn’t cry. OK, I cried a little, but I was still strong. The doctors were so good that I didn’t even have to stay at the hospital for another day. My aunt, sisters, and mom hurried in after the doctors were gone and all of them asked how I was doing. They tried to make me happy by saying, “Your eyebrow looks better now.” I didn’t even know if I should have taken it as a compliment, but I took it anyway. The next day, I got a gift basket from my friend saying she was so sorry that her sleeping caused her to hurt her best friend.

Right now, my family is supporting me in everything I do even when I don’t want them there. Also, I focus a lot on school even though some classes are really boring. The advice I want you to take from this is never to tell yourself that you have no support system, even if you are a troublemaker because your family and friends will always be there for you through the bad and the good things.

Also, be sure to stay away from loose nails on furniture.

Best Years of My Life

by Shirley A. S.

The day I learned that I could get what I want any time was when I was about two years old. My family and I went to a toy store. I used the “I’m going to be sad” strategy and used my sad face; then I got what I wanted. I used that strategy a lot.

When I learned that I could get what I want, I was so happy because every little kid’s dream is to get what they ask for and what they want. I also learned that I used to be bossy and demanding. Now, I am not that bossy and demanding, and I am a better person.

I will just ask my mom and dad, and they will tell me I am going to get it and I get it. Sometimes, I don’t ask for stuff. If I have money, I will just buy it.



Myths

by Kenny B.

When was the first time you ever heard of a myth? For example, the Tooth Fairy, Bigfoot, ghosts, etc. Some myths are believed to be real, and others are believed to be fake. They are fake because you have never seen them and there is no proof, but some do have proof, like Bloody Mary. There was proof in a video.

When I was young, I used to believe in ghosts and other scary monsters. For some, I even had proof which made me a little more scared to go to the bathroom alone. I watched scary videos that had proof in them, so that is how I believed in them

Whenever I was alone in bed, I was always scared to use the bathroom or go to the kitchen (and I still am scared – I don’t know why). My younger brothers and sister and I used to believe in ghosts and thought they were real because of their scary spirits.

Some of these myths scare many children in the world, and they end up crying and believing them. I am scared of being alone because I always think that something is going to pop up. If you are like me, I believe in ghosts and scary legends. I learned that being scared is normal and the experience was quite scary.

I GOT CAUGHT!!!

by Jessica C.

The day I learned telling the truth is important is the same day I got caught in a lie. I remember my mom asked me something and I had to tell her the truth. I didn't want to keep on lying and making everything so much worse.

On this particular Wednesday at 12:48 PM, my mom asked me a question. There was this woman who had told my mom that I had been walking home (the woman knows my mom). So, the next day (Wednesday), my mom and my dad picked me up, and when we were walking home, my mom asked me the question. She said, "Are you walking home or taking the bus?" (Everything she told me and everything I told her was in Spanish.) I asked her, "Why are you asking?" She replied, "Because there is this woman who saw you walking home. Not only Monday or Tuesday but almost every day."

My heart felt like it stopped because I was so nervous and scared. My mom asked me one more time. I said yes, I had walked home. She asked me, "With who?" and I told her that sometimes I walked alone or sometimes with my friends. I didn't get in trouble. She just told me not to do it again and that if I want to go home walking just to ask her or tell her that I walked home.

Since then, I learned that telling the truth is important and better for all of us. Now, I walk home without having to lie.

The First Time I Was Hospitalized During School

by Alexa R. C. G.

The first time I was hospitalized during school, we were playing tag. All I could think is *Run. Keep running, until base.* I continued to run. I just kept running. I didn't notice my pace, nor the girl coming my way.

BAM! We both crashed into each other. I slid to the right, and she remained in the exact spot she was in. I felt paralyzed. I couldn't move a muscle. My legs were burning. My right knee felt broken. My eyes filled with tears and my body stiffened.

The teachers came over to the girl and me. They called an ambulance. I overheard the conversation between one of the teachers: "I don't think she's hurt." My body filled with rage and anger. *You're not inside my body, and you don't feel what I feel!* I said this inside my head, not wanting to talk.

