

Classification Essay: Example #1

Many Ways to Turn a Page

People say that one can understand a lot about someone's personality just by looking at his shoes. The way people take care of their shoes reveals a lot about their characters. Similarly, the way people treat their books can be definitive about a reader's personality. Therefore, most readers could fall into one of five groups: the perfectionist, the teacher, the antiquarian, the collector, and the aesthete.

If one happens to be in a bookstore and sees someone asking the bookseller for a copy that has never been opened before, this person must be a perfectionist. People in this category are usually very fastidious about everything, including their books. Book lovers in this category are most likely to go to a shelf in a bookstore and spend hours exploring the contents of books before they choose one. After they choose a book, they will ask for an immaculate copy – if it is possible, never touched by a hand – and for sure they will check for misprints, folded pages and may ask that the tag with the price be peeled off (if there is one). They use their books in the same manner. They probably read their books at a 45-degree angle, so that they look as if they have never been read. A perfectionist will never write on his books, and he will shelve them in perfect thematic order. Of course, his shoes always look blindingly polished.

The next category of readers is the teachers. People in this category are usually life-long readers and use books as a tool for gaining knowledge. For them, the book as an object doesn't have as much value as the book as a source of information, knowledge, and ideas. The teacher most likely will write on his books, since for him they are not sacred objects of adoration, but just useful tools for sharing ideas. His beliefs, ideas, and positions can be seen in the remarks made in the margins. Usually people from this category have a very accurate ability to distinguish significant things from marginal ones. Like the perfectionist, the teacher will put his books in thematic order, but he will always care more about the knowledge inside them instead of the books themselves. The teacher is a kind of reader who easily will share his books with other people because he actually enjoys sharing ideas. Moreover, he wouldn't care if some of his books were lost, since he has already read them.

The third category is the antiquarian. This category is very specific. People who have an antiquarian interest in books should be called book lovers, rather than readers. Of course, they like to read books, but their main attitude toward books is expressed generally in the possession of books as objects with commercial value. These people have a wide bibliographic knowledge about books. For example, they know about publishers, different editions, years of publication, copies, and reprints. People in this category are "book hunters". Sometimes they dedicate their whole life to the passion of finding rare books; as a result, they make this interest about books their profession. Most of them are bookstore owners since they evaluate books mainly as objects with a high commercial value. The antiquarian reminds me of a *souteneur* (a pimp) : he loves books, but more than that, he loves the money he gains from them.

The collectors are a different group of book lovers. How is this category different from those already mentioned? On the one hand, it looks pretty close to the antiquarian; on the other hand, it has a lot in common with the teacher. Thus, it seems that this category of people is somehow in between these two others. While the antiquarian likes to collect books with a commercial interest, the collector has a 100% personal interest. This is the main difference. The collector, like the teacher, evaluates books according to the knowledge he can find through them. However, instead of gaining this knowledge, he buys books with the idea to read them later, at some future moment. This way he makes huge collections of books that he doesn't read for years, sometimes even never. The collector enjoys reading, but since he doesn't have time to read, he develops a dependence on the possession of books. In other words the collector is "a put-off-teacher" and not a real antiquarian.

Finally, the last category of book lovers is the aesthete. People from this category can be called "readers" only in a formal sense. Actually, they don't like to read at all, but they have specific attitudes toward books. These are people who see books as a nice way to add comfort, a good look or the "last detail" to their magazine-style interior. Books in their world exist along with vases, family pictures, boxes, and candles. The most important quality that book can have in such a world is a pretty cover matching the interior style. For the aesthete, books have value only as a decoration. They are nothing more than a needed accent, so that the interior vision looks complete. For example, the aesthete often buys book collections only to fill the empty shelves, so the room can look cozy. The aesthete will rarely open a book, but will regularly clean the dust from it as a part of the furniture.

In conclusion, it can be seen that books are like signs reflecting people's personalities; indeed, books are a very significant factor expressing someone's personal values. Since the scripts of antiquity until today, books have changed their image many times, but they have always had a significant role as cultural icons. Maybe soon books will have mostly a virtual existence; however, the attitude toward reading will still reveal one's personal philosophy.

Andriana Yovcheva

Classification essay: Example #2

First Families

"My host family took me to the beach yesterday. It was so nice!"

"Really? I envy you! My host family doesn't even feed me well!"

There are sometimes these kinds of conversations among the international students. Many international students, especially those who stay in America for a short time, prefer to stay with an American host family because they can experience American culture, and it is helpful to improve their English. However, not all international students get to stay with a pleasant host family. Having talked about host families with several of my acquaintances, I realized that there are different reasons why American host families invite an international student.

The first type of American host family is the host family who invites an international student because of money. Of course, this is one of the basic reasons why most American host families invite international students. However, this type of host family's purpose is only to earn money from an international student. When I studied in a private English academy, I met a student who was living with that kind of host family. She paid more than \$500 per month, but they'd never offered her good food. They always gave her only a slice of bread or a small portion of frozen food. She'd never seen milk or fruit in her host family's house. When she asked her host mother to give one more slice of bread, her host mother even answered no. Another student whom I met was living in a bad environment. For example, there was no lamp in his room and no telephone in his house. Of course, this type of host family doesn't treat its host students well, and they don't try to take care of their host students.

The second type of American host family is the host family who really wants to help international students. In the city where I am living now, there is a Christian group organized to help international students. All members in this Christian group try to help international students by offering a volunteer tutoring service or making a party for international students. Also, some members invite host students, and most of the students who find their host family in this group are satisfied with their family. Because their main goal is to help international students, these families don't receive much money from their students. They treat their students well, and try to help their host students to live in America, which is a very strange country for them. In my case, I also found a host family by contacting this group, and they were very helpful people. They gave me a lot of information about the area, like the locations of important buildings or the way to use public transportation. Also, they tried to make me experience American culture, so my host parents took me to a potluck party or invited me to a family dinner. Whenever I asked about English expressions, American customs, or my homework, they tried to help me in any way they could.

The third type of host family is the family who invites international students to stay out of their own loneliness. This is usually a family consisting of a retired couple or a single person. Some people feel lonely after retirement and have nothing to do, especially if their house is an empty nest. Therefore, therefore they host an international student and treat

the international student like their real daughter or son. This also applies to people who live alone. One of my friends who came to America to learn English lived with this kind of host mother. The host mother was divorced, and she wanted to host a student because she was lonely living alone. Therefore, she treated my friend like a real daughter. She took my friend everywhere she went and introduced my friend whenever they met new people. When my friend returned to her home after class, she and her host mother made dinner together, watched TV and talked for a long time.

Living with an American host family has many advantages. Especially for foreign students, having the experience of living with a host family is a huge support. However, whether the experience is pleasant or not depends on the attitudes of the students as well as the attitudes of the families themselves. Therefore, I hope international students living in America can meet host families who will enrich their experiences in this country and leave them with pleasant memories.

Hae Yeon Cho