Dear Professor,

My journey this semester has been quite befuddling yet has also been full of lessons that have given me insight to the world of an adult. This has been my first semester with a job; due to this, my days have been overflowed with activity, giving me scarcely any personal time for myself. In spite of this, I have found this semester to be very enjoyable; my classes were not as stressful as last semester and my classes were full of interesting characters and many inspiring advisors. I would say the most interesting piece of this semester’s journey has been your English class. Your class has made me think in ways I did not imagine I would have to.

 In Unit 1, our class began the semester about writing about how our day went without using certain words. This assignment really stuck with me because I never in my life had to write without using certain letters and it made me have to really think of other words outside of typical words of my vocabulary. We continued to use this method for our next assignment where we had to write about our biggest fears using the same constraints of not being able to use descending letters such as: g, y, q, j, and p. I found this task very fun and thought provoking because not only have I never had to write with constraint before, but I’ve never had to write about such a personal topic as an assignment before and it made me really open up on my thoughts. The next step to this assignment was to write about our cure to our fears under the constraint of not using ascending letters I found this assignment more strenuous than the last because I did not realize how many words contained ascending letters within them. Our next assignment was to read to 2 articles and reflect upon them in class. These articles taught me about grammar and that being unconventional is not a bad thing. The final and grandest assignment for unit 1 was our “freedom” essay based on a Malcolm X autobiography. This assignment was challenging to me because I never had so much freedom on what I could write about for an essay. The topic was very intriguing and helped reiterate the concept of constraint and freedom that was pushed throughout this unit.

In Unit 2, We discussed the aspects of genres. When I originally thought of the word genre, I thought about types of books or movies like horror, comedy, action, and romance but to my surprise I learned that genre is vaster and consists of aspects I was not aware it pertains to. The first assignment was to write a personal skill we have in the form a recipe. I found this assignment to be very fun and creative. The next thing we were assigned to do was to think of 10 common genres we encounter throughout our lives and bring an example of it. We evaluated our examples determining who’s the audience, who is the writer, and who is impacted by this genre. We then used the genre we choose to write about the skill we chose in the prior assignment. After that, we had to read an article and reflect upon it. Finally, we had to write down inner dialogue and outer dialogue we encounter throughout our transit home.

In unit 3, we started to research our skill for controversial topics that our skill from the last unit may bring. My skill was listening, so I began to search up “listening” then found myself looking up “surveillance” and “paranoia”. These key terms brought me to the topic of if we are being listened to too much by the government. We then had to write a proposal for our research to discuss with you.

Unit 4 has been the most creative unit in my opinion, I just wish there was more time to develop our assignment and build upon them. I decided to do a podcast instead a podcast because I happen to listen to podcasts a lot throughout my daily life. The fact that video and audio were introduced as more genres of presentation gave me more understanding to the fact that genres are vaster than I initially believed it to be.

Overall my journey throughout this semester has been very enjoyable. It has challenged me in ways I did not think I could be challenged and has given me a broader sense of the world of genre, freedom, and inquiry. If I could do it all again, I would definitely pick this class all over again. I would say it has been my most thought provoking, intriguing English class or even overall class I have ever took.

*Unit 1 assignments were pretty challenging. The first two assignments shown for my fear and the cure to my fear made me have to go outside my norm when it came to what I write. It made me notice trends and habits of my writings and humbled me from thinking that I was a fairly good writer to feeling a sense of amateurism. The freedom essay we were assigned to do gave me a realization that there doesn’t always have to be a guideline to writing.*

q,p,g,y,j

The biggest fear I have

A monumental fear that I have is a fear of failure. I fear that one moment that I will not achieve the ambitions to which I set towards. A fear that drives me time and time anew to remain on the endeavor to achievement. This fear comes hand in hand with other situations that would shift me to unease such as the sorrow that failure would bring to individuals who have elevated excitements for me and the future. I feel that as time continues the imminent test of fate looms around me like a shadow that becomes more immense as if the sun above me is at the crown of its reach.

T,b,f,h,d,k,l

What will cure my fear

 I can cure my unease via acquiring a grasp in sereneness. Some peace can give me a merry muse.

Dillon John

ENG 1121/Section E115

Professor Schmerler

March 1, 2019

 **True Enlightenment?**

When you hear the word freedom what is the first thing you think? An escape from captivity? A departure from a toxic relationship? Driving on the open road for the first time? To me, freedom is the result of coming to terms with our own personal demons, as well as overcoming our own individual obstacles that hinder our distinctive growth. Every individual has personal battles that they must endure, a person who has reached full enlightenment and gained true freedom must overcome their hinderance. An example of this can be seen in an excerpt from an autobiography of Malcolm X titled, “Learning to Read” written by Malcolm (X) Little and coauthored by Alex Haley. In this excerpt, Malcolm X, a man who went from being a convicted street hustler in 1946 to overcoming his personal demons and becoming ‘one of the most articulate and powerful leaders of black America in the 1960s’ speaks on his lack of literacy and how he overcame that personal struggle during his lowest point in life.