My mother came and then they did an X-ray for my right leg when we were at the hospital. It came out fine. I just bruised my muscle. I learned that my body is sensitive and that I can't trust the nice "picture" that nurses have on because it's usually not real. I was sent home with a bandage wrapped around my knee.



Eric D.

by Eric D.

When I was a toddler, I learned that my parents and guardians loved me and that they wanted the best for me. They also wanted me to be safe. They wanted me to have the best life any kid could have. They always showed love. It made me feel important. It made me feel safe.

A personal narrative essay
by Ariel G. D.

Stealing money or something that is valuable is not the best idea. I was six years old when I stole money. I stole money because I wanted something I could play with and entertain myself with. You should never steal or take something without permission because there will be consequences. The reason I took money was because I just wanted something I could entertain myself with. I stole money while they were sleeping so then later I could say, "You guys can buy me a toy, I found this money on the floor." They then asked me, "Where did you get that?" I said, "From my toy collection." They then knew I took it because they had a certain amount of money, but then the same amount of money that the toy had cost wasn't there.

Stealing money will put you in a bad position because you are taking something that is not for you without telling other people. I stole the money only for the toy I wanted. Even though I got in trouble, they ended up buying the toy, and they told me not to steal anything. I got in trouble for a couple of days, and they told me not to steal ever again. There will be consequences when you steal.



A personal narrative essay
by Kevin G.

When I was a little kid, I wanted a game, but my mom said, "No." I really wanted the game, so I begged for it. But my mom kept saying, "No." I was sad that I could not get it.

When I left, I was sad and never got my game. I had toys, and that was one of the reasons my mom did not get me the game. Whenever I wanted something, she said, "No." So, when I got home, I was still thinking about it.

When I was thinking about the game, I was sad. I thought that I would never see the game again. So, I started thinking of other things to forget the game.

Ms. Understood

by Kayla G.

Have you ever pressured someone or ever been pressured? It's the worst feeling ever when you look back at it, knowing you did wrong. To be very honest, I know how it feels to pressure someone to get you something. Pressuring someone is to persuade or coerce them into doing something they don't want to do.

A day like today, walking down the street with a family member, then I see something I like and want. I remind myself I really don't need it. But...I was dying to have it. I saw a huge bear, and then I looked at my mom and said, "I want it, Momma." I was six at the time, so I really didn't know how to say things politely and didn't understand when to stop.

I kept saying, "Give me that. I want it now." My mother said, "No mamas, no money." But then eventually she bought it for me. But then, I stopped playing with it, and I got tired of it. I saw another object I wanted to play with, and I said, "Mommy, buy this before I tell Mami (my grandmother) about what happened." So she bought it for me once again.

Looking back on this day makes me feel like a bad daughter for not facing the fact she didn't have money to buy unnecessary things! And this makes me feel selfish and uncaring about her feelings. If I could change this day I would because I want to change all the mistakes that I've made. But I can't so what I have to do is accept the consequences. I felt before this day occurred that everything was fine and I could do and get what I want, but I was wrong. I learned from these experiences never to pressure someone to do anything when they don't want to! I will use these lessons in the future by letting myself know when it is not the right time and place to do things like this, so chill!

Kindergarten Liar

by Anastacia J.

I was not the best kid in Kindergarten. I used to get in trouble a lot. One day, my mom just didn't want to take it anymore. So, she punished me and said that I couldn't go to Six Flags with my family. I was so upset that I threw the biggest temper tantrum ever which got me into even more trouble.

So, one day, my sister and I were playing inside my house. When we were playing, I threw my doll and knocked over and broke my mom's vase. There were shards of broken white glass everywhere. I tried to hide the pieces, but it was too late. She heard it fall. I tried to lie and say my sister dropped it, but my mother knew it was me. When I tried to lie it only made it worse. My mom's face was bright red. Then she told me that she wasn't going to punish me until I lied. That lie was the worst lie I ever made because at that moment my mom told me I couldn't go to Six Flags. When she said that, I started to cry so hard. I turned completely red and couldn't breathe.

Breaking my mom's favorite vase and trying to lie to her about it made me realize that telling the truth may actually work to get you out of trouble. Now, I tell the truth as much as I can when I know it will get me out of trouble.



A personal narrative essay introduction

by Imani J.

