

**For my education narrative, I received a B- because I didn't meet the word limit and because I was vague when describing my story. In order to make this story more interesting, I added more descriptive language and I went into detail so that there wouldn't be any confusion. I wanted the story to flow better, so I provided information that I purposely retracted. Lastly, I included an edited version of my Open Lab "Education Experience" post to explain the purpose of this education narrative.**

## **PROVING MY INNOCENCE**

It was the middle of the first semester of junior year. The air surrounding this gloomy day was cold and windy. College Now classes were canceled, and I was excited to leave school earlier than usual. Unfortunately, my peace of mind was shattered due to the upcoming meeting I had with my National Honor Society advisor.

I was sitting in front of her desk, staring out the window, watching kids walk to their respective bus stops. The cold wind gently caressed my face. I wanted to leave badly, but I knew that sitting through this meeting would put everything to rest.

The teacher sits down on her squeaky chair and lets out a deep breath. "Do you understand why you're here?" I shook my head in confusion. I genuinely couldn't think of a response to her question. The pen in between her fingers gently tapped the paper that was neatly placed on her desk. "Your classmate..." *My classmate huh...you mean my psycho ex-friend who has it out to get me*, I briefly thought, "...wrote me a letter and told me that you always stare at her with malicious intent. She said that every time she looked up, she saw you angrily staring at her."

The teacher gave me a chance to explain my side. I told her, "My face naturally has a "cold" demeanor; if she felt that I was staring at her, which I wasn't, that's her problem. I'm not going to change my natural expression for someone who clearly doesn't like me." But she responded to me as if it was my problem. "As a National Honor Society student, you shouldn't be getting into altercations; if she is causing you trouble, you need to ignore her." She said.

This response left me puzzled. Did she not listen to what I explained to her? Doesn't she understand that I didn't stare at her? That in turn means that I ignored her right? She kept talking and talking, and everything that she was saying went through one ear and out the other, until I heard her utter false accusations. "You influenced your friends to do things that they didn't feel comfortable doing; you control their actions." I was in disbelief. This was completely false, my character was being questioned based on rumors. Should I be surprised though? This teacher was showing clear favoritism towards her student. Yes, as a teacher, she had to investigate thoroughly to see if it was true, but either way, her faith was in her student.

"Do you have anything to say about this?" Her voice snapped me out of my deep thoughts. At the time, I didn't care to explain myself, I just wanted to go home, "She's spreading rumours", is all I say.

"Do you want to explain why?" She asks me. I shook my head, "Not today, I really have to get home."

She nods her head and allows me to leave. I gathered my belongings and left the classroom. Waiting outside was my ex-friend and her clique. As I walked past her, I felt the superiority complex she had, grow even bigger, as if she achieved her goal. I couldn't help but to feel deep rage develop inside me.

During the weekend, I couldn't stop thinking about what happened. I was annoyed and frustrated. I hated the fact that there was unnecessary drama because of stupid rumors. I wanted to do something about it, I *needed* to do something about it.

After a while of debating on what I should do, I took a deep breath, threw myself onto my bed, and reached for my phone to text my friends in our group chat. I needed their advice on how I should handle things.

"What if I make a PowerPoint?" I presented an idea. They all laughed at the concept because of how petty it sounded, but they came to an immediate agreement. Although it was out of spite, they believed it would settle that matter for good.

My friends offered to help me by sending me screenshots of messages that proved my innocence, and told me their own experiences that I could add. Other friends of mine who were acquainted with her, agreed to me using voice messages of them explaining how this student bad mouthed me any chance she got.

As a result of all the preparation, I was finally ready to email my teacher.

*"Hello. I was thinking about the meeting we had and at the end you asked if I had anything else to say. I had said I didn't, but after discovering things that could potentially risk my spot in the National Honor Society, I want to have another meeting with you. I made a presentation to clear up any misunderstandings. This is my way of ending this situation once and for all. My character is constantly being questioned- I am being portrayed as something I am not. I would like to have my friends present at this meeting, mainly because they play a huge role in this. If this is ok with you, please let me know."*

I nervously bit on my lip waiting on her reply, thinking of all the possible ways she could respond.

A couple of hours later, my teacher answered and told me that she had no problem with scheduling a day to have a meeting.

After sorting out the details, the day finally arrived. The powerpoint was displayed on the smartboard and it was time to explain my "case". The presentation included everything from freshman to junior year. It had every screenshot that we could find where she harassed us and lied to us and consented recordings of other students who she spread those rumors to. It was petty on my part but it felt pretty good to release everything that I've been holding in.

On account of seeing all the overwhelming amount of evidence, the teacher finally believed me. She hated the fact that her favorite student lied to her with ease and that she was targeting me due to jealousy and hate. She apologized to me and said that she would talk to her as soon as possible. "I never want another situation like this to happen again."

