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English 1121 spring 2021
Final Portfolio and Reflection

Reflection

This semester, I faced a lot of challenges with my writing. I felt like I needed to think outside the box in order to get a good grade and for my work to stand out. But now that classes are over, and looking back at all of the assignments, I felt that I've made progress and I really pushed myself in my research. And as a reader I learned that every piece of writing has a different tone while reading articles in class and hearing writing, I've realized the power that tone has on writing pieces. So this semester I guess I worked on adding different tones to my writing. In unit 1 when I wrote about the phrase in my discourse community, I felt like I was having a conversation with the reader which I didn't think was possible. For unit 2, I wrote about homelessness in NYC and I was actually passionate about this topic. So the article sounded more like an informative essay than an article that belonged in New York Magazine. Unit 3 was actually more complicated than I thought. Making a podcast sounds easy and it's just talking but while working on it, it actually took longer than I had planned. It took three types of apps and like 30 different recordings, and at the end I had to transfer my final work to soundcloud, so this unit definitely taught me to give myself time to submit work. So I would say that this English class and this semester made me grow as a writer, reader and a student.

Unit 1 was one of the strangest pieces of writing that I've written. When I first read about what we had to write about, I was confused because I felt free writing about my personal experience. And writing about a phrase that's so close to me and my friends was very exciting for me because I wanted to share the story of how the phrase came to become so common between us. When rereading my article, I would do things differently. For example I would probably change my introduction, it really doesn't introduce my topic, which is the phrase "anndd... Scene". I would start with how my friend and I met each other so the reader knows what kind of friendship we had. We are built on dark humor and sarcasm, so with the reader knowing this the article would have been more understandable. Also in the second to last paragraph I would add more events that made me realize that the phrase was only understood between my friend group. So that's what I would change in my revision for unit 1.

After realizing that the writing assignments were going to be more casual than informative, I decided to write about homelessness in NYC for unit 2. Writing about a New York City problem is a perfect topic for the New York Magazine so I decided to write a casual article as if the readers are New Yorkers. For my article I titled it "The Rough Reality of Being Homeless in NYC" but now I changed to "Being Homeless in NYC" because throughout my article I noticed that I'm giving the readers more of an inside look of what it's like to be homeless in NYC, also my original title was way too long for a title. Also while I was rereading I realized that the order of which my article was written was unorganized and messy, I missed adding more ways to help and websites on which people reading my article could help. Also I should add more transitioning words because the article did not run smoothly. Because I rushed the final

piece I didn't add pictures so on my revision when I'm talking about the anti homeless architecture I'll add images so the reader gets a better understanding. Also I rewrote my conclusion because I felt like I needed to end the article on a happier note.

For unit 3, I faced a lot of challenges. For this assignment I created a podcast about how last year had changed me and what I learned about myself. I decided to talk about how I became more sure about myself and more confident about my decisions. At first I went a week listening to random podcasts just to get familiar with how a podcast is shaped and what tone they were in. After I started looking for apps to help me create my podcast, I ended up using the voice memo app on my phone, it was easier to use and I did 13 recordings before I submitted my final piece. But while submitting it openlab isn't allowing me to submit it so I had to transfer my work into sound cloud in order for me to submit to openlab, so I learned that I had to give myself time before I think I'm done because maybe submitting work takes time and work.

Now that the semester is over, I'm grateful that I took this class because it really helped me grow in my writing and it prepared me for the real world. Like for example submitting my assignments on time and not procrastinating, also to really think about a topic not just writing about a boring topic. Also to plan things out because it would make my writing easier and it'll keep me organized.

UNIT 1

Hollywood but in Brooklyn

In film making after a dramatic scene ends, the director/producer will say 'aaand scene' and close the film clap board and the actors go back to their regular mood. That's exactly what goes on in my group of friends. In this group there are 5 of us including my older sister. We try to keep the friendship as a safe place and I feel good in my own skin when I'm with them. We've all known each other for more than 6 years, and some of us work together, so we know when someone is serious or just needs a laugh. So when we use the phrase "aaaaand scene" it's because we know the person needs to chill and needs a laugh. This word has become so familiar to us that we don't even recognize we are saying it, using this phrase has become a habit between us. In the group, that phrase is so normalized that we don't even call jinx when we say it at the same time.