During Malcolm’s time in prison, he became frustrated at the fact that he encountered difficulty writing letters. He felt as though he wasn’t able to convey his thoughts through his writings, illiteracy became his figurative shackles. There are many instances where an individual can have figurative shackles, for instance: a person who is stuck on their past, has fears that limit their personal lives, or even lacks ambitions. These “shackles” can be internal or external and can have different severities, but what Malcolm’s story shows is that it’s possible to overcome and achieve.

There can be many forms of inspiration towards a person’s journey to freedom. In the autobiography, Malcolm speaks on his time in Charlestown Prison where he met a fellow prisoner named Bimbi, his encounter with Bimbi became the catalyst for his quest for knowledge; Malcolm admits to feeling a sense of jealousy towards Bimbi. In life, inspiration can be found in a multitude of ways: a helping friend, a rival, failure, others’ success, or traumatic events. Sometimes these inspirations are not always obvious, it can take a lot of hard work and reflection. It’s astounding how minor events can became the stimulus for major changes in a person’s life.

Furthermore, an individual’s journey to freedom is never easy, it takes countless trials and possible tribulations. Originally, Malcolm would skim through the book and skip over words he could not understand; he would continue while transferred to the Norfolk prison county where he came close to the verge of giving up on his efforts. The journey to freedom can be very strenuous, not everyone is able to overcome these obstacles, it is easier to succumb to your deterrents than it is to keep striving towards liberation.

There can be numerous tools that people can use during their pursuit to freedom. Malcolm’s tool was a dictionary he eventually got hold on where he would study the words that he lacked knowledge on and also began to practice his penmanship with tablets and pencils. Tools, whether tangible or intangible, are crucial factors to one’s journey to liberation; from advice from others to self-help books there is a vast quantity of options to help with further advancements. The tools needed for freedom are entirely based on an individual’s personal drawbacks.

Advancements towards your freedom can surprise you. Malcolm was surprised by the vast amount of words that he discovered during his studies. He states, “I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through the dictionary’s pages. I’d never realized so many words existed! I didn’t know which words I needed to learn.” (1) This quote shows the amazement Malcolm felt from his newly acquired knowledge.

Freedom brings a newfound enlightenment to an individual’s life. Malcolm found a new sense of satisfaction from his achievements. In the excerpt he states, “If I weren’t out here every day battling the white man, I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity – because you can hardly mention anything I’m not curious about. I don’t think anybody ever got more out of going to prison than I did” (2) This quote shows how much Malcolm’s time in prison has changed his views and interests.

Confinement is more mental than it is physical. I say this because even while locked up in prison, Malcolm still found a way to ‘free himself’ from shackles that he felt limited him. In the excerpt he states, “In fact, prison enabled me to study far more intensively than I would have if my life had gone differently and I had attended some college” This quote shows how even though Malcom could not physically free himself in prison he was able to free himself mentally and he shows gratitude for that.

In conclusion, freedom is something rigorous to obtain but can give true enlightenment if it is achieved. Malcolm’s strive for literacy during his time in prison was a true representation of liberation from mental confinement. Restraints can come in many forms and severities, in order to overcome these restraints a person must come to terms that they are restrained.

 **Sources Cited:**

* Malcolm X. “Learning to Read”. “The Autobiography of Malcolm X” 1987. https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/schmerlereng1121e106spring2019/files/2019/02/Malcolm-X-Learning-to-Read.pdf

*Unit 2 assignments were not challenging but gave me a new sense of knowledge on genres. Our first assignment to create a recipe was very fun to do and I found it very creative. There was some confusion during this unit but after some clarification it became very clear on what I had to do. I enjoyed being able to pick my own genre for the next assignment and gave me a feeling of individuality.*

* I listen very well
* I give good advice (or so I’ve been told)
* I am good at playing video games
* I am good at being understanding and open minded of others and their opinions
* I like to paint
* Sleeping
* Waking up
* Coding (python, java)
* Picking up quickly on things
* Playing saxophone
* Babysitting
* Step 1 to being a good listener always try and be as least bias and opinionated as possible (people should have someone who will not judge them or blindly agree with them for opinions on things)
* Step 2 to being a good listener always pay attention to the way someone speaks on something their tone means a lot when it comes to their feelings or opinions on things.
* Step 3 to being a good listener put yourself in the shoes of others what may not be a big deal to you may be a big deal to them.
* Step 4 to being a good listener: have patience, sometimes it takes a lot of patience when it comes to understanding others and where they come from on topics especially if you don’t agree