When this situation occurred, I was annoyed and tired. Annoyed because it was a new issue that my ex friend formulated, and tired because I knew she was never going to stop. I understood that she would always spread lies about me, but to tell my NHS advisor something so trivial and foolish; was a new level of disrespect that I couldn't allow to go unchecked. My character was being questioned by a teacher that I actually respected and the fact that she believed her, didn't help my case at all.

I understand that favoring a student over another happens, but if it's clouding your judgement, you shouldn't have "favorites" at all. If you have a close relationship towards a student, you should be able to discern what the truth is, especially if you haven't even directly talked to the student they're accusing. You shouldn't be enabling their toxic behavior.

This occurrence changed my views on the teacher, and I lost my respect for her. As an adult, you should have a neutral stance when dealing with problems that have no concrete evidence and are based on insecure feelings.

**I did not revise this Unit, however I am aware of the changes that need to be done. In the first two sources, I was ok at explaining it, but there were some quotes that needed more information on what I thought. In the third source, it was weak due to the fact that I didn't give much thought into it. If I were to revise it, I would go back and provide my input much more and for the third source I would rewrite it and organize my ideas better.**

## **STAY WOKE, THE NORTH'S CREEPING**

Was the North really an ally towards black people?

What were you taught regarding this issue? When I was younger, history books were watering down the truth of the North's involvement in racism. I was taught that the North was against slavery, and that they fought for the rights of black people and I continued to believe that for years. Until I stumbled across a video of a black family being harassed in Queens, NY, in the 1970s (?). This led me to believe that they were spreading lies all for the sake of looking good in history.

In my research I expect to find some websites that tell the truth and other websites that spread misinformation. I believe this to be so, because, although there are websites that expose the hidden truth of American History, I think that there will be sites that will try to hide or deny it. I also think that it will be difficult to find information on the internet regarding my topic because of how contrary it is to "popular" belief.

If I find information that goes against my belief, it will further prove that they are hiding the truth. American history isn't all squeaky clean as they try to make it appear. I know that there are many faults and disturbing facts concerning American history. If those websites spread misinformation, I will write about it, only to prove my point. I would still continue to research my topic, because I truly believe that even one website will confirm my view.

## **Northern Racism**

"Africans in America/Part 4/Margaret Washington on Northern Racism." *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, [www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2987.ht](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2987.ht)

Margaret Washington indicates that the northern part of the United States had slavery and was slow to the liberation of enslaved black people. For example, they passed laws that refrained blacks from leaving, so that they can settle elsewhere. In addition, the laws that existed in the north prohibited African Americans from riding streetcars and steamers. They couldn't vote even if they owned property. She continues to explain that, no matter how poor a white person was, they still had privilege over a wealthy black person. It also affected immigrants who came to the United States because they would automatically have a higher status than black people who were born in the country. This created problems because those same immigrants took jobs away from African Americans.

One statement that Washington emphasizes is, "The whole idea of Jim Crow and segregation of the races really originates in the North". This is one piece of information that I never heard taught in schools or online. The Jim Crow law was always associated with the South, never with the North, because it was their way to keep black people oppressed. In all honesty, I question the validity of Washington's assertion because, this is the first claim I've seen someone make regarding segregation in the North. However, I do believe that this is a possibility because, although slavery in the north wasn't boldly stated in texts, it occurred. This specific detail requires more research, in order for me to make a proper conclusion.

Washington also introduces the idea of the privilege white people have over black people. She asserts, "that no matter how poor you are, no matter what situation you're in, if you're white, then you are far better off than the wealthiest person of African descent." I completely agree with this remark because, the system of America was created for white people and their success. It wasn't created to uplift black people. America wanted to keep black people subdued. They were afraid of having them revolt or coming to an idea that insinuated their freeness. Black people then and now have to work ten times harder than a white person (rich or not) in a work space to prove why they are qualified. And oftentimes, the white person who has less qualifications are chosen over the black person who went to an ivy league college, or who participated in many programs and internships. Furthermore, if a white person has connections in a certain field, they could easily steal that job opportunity from a black person who needs it.

## **The North's Stance On Slavery**

*Slavery in the North*, slavenorth.com/.

In the article "Slavery in the North", it bluntly explains the truth of racism in the north, beginning with slavery. States such as: Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and much more, participated in the owning of slaves. Even American revolutionists (John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin), bought, sold, and owned black people and other prominent American "heroes" did as well. A historian named Joanne Pope Melish recalls a time in the 1950s where her high school textbook discussed slavery only occurring in the South. However, when she lived in Rhode Island after 1964, she encountered a vague reference to local slavery, and almost every person she asked knew anything about it. But, when asking the members of the historical society, they told her it was "brief and benign, involving only the best families, who behaved with genteel kindness." Furthermore, although slavery existed in the north, it never reached the numbers of the south. Slavery played a huge role in the economy of northern states, but it failed due to climate and economy. It had little to do with morality.