It all started because of a meme, about 4 years ago or so. It was a picture of a man in a suit taking a bow with the caption "aaand scene" and my sister shared the meme on Instagram. In the text she said "you; when you are done having a bad attitude" and I found it funny because of how relatable it was, due to the fact that I'm known to be the dramatic one in the family and being loud all the time. After that, my sisters and I used 'aaand scene' after one of us is done having a breakdown, or come home ranting about a small inconvenience at work. And at some point I got so used to using the phrase that I brought it to my friend group by accident. One day at work, one of my friends was giving a speech about why the guys at work shouldn't be allowed to use the girls locker room bathroom, and for some reason she was very passionate about her argument, to the point that it got a bit intense, she was using a lot of hand gestures. When she was done ranting about it, I said 'and scene', I said it in a low voice thinking that no one was going to hear me say it, but they all heard it and laughed. I knew she was serious about the situation but she was getting worked up about it and I felt like she needed to breathe, so I broke the awkwardness with that phrase. Now still to this day, when one of us is having like a mini episode or when we are on our period and a bit moody we used "and scene". Sometimes we even use our hands to clap them and pretend like we just closed the film clap board. Our definition for this phrase is basically when one of us is being

over dramatic and/ or causing a scene. And sometimes we say it to ourselves when we feel we are being over dramatic or yelling a lot.

We also used this phrase to lighten up the mood sometimes or make someone smile. During the summer I was the designated driver for the group. We were headed to the beach and some guy stole our parking space that we've been waiting 10 mins for and I just didn't think it was fair that we waited for the space and some random guy just comes out of nowhere and parks there. So I started cussing the driver and yelling at him about how I was going to hit his car and probably pop his tires. But after a while we realized it wasn't worth dealing with him, we decided to leave and find another parking spot, and my friend from the back seat yelled "aaaaaaand scene". And I grew a smile on my face because I knew that my yelling at the driver was really unnecessary and I caused a scene in front of a whole bunch of people. So that day we just kept laughing the whole time about how my anger gets the best of me sometimes and that my outburst was an Oscar worthy scene. Looking back at this event, they made me feel better about my embarrassment and they made me feel comfortable again after the awkwardness that I made. And how that phrase 'aaaand scene; could change a whole person's mood, from yelling at a person and threatening his car to laughing in the car with the best people in the world looking for another parking space.

The day I realized that "aaaaand scene" was just between me and few people was when I was waiting in line for an iced coffee and a lady in line was talking to someone on the phone of why Biden wasn't going to be a good president and etc, so when the cashier called her she ended the call and I wanted to say it out loud but I realized I couldn't because no one was going to understand and people were probably going to look at me weird. And I really wished one of my friend was there to witness this lady's loud argument so we could have a laugh later. But later we later text each others stories about how someone caused a sense in the train or how our manager are acting fake when the CEO walks in. We also use 'aaaand scene' in text with each other, when we are giving out our opinions and we get defensive about it and we just send a gif of someone taking a bow. Which is basically just mocking each other about how dramatic we are with little things.

I like that we share this phrase because it makes us feel more comfortable with each other and it makes us feel special being part of a group that has developed this slang work and using it on a daily basis. When you think about it a random common word or phrase could hold so many memories and events. The phrase 'aaaand scene' actually bonded us closer because it allowed us to show our ugly side and not feeling bad or embarrassed about showing it or exposing it, we will just laugh about it later when we are back to our regular mood.

UNIT 2

Being Homeless in NYC

They say that it takes 15-21 days for something to become a habit. But it took me almost 2 years to realize that waving at someone hi/bye or just occasionally giving someone a dollar had become a habit for me. Ever since I moved to Woodhaven, Queens there was always this homeless man camped in the corner of 91th street. He would be there in the morning on my way to school and on my way back home. But one day out of nowhere the street corner looked empty, wider, and cleaner. The man that stayed there had passed away according to the deli corner store owner. That's when I realized that I was so used to seeing him there that it had become a routine of seeing each other. So this got me thinking why he didn't get help before or why didn't he go to a shelter.

On the news you hear that the city is creating new programs for homelessness but then residents of NY go out to the street and see a lot of homeless people, so then the questions start, are the programs really real and efficient. And the homeless rate is only increasing and with that said, it becomes very difficult for every homeless person to get help since the city can't help everyone. According to a Fox News article written by Nick Givas it states that "Issues with New York's homeless population have made headlines over the past two years, with many incidents occurring on the subways or near underpasses, where encampments have emerged". This shows that the rates are increasing and there aren't enough shelters around in the city, so homeless people have to find shelter in the MTA. Also, it shows that whatever programs the state creates is not as helpful as they say it is. So with poverty and homelessness increasing in NYC, what are the city's programs really doing to help control the increase and help people get back to stability?