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ingredients | Servings | Time | Measurements | Equipment |
| Attentiveness | As much as the person needs.  | As much as the person needs  | As much as you can handle | Your eyes |
| Patience |  |  |  | Your ears |
| Empathy |  |  |  | Your mind |

* Step 1 to coding really well, Practice practice Practice PRACTICE
* Step 2 to coding really well: have patience errors can be common in codes
* Step 3 to coding really well always be attentive to the code’s spelling, placement, variables, a

 **Genre Project**

Dillon John

 ENG 1121/ SECTION E115

 Professor Sarah Schmerler



This format is a programming language called python. This code was written by Burak Tandogan and published to code.activestate.com. The audience for this format is programmers and the computer in which the code is inputted into. The purpose of this example is to program the computer to output a game of rock, paper, scissors for the user to play against it. The code starts off as comments for the first and second lines that just give information for the directory on the computer it was originally inputted into. The third through fifth lines are used to import modules into the main module. Line seven assigns a definition to the variable “sus” while line eight creates a list containing the choices in quotes. Lines ten through thirteen is an if statement that notifies the user if the choice that they made is not an option in the game and continues to the next section of the code. The fifteenth line sets up the computer’s choice to be random. Lines seventeen through thirty-three are if statements based on the users input compared to the computer’s random choice to decide on who wins the game.

**Source:** <https://code.activestate.com/recipes/578983-rockpaperscissors/>

#Here is how to become a good listener

skill=("being a good listener")

ingredient1=("Your ears")

ingredient2=("Your mind")

ingredient3=("A person who needs to speak about something")

ingredient4=("Wisdom")

ingredient5=("Empathy")

step1=("Let the person talk about something on their mind")

step2=("process what the person is saying")

step3=("give thought to how the person may feel the way they do and put yourself in their shoes ")

step4=("respectfully let the person know your opinion/input/advice.")

tip1=("even if you may disagree with the person always keep calm and don’t judge")

print("Here is the my advice for "+skill)

print("The ingredients you need are: "+ingredient1+", "+ingredient2+", "+ingredient3+", some "+ingredient4+" and some "+ingredient5)

print("First, you "+step1+". Then you "+step2+", once you do then "+step3+". After you're done with that, "+step4+" Just remember that, "+tip1)

*Unit 3 went by really quick. Our main focus on this unit was research and I found this unit to be the most confusing out of all the units. I searched up key words relating listening and found words like “paranoia” and “surveillance”. We had to write a research proposal based on the controversial topic we chose relating to our skill. Although this unit was confusing I enjoyed it because we got to discover information about new things.*

 **Research Proposal:**

Listening is a vital part of society and basically almost every social aspect of life. Through things like music, conversation, directions; listening is a key factor to many individuals’ lives but what about when authoritative figures listen? Are we being listened to too much? That is an important question one should ask themselves in this technological era. The demographic affected by this issue is any person with access to internet especially those who use social media.

 According to Business Insider, in 2013, A man named Edward Snowden released top secret information from the NSA to the public. This leak of information shed a new light to society that “Big Brother” is always listening. It revealed that the government not only has access to phone data collected of every single phone call made across the entirety of the United States of America, but it also has access to records kept by major internet companies like Google, Facebook, and Twitter. He even mentions that the government has access to the microphone to devices like cellphones and artificial intelligence assistance even if the device isn’t initially created to be listening all the time.

This awareness is important because people tend to post a lot of personal information on the internet, and when these things are posted the government surveils them and keeps record on them completely extinguishing any form of privacy we may have left. In a world where we are always being listened to and watched, everything we say holds relevance and does not fade away. In this day and age of technology privacy does not exist.

What happens when the thing listening to you cannot forget anything you have said? A track record of every conversation you have ever made on your cell phone is being kept and analyzed. According to the article “Edward Snowden Warns Your Phone May Be Listening 'Everywhere You Go' ” by Eric Mack, Snowden states, “ ‘When you think about the fact that your washing machine is a computer and can be used to attack other computers within your own home network—your laptop, your tablet, your phone…or better yet, when your toaster gets connected to the Internet, think about who has the capability to turn that on,’ "

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*Unit 4 was our Multi modal project I found this unit to be intriguing because I have never made a podcast before. Even though I lacked on the technical skills for a video and somewhat for the podcast, doing this assignment was very fun. There was only one confusion that I had on this unit which was the required length for the podcast or video I wondered if my podcast is too short.*

[*https://dillon1john.podbean.com/e/are-we-being-listened-to-too-muchunit-4/*](https://dillon1john.podbean.com/e/are-we-being-listened-to-too-muchunit-4/)