

## IRE

When