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B Block
Cronin AP Lit

Looking Back

When I first came to Newton North High School, I was unsure of my ability to write. In ninth grade, I struggled with most of my writing assignments because I did not believe I was a good writer. I think what I learned from my first year of English in high school was that I could be better at writing if I tried and that I was better at writing than I thought I was.

In tenth grade, I think I improved my writing, but I did more than that. I also learned about how people make appeals, both in writing and in speeches. The sophomore speech was both extremely interesting and extremely challenging for me. I enjoyed having the opportunity to write about something that I cared about, but at the same time, I didn't even know what I cared about! While my speech ultimately did not turn out as well as I had hoped it would, I found listening to my classmates' speeches to be very interesting. Being able to see my classmates perform their speeches taught me a lot about a wide range of subjects, and being able to understand how they put together those speeches helped me understand how to write better than I did before.

In junior year, I think the realization that my high school career was almost over began to set in. That year in AP Lang, I was challenged to write better than I had ever written before. For a lot of the pieces of writing I was asked to produce that year, I had no idea how to even start writing. Fortunately, my teacher would periodically drop hints on what to do. This was the first year I had asked a teacher for help even though I feel very uncomfortable around most teachers. This was the year I think I was the most uncomfortable, but this was also the year I think I learned the most about writing. I think my teacher knew that: my teacher would always say that

the course was designed to prepare me for college (and for life), and my teacher encouraged me and my class to think about the world and society.

In senior year, I learned that I was perhaps not as good of a reader as I think I should be. When I discussed readings with people in my group, I often (but not always) found that I interpreted the reading differently, and that the interpretation that the other people in my group had made more sense. I know that my interpretation is not necessarily *wrong*, but I cannot help but feel like it is. In my senior year English class, I was also reminded that I have not completely solved my habit of not fully explaining ideas in my writing, and I worked on remedying that, although how successful I was at explaining my ideas more clearly remains unclear.

Throughout my experience in high school, I have come into contact with many ideas that are new to me through my English classes. I have learned about reading and writing (in freshman year), appeals and how to convince people (in sophomore year), the idea of the panopticon and education (in junior year), and how people deal with relationships (in senior year). I have also met many people in my English classes that I would not have met if I did not take English classes. I now understand which parts of my writing and speaking are weaker than I would like them to be, and how I can improve both my writing and my speaking skills. English has brought me into contact with many different issues in the world and sometimes how people are trying or have tried to tackle them, and from the diverse set of perspectives that English has given us the ability to see from, we will be able to solve some of these issues.