When walking down the streets of NYC or taking the train/subway (MTA) there are people laying in the street asking for change. So when a new yorker sees this so often, the only question that comes to mind is who is helping them. What is the city/state doing to help them out of their situation? According to an article by Politico 'The city has several existing programs to help tenants on the brink of eviction'. This shows that the city wants to avoid more homelessness which is good because the homeless rate will decrease, but the city needs to help the people that are currently homeless to make our city better not avoid people that are becoming homeless. NYC is great at creating programs for the less fortunate, like free education for all, many public and free parks and pools, free lunches for children during the summer, public housing for people with low income etc. So what exactly do these programs or aids provide to the homeless? According to the ACE, a program for the homeless, they provide people with jobs by giving them job training and work experience. In the article "Why Some New Yorkers Choose Streets Over Shelters" by Greg B. Smith, the writer interviews a homeless man on what it's like to be homeless. During the interview the homeless man mentions that he has to wait a whole year in the street because a homeless aid worker had to observe him for a long time in order for him to qualify for help. This comes to show that it's difficult for people living in the street to get aid because the process of approval takes time and work. So, Yes the city's programs are efficient but if the homeless rates are going up every year and it takes a year to help one person at some point the amount of homeless people in the streets get too out of control for the city. And the city's answer to stopping homelessness is creating anti-homelessness architecture. When walking in a public place in NYC like Central Park or Grand Central Station for example, did you notice that all the benches there have armrests now? The armrests that divide a bench into four seats are not for you to have personal space from the other person or for your arm to rest, but to avoid homeless people from laying there and occupying the space, also while waiting for the bus have you notice that the benches are tilted that a person can't even sit, you basically have to be standing and leaning on the bench. When a problem has become so big that people use spikes on their floor to avoid homeless people, it makes me question how the whole homelessness outbreak starts. And if it could have been avoided.



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Some people might be wondering what leads a person to becoming homeless or living out in the streets. There's actually a lot of ways a person could lose everything but being homeless doesn't always mean that the person is poor or a drug addict. For example women escaping domestic violence only way out is to go to a shelter and leave everything behind or young teens that live in abusive households, their only escape is finding a shelter. Other contributions that add to the homeless rates is the lack of affordable housing, rents in NYC are too expensive, and I think that we all agree with that. Also the fact that there aren't enough jobs and the jobs that are available pay minimum wage which is difficult to make a living with \$15 an hour and pay \$1,800 monthly rents. People also end up homeless because they are bankrupt, either it's because medical bills got out of hand or the credit card bill was too much. So when society labels homeless people as drug users and addicts, it's a bit unfair to look at them as less, because it could happen to anyone and we don't know anybody's back story.

One downside of public shelters is that they are unsafe and people don't feel comfortable enough to spend the night there. During the interview in "Why Some New Yorkers Choose Streets Over Shelters" by Greg B. Smith, it mentions that "Three of four people questioned had spent some time in shelters, with 38% saying the main reason they left was their concerns about personal safety", this leads to more people living in the streets and in the subway stations, one can say that the whole system is messed up because no matter what kind of help homeless people get there's always going to a disadvantage side and for people to feel safer in the streets than in a shelter is a big dilemma with the system. The good side of this is that there's shelters in every borough throughout NYC and if communities come together and help out the homeless rates will probably decrease. What NYC lacks is their residents giving back to the community and volunteering. As New Yorkers we are considered rude, ignorant, self centered and always rushing. But if a few people go and volunteer at the shelters just for a few hours, it could make a difference. Also donating food to your local shelter and clothes also help out with the changes of seasons, for example during winter there's the coat drive where people donate their coats for the poor. It's the small things that matter and that make a big difference. Even though helping out and advocating for the homeless isn't going to be enough, when we face reality NYC is a rich city that is only growing economically. So poverty and homeless people living out in the street

are here to stay, yes we could contain the rates and numbers low but there's always going to be homelessness. Some pages to visit to help or support are www.coalitionforthehomeless.org, <https://citylimits.org/>, and also visiting your nearby community board meeting.

In movies they portray NYC as a luxurious city where everyone has their dream job and for some reason everyone can afford an apartment in Manhattan, but the ugly truth is homelessness throughout NY. At the end of the day, there's always going to be little things that make up New York City, and that make up a New Yorkers daily routine. And maybe for me it was seeing that homeless man in the corner of my street or maybe for someone it's that other homeless person in the same train station. But they are still part of our community and we have to help them in order to see changes. Also by signing petitions, and avocading for the homeless and pressuring the government for more budgets for shelters and more aid, will help NYC grow. If anyone wants to help there's a lot of websites that give information about how to help or how to seek help.

Work Cited

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