

Cover Letter

To whom it may concern,

When I first heard the assignment was to write about my literary experience I knew exactly what I could write about. Dyslexia has impacted the way I read and write in numerous ways. Picking another topic was out of the question.

While writing my rough draft I noticed I left so many details out. I was stumped on how I was going to include details like the first chapter book I read, book clubs, essays, and remain in the word count. To reduce my essay's length, I enlisted the help of my friends. They made comments on my doc on things that could be worded better, didn't make sense, and could be deleted. Those suggestions were able to make my essay drop from 1075 words to around the range of 970-1010.

Coming up with the details was easy because of the way dyslexia affected me. Condensing those details and finding the right words to express them wasn't. The first rough draft was definitely rough. The writing itself was sloppy. There were missing details, bad grammar, and a rushed conclusion. Overall not how I wanted the essay to be. When I revised it, the details I wanted were all there. The grammar was nearly as horrendous, and it told a coherent story. The issues were a few grammatical errors and the essay was too long. Using both of the drafts I was able to create an essay that tells a story and wasn't grammatically awful.

The purpose of the essay was to write about our literacy experience(s). My purpose was to share how it was for me to read and write as a dyslexic person. I chose this because I felt that

this is what I'd be able to write the most about. I also had the most details for it. My audience is anyone who wants to learn about how the literacy experience changes if you're dyslexic.

Unlike my review, which was informative, this essay takes a more narrative and emotional approach. In this essay, I wanted the reader to be able to follow my story of growing up with dyslexia, so I used the first person perspective instead of the third person like in the review. This better conveyed my life and not if or if you shouldn't read a book. I was able to put in more details since I wasn't trying to avoid spoiling anything. This gave my essay more of a beginning, middle, and end. It reads more like a story than a New York Time article over a book. Those choices separate this essay from ones like the book review.

Had I not made those changes then the essay would've been more like a textbook or Rotten Tomatoes review than a narrative. Finding out the audience helped me discover how to properly communicate my literacy experience. The drafts bettered my final draft. All these steps are what led to an appropriate final outcome.

I Can't Spell Literacy

“D-Y-S-L-E-X-I-A, dyslexia.” Isn't it weird to give a learning disability that affects people's reading and writing ability one of the most over-complicated spellings in the English language? It's odd enough that they teach that cursive helps cope with dyslexia, but there have been times when teachers would yell at the class for using it. Also, the coping mentioned is nonexistent, after nine-plus years since my diagnosis, I had to look at the board to make sure I spelt literacy right.

In kindergarten, we're taught the ABCs and the days of the week. We are shown how to spell our names using star-shaped stickers and a black piece of construction paper. Unlike the other kids who got the hang of it, I remember being the only one who'd look over the test dividers to see my name on the name card in front of my seat. This gave my parents reason to suspect that maybe I wasn't ready for elementary school. A few months into the school year they sent me to back preschool. There we would count to ten and recite the alphabet, but we weren't \expected to know it. As a result, the same issues that had happened in kindergarten were happening in preschool; however, my lack of ability would either go completely unnoticed or was blamed on the fact that I was too young.

When they sent me back to kindergarten I couldn't say there had been any improvement. I still couldn't spell and was falling below the school's reading expectations. In first grade, my teacher, Mrs. Rouse, introduced us to the wonders of “book clubs”. I say book clubs because they were book “clubs” for my classmates. They read with a group of people who were on their reading level, but when you're too far behind your class's level then you have no one to read with. My classmates would talk about their stories, how they were reading at a fourth-grade level, or how they got moved up in a reading group. Those were the conversations I heard but

never had. We were given writing assignments based on the books, and when I was having trouble spelling the conversation would go something like this.

“Mrs. Rouse, how do you spell read?” “Look it up in the dictionary or sound it out. Also, stop looking over the dividers, you should already know how to spell your name. You’re going to be in second grade next year, aren’t you?”

Second grade is when they introduced the “special reading class.” One where you’d have to keep the book flat on the table and as a lady watches you read. If I didn’t read well enough the repercussions would be practically nonexistent. Eventually, they sent me to a new room. It was me and some lady who kept asking questions like, “What does this say?” “What doesn’t match?” “Can you read this sentence?” Two weeks later I was told I had a problem: that I’d be sent to a different special room with other kids with dyslexia. I began going to a small classroom that resembled a storage closet, where a lady would show me how to write in cursive and give me candy or a toy if I did it well. To say this year of dyslexia classes helped me would be an overstatement.

In third grade those issues became clear. Mrs. Rouse, once again, was my teacher along with a few others. Mrs. Rouse’s attitude towards me didn’t change. I couldn’t spell are or of, and she didn’t enjoy that my dyslexia classes just so happened to fall on her class some days. She didn’t like me and that was fine. Ms. Solano, one of my other teachers, would help and try to boost my confidence however she could. She didn’t account for the fact that I wasn’t a good reader, and reading *Fish in a Tree* and *Thank You, Mr. Falker* may be a struggle for someone who’s never read above a first-grade level. She made me a better reader though. I finally felt that maybe my disability wasn’t disabling.

This stuck with me, so in fourth grade when book clubs came around I wasn't alone. I read a book, called *Shiloh*, that was actually on level. I was with a group of some of my classmates, and we'd discuss what we had read. I was having the conversations I had been hearing for a while. I was reading chapter books like everyone else. I felt accomplished for once.

At the end of fourth grade, I moved to a new school. There I met two teachers who changed me for the better. They saw something in me that I couldn't see. Mrs. Lawrence and Ms. Martinez set me up to be where I am now.

In fifth grade, I had the two of them plus Mr.C and a teacher who I don't remember. Mr.C and Ms. Martinez put me in the advanced reading groups. I read *Holes* and a Spanish book about Helen Keller that I don't remember well, but the point is they allowed me to prove myself. They said I didn't need the dyslexia classes anymore, so I was removed from the roster. I was able to grow outside of the mental handicap they'd placed on me since I started school.

Since then I've grown a love for writing as a form of expression and can enjoy some books. There have been teachers who treated me a little differently or refused to give me accommodations, but I know I can handle myself. I was told I had a disability, but I don't feel disabled. I know I said I had to look up at the board to see how to spell literacy; I didn't have to while typing this conclusion. I guess I should've said I couldn't spell literacy.

Works Cited

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