The author includes an important statement saying, "The North failed to develop large-scale agrarian slavery, such as later arose in the Deep South, but that had little to do with morality and much to do with climate and economy." Many history books today tell us that the north disliked the idea of owning black people, hence why it wasn't rampant in the north. They also say that slavery did not exist in the North due to climate, and their way of producing money, which was factories. Yes, they were not able to create a full scale "operation" as the south, but they still participated.

In many current pieces regarding slavery in the north, it was always said that northerners detested the slavery, however, in the article, the author argues that "The elements which characterized Southern slavery in the 19th century, and which New England abolitionists claimed to view with abhorrence, all were present from an early date in the North. Practices such as the breeding of slaves like animals for market, or the crime of slave mothers killing their infants, testify that slavery's brutalizing force was at work in New England." This proves that some historians have turned the truth into something that they deemed appropriate in order to paint America as the "land of the free". They admit to slavery, but they water it down by saying, the north abhorred how the south treated black people. They didn't agree to their brutal style at all, but we see here that this was falsified to make it seem like slavery wasn't as bad as what it actually was.

## **"The Beacon of Hope"**

Sokol, Jason. "The North Isn't Better than the South: The Real History of Modern Racism and Segregation above the Mason-Dixon Line." *Salon*, Salon.com, 13 Dec. 2014, [www.salon.com/2014/12/14/the\\_north\\_isnt\\_better\\_than\\_the\\_south\\_the\\_real\\_history\\_of\\_modern\\_racism\\_and\\_segregation\\_above\\_the\\_mason\\_dixon\\_line/](http://www.salon.com/2014/12/14/the_north_isnt_better_than_the_south_the_real_history_of_modern_racism_and_segregation_above_the_mason_dixon_line/).

American History creates an image of the north as the land for liberty. The actual land of opportunity. If you were to ask anyone their thoughts on northern history, they might tell you that they were an ally to black people. White abolitionists fought for the freedom of black people. The union fought solely for the purpose of the betterment of black people. The North was an amazing place for black people to live in. They were able to live as their own freely; no discrimination, so segregation. But the reality of it all is proven otherwise. The North has a sinister side to it, a side that the history taught in schools doesn't expand on. Slavery had roots in New England and New York City and the history of the twentieth-century shows the horrifying record of racial violence and the segregated communities of white and black neighborhoods.

This article brings up an interesting fact, that I wasn't sure was true. Sokol states, "...the centrality of African slavery in many northern cities, episodes of brutal racial violence like the New York City Draft Riots, or the fact that Jim Crow laws had their origins in Massachusetts." In the PBS written article on Northern History, Margaret Johnson included a similar statement as well. I was a bit skeptical since it was a claim that I never heard of and because she did not include the specific state. However, Sokol mentions that segregation in fact originated in the North, specifically in Massachusetts. The south has a clear part in the racism in America, however, the pride and glory of America (the North) is just as guilty for the oppression of black people.

## **So, What Is the Truth?**

How has history falsified the hideous truth of the north? White people who lived in those times attempted to write the events that occurred and twisted the reality of the north so that people would believe that, even though the United States participated in discriminatory acts, white people who lived in the north didn't justify those actions. These pieces of information were passed down, changed, and in turn, included in history books that are taught in schools today. What is the truth? America as a whole treated black people terribly. No amount of lies will erase the fact that the North participated in slavery; they dehumanized black people just as the south

did. And what's even more shocking is segregation originating in the north. History has made it seem as if the South were responsible for all acts of racism, which is true, however, the north also engaged in that systematic racism as well. The white people who lived in the north gentrified black communities, forcing them to leave so that they could turn it into something "better". When black people tried to leave the hood to live a better life, they constantly harassed them, screaming at them with racial slurs, because they viewed themselves as superior. What does this show? It didn't matter where they lived, in this time period, white people across America didn't want to view black people as equals, so they oppressed them. These lies have made people believe that America had a redemption arc. "They've done terrible things, but in turn they helped fixed it." It makes it seem like the trials and tribulations that black people have faced are miniscule because the "Great America helped eradicate the matter. That is insulting to black people who live in this country; it manipulates us into thinking that we are exaggerating what happened. It's disrespectful and that's why American history has to be rewritten because a huge part of it lies on black people, their oppression, and their contributions to society. As I grow up, I discover different truths to Black history and it disheartens me that in school it was taught to me. It was an erasure of my ancestors trials. Black kids deserve to know the truth; to know the hardships our community faced and how we were able to remain steadfast to accomplish our goals. We wholeheartedly believed in our truth and our power, and that's what American history is, no matter how hard they try to erase it.