I was someone who I never want to be again. When I was in elementary school, I was trying out for the basketball team. It was one of the scariest days of my life. It was as if I was in the jungle trying not to get hurt by the trees, bushes, and animals. Before I was afraid of what people thought of me and I would make a fool of myself. Now I really don't care. Their opinions are irrelevant to me although they can sometimes help me better myself at skills of teamwork and structure.

Tryouts were today. I woke in the morning feeling so ready. I got dressed so fast and went to school on time. I mean you could say I was excited but still nervous. I got through the day so smoothly until the sixth period when the teacher walked in calling my name for tryouts. When she did that my heart dropped.

Jaguar

by Cristofer M.

When I was little, I believed that I could win anything. That all stopped one day when I lost in a race to my godbrother. I never expected that to happen.

When I was little I was really good at racing. I felt like a champion. Only a few people in my family run really fast. My dad said, "If you continue like this, you could be as fast as a jaguar." I really didn't believe him, but I kept running.

One day when I was running, my godbrother wanted to race me. I said, "Okay," and when we raced, he won. It was a sunny day in the afternoon. I was running. My godbrother came up to me and challenged me to a race. I already knew I was going to win. When we started, he was running really fast until he won. I felt bad. I was like, *How can he beat me?* I wanted a rematch. Again and again, I kept losing. From there I realized that I can't always win in everything.

What I learned from that was I don't back down that easy because I kept challenging him for rematches.



A personal narrative essay introduction

by Yajaira M.

When I first joined a soccer team, I was seven years old. It happened on a Friday. I was really shy to join the soccer team. On this day, the coach will let you know if you were going to be on the soccer team or not. It was kind of sad because most of my friends did not make the team. I was happy and sad at the same time because I had made the team, but my friend had not.

I learned that I am not only a nerd, but I also know some sports and felt so happy and so proud of myself. I also wanted to cry in that moment of excitement.

The Fairy Lie
by Dzenana M.

When I was six years old, I believed in the Tooth Fairy. I was a girl that loved “being” a princess. I loved the color pink. At that time, I wanted a Barbie doll. And then my tooth fell out. I had asked my uncle to buy me a Barbie doll, and he said to me, “Just put your tooth under a pillow, and next time you wake up, and you will have a Barbie doll!” I was so excited when I heard that. I thought, *ohhh, OK, I am going to try that.* I put my tooth under the pillow, and I fell asleep.

The next day, I woke up and I picked up my pillow, and I had a shocked face. I said, “Where is my doll?” Well, then I learned my lesson. Don’t always believe what people say or tell you. I was upset at the time, but I was happy that I tried it out. Anyways, when my uncle came in my room (after I noticed there was no Barbie doll), I had a frown on my face. He came and said to me, “Ha! I got ya!” Then he said to me that I would get the Barbie doll one day. But I was happy I got to try it out even though he tricked me. When my birthday came around, he got me the doll I wanted.

What I learned about myself from that experience was that I could be gullible. I mostly believed what people would tell me. But since that experience, I can sometimes tell what they tell me isn’t true, so that’s like a strength of mine. So, that’s a nice personality that I have.

Playland

by Sebastian P.

When I go to Playland, I get super excited. Once I get there, I get to see the big rollercoasters. There are stations for Popeyes and Nathan's. That makes me happy because I like food a lot.

My favorite foods in Playland are popcorn, funnel cake, Popeyes, and Nathan's. Popeyes has some good chicken. My father buys the \$20 box. It is so good. There were eight pieces of chicken. In Nathan's, there were cheese fries, bacon cheese fries, and hot dogs. All of these stations have drinks as well.

My favorite rollercoasters are the Superman, Dragon, 2000 (spins a lot), water rides, and Crazy Mouse. In the Crazy Mouse, it's crazy because it's a mini-roller coaster, but it turns rough. It hurts me. The cart is a mouse. The scariest ride is the Sky Flyer. It goes upside down a lot, and I thought I was going to fall out.

There are shows with zombies on the stage or a rockstar band. There are also these rides that are scary because zombies pop out, as well as skeletons, vampires, and gorillas.

Even though the rides can be scary, I go on them anyway. I'll never let fear in my way.