



Elite Education Student Service

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This summer, I went to The governor's Honors Program, also known as GHP, a six-week intensive college-like experience where the best and brightest students in Georgia gather to learn and grow as individuals. It was the best thing that has ever happened to me. That is something of a hackneyed phrase; people cheapen the extremes of language by constantly using superlatives for everyday occurrences, making it harder and harder to actually describe the few subtle and transcendent moments of life. In *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert claims that language is but a cracked kettle on which we play music for the bears to dance, while we dream of making the stars weep. The experiences we have never fit within the too-close confines of language; but I will try anyway. The classes that I attended were nothing like the classes that I would take normally. Nowhere else would the teachers encourage sixteen and seventeen year-olds to look for sexual imagery in Shakespeare, and then find even more than they did, without the exercise being sordid instead of literary. I attended classes named anything from *Dirty Words: Clean Thoughts* (a class on Profanity; the only course in which the use of profane or vulgar language was prohibited) to *Teenage Female Angst: Beyond Holden Caulfield to Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. All of them opened my mind to a brand-new way of looking at the world, and processing information. Thanks to the varying education that I received, I know that valuable information about life is not only in the "classics," but even appears in seemingly mindless and trashy zombie films.

While I learned a lot in the classrooms of GHP, I feel that most of my growth occurred outside of the classroom. I met the sort of people who



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will change the world, who will go forth into the world and, without making a big name, will do the things that make the world a better place. My best friends there were people that I would never have met; people I would never have known existed; people that I can now not imagine life without. One was a math major, an excellent athlete in every sport, and an accomplished singer; the running joke was that the only thing that he was bad at was failing. The other was a phenomenal writer, always ready to play an endearing trick on somebody, and the former's girlfriend. Both of them were fairly conservative Christians, and yet totally accepting of me for whom I was, despite any of my clashes with their beliefs. I did not limit myself though, and made it almost a mission to find and talk to as many of the people there, because I was sure that each and every one of them would have an interesting perspective on things. Once I was walking back from playing Frisbee, and was stopped to discuss what the ethical framework for life ought to be; just for fun. The experience that I had there has undeniably changed me forever.



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ANALYSIS

Aditya's description of his six weeks at GHP make use of plenty of diverse and lively examples to demonstrate how this "was the best thing that ever happened" to him. The one-paragraph format that Aditya chooses can be difficult on the readers, since long paragraphs can be quite daunting. Aditya might have chosen to create a new paragraph with the sentence, "The experiences we have never fit within the too-close confines of language; but I will try anyway." Another logical place to begin a new paragraph would be with the sentence, "While I learned a lot in the classrooms of GHP, I feel that most of my growth occurred outside of the classroom." In general, multiple paragraphs help organize an essay to focus the content and provide flow to overall paper structure. While the sentence, "It was the best thing that has ever happened to me," seems simplistic, Aditya quickly redeems himself from the cliché with a sentence that shows his mastery of the English language. He writes, "That is something of a hackneyed phrase; people cheapen the extremes of language by constantly using superlatives for everyday occurrences, making it harder and harder to actually describe the few subtle and transcendent moments of life." His reference to Madame Bovary demonstrates Aditya's ability to draw connections between ideas and thereby support his own assertions. The examples Aditya references are particularly strong because he relates them to one another, instead of simply rattling off a long list. It can be challenging to present a diversity of interests while also holding a core focus. Aditya's center appears in the form of literary and cultural analysis of many sources, from classics to "trashy zombie films." The reference to Madame Bovary also shows us that Aditya truly learned to open his "mind to a brand-new way of looking at the world, and processing information." Had Aditya ended his



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essay here, we would have learned about his cognitive development but missed out on the social and emotional aspects of his GHP experience. The descriptions of the close friendships Aditya formed with a diverse group of people further strengthen our understanding of how Aditya grew to be an open-minded person. Aditya devotes quite a large amount of space to talking about the math major who couldn't fail and his writer girlfriend; he might have summarized this information more concisely in order to explain his own relationships to them. By writing that they totally accepted him, Aditya removes his personal agency; he could have reworded the essay to explain how he became more accepting of them. The last sentence of the essay, "The experience that I had there has undeniably changed me forever," is somewhat abrupt. With limited space, it is important to have both a strong introduction and a strong conclusion that are not so open-ended that they could be generalized to everyone. The most compelling part of Aditya's essay is not that "The experience that I had there has undeniably changed me forever" but rather in the sophisticated literary analyses he made, the friendships he formed, and the Frisbee he played. When space is limited, err on the side of more detailed descriptions and fewer generalizations.