### **PAST MEETS FUTURE**

"Hey Ninmah, how are we doing at the end of the semester. Did we pass our classes with flying colors? Were we able to deal with our stress in a healthy manner? Did you improve your art skills? I hope that our plan of success is going well. I know that it's hard but remember your goal and why you're really doing all of this. Don't give up and keep grinding. Stop thinking about the people who you thought would have supported you, but think about the support you already have. It's the only thing that matters."

This was my message to myself at the end of the semester. Looking back at this, I was optimistic and hopeful. I had motivation for myself to do better. I wanted to get out of my shell; I hated being weighed down by my social anxiety. Constantly going to war with myself was honestly exhausting, but I wanted all of that to change. I always told others to follow their dreams and to believe in themselves, but I couldn't do that for myself. Isn't that hypocritical? I knew it was but that's why I decided to start listening to my own voice. In that message I promised myself that I wouldn't get swept up by procrastination and stress; I told myself I could do better if I pushed myself.

And that's what I did. The first couple of months, even though there were assignments I had to complete back to back, I actually completed them on time. I was so proud of myself. I had some time to spend for myself because I was so on top of things. I was a little stressed but it wasn't something I couldn't handle, so I brushed it off. I was doing hobbies that I liked to do, like drawing. I was drawing daily and I noticed improvement in each of my illustrations. I was so happy that I was able to make time for things like that. I was able to make time for my friends, life was pretty ok.

I was sleeping at times that were normal for me, (2:00am, 3:00am latest), and even though others don't find those times reasonable, it worked for me as a night owl. Even though I felt groggy in the morning, I still put in the effort to wake up for classes and pay attention.

Where did things go wrong?

I thought that if I continued like this, I'd be good just until the semester ended. I thought I'd end the semester with a boom.

I was completely wrong.

After midterms took place, I noticed myself slowing down, but I didn't think much of it. I slept later than usual (4:00am-8:00am). My sleep schedule was absolutely garbage, but no matter what I tried, I couldn't go to sleep. I wasn't paying much attention in classes, I would sometimes fall asleep. I tried to shake off the tiredness and complete my assignments, but I found myself doing them the day before or on the day they were due. I was back into an old routine I promised myself I wouldn't go back to.

But I thought I would be fine, I mean I was still submitting my work, and that was the only thing that mattered to me. However, as a result, I didn't have time to do the things that I enjoyed. I was buried in homework and I couldn't reach the surface.

One day, I wasn't able to sleep, so I spent the whole night up and slept right before my first class started. I thought that I would wake up on time, but consequently, I slept right through. I had a raging migraine the whole day and I had pre-cramps that would strike every now and then. I stayed in bed for most of the day and ended up falling asleep by the evening. When I woke up it was 10:50pm and I remembered that I had homework due for math.

When I signed into the website, I saw that there was a quiz due at midnight. My heart sank and I could feel my heart quickening its pace. I didn't study, so I didn't know if I could pass. But I didn't want to be pessimistic, so I hoped for the best. Unfortunately, upon taking the test, I was struggling to answer the questions. I didn't know anything that was being asked, I wanted to scream.

After completing it, I saw what I dreaded the most; a failing grade. My chest started to tighten and I could feel the tears beginning to well up in my eyes. I was breaking down, I couldn't take it anymore. Everything that I tried so hard to build up came crashing down. I didn't know what to do with myself, my first instinct was to talk with my friends and older sister. And they helped me calm down, but it only worked for that night. After that night, I went downhill.

I couldn't sleep, I lost motivation, I lost my appetite. I was in a deep hole that I couldn't climb out of. I skipped classes and refused to do work that I had due. I couldn't care less.

After days went by, I knew that something was up. Was it depression? This wasn't my first time lashing out, but I didn't want to admit it. I still don't want to. I kept thinking over and over about my actions. I needed advice.

It was really late, somewhere around 2:00am, and I FaceTimed my friends. After an hour of talking about social issues and teasing each other, I mustered up courage to tell them what I was going through. One of my friends who has depression, sensed that I could possibly be going through the same thing, but she didn't want to tell me.

I told them that I would go to therapy and get the help that I need. I was no longer going to rely on myself.

It's the end of the semester, and I'm still submitting things late, like this reflection (sorry professor). I still feel like my world is in shambles, but I'm glad that I will be going to a therapist soon.

I am incredibly grateful that I was able to have you as a professor this semester, you were incredibly understanding and I thank you for that.