

Joanna has made a lot of progress in her writing. Most of the amazing progress she has made was from a breath of a push in the right direction and her full on sprint to a funny and smart writing style.

~ James Freer, Tutor

## **Creativity**

By Joanna Keller

I'm not a creative person. I was one of those kids who made sure to only color inside the lines. I like boundaries, borders that I know I'm not supposed to cross. This fondness of boundaries carried over into my high school days and when the teacher assigned an "open topic essay", I panicked. Perhaps it is the fact that at my very core I am indecisive, and this indecisiveness permeates throughout every decision that I make in a day. From what I wear in the morning to what I eat for breakfast, indecisiveness is always there, taunting me with the knowledge that I have no idea what I want! Fortunately, I realize this about myself and I plan accordingly. For instance, when going to a restaurant, be it McDonald's or Red Lobster, before I even arrive I know what I am going to order, I know this because I have been thinking about this decision all day. This is not necessarily a trait I like about myself; in fact, my indecision often gets in the way of taking advantage of opportunities that suddenly appear.

So, when assigned an the daunting task of writing fifteen hundred words about anything I wanted, I immediately look for some possible "assigned" topic that I could write on, for there are simply too many topic to choose from! Some form of guidelines must be present, for if there are none, then how am I supposed to know what I want to write about? This is the question that I ask myself as I sit contemplating the many topics that I could write upon, yet none seeming to capture my enthusiasm enough to write a complete essay on one of them. So, faced with this dilemma, I go into panic mode. Not a crazy, tear my hair out mode, but into a state of utter and complete inner chaos. On the surface I am collected, nodding excitedly along with the rest of the class about how we finally get a choice in what we learn about. But underneath my cool façade, I am in turmoil, my head spinning with the endless possibilities. Fortunately, or unfortunately, (depending on how you look at it), I now know this reaction is coming and am well prepared for the coming attack on my psyche. So I take a few shaky, yet calming breaths, and slowly explain to myself that yes, I will be able to find a topic interest. As my head clears I do the only rational thing in a situation like this, I look around the room for some divine inspiration. A fake plant, some old political posters, last month's lunch schedule, and the guidelines for emergency procedure. Shit. Finding nothing, my mind reels back into panic mode. I mentally begin to again wade through the many possible topics that I could read and write upon until my head hurts.

Days pass and as the deadline for the essay draws closer, I am still no where near picking out a topic, but have at least narrowed down the choices, aliens and Victorian history are definitely out. Finally, weak with indecisiveness, I pick out a topic that is somewhat interesting, but nothing that I am passionate about. I proceed with the usual steps, I read, I write, I turn my finished essay in on time, and as I walk slowly back to my desk, disgusted with myself, I hear the next assignment: a six-page research paper on War and Peace. And amid mine and my classmates' groans, my heart leaps with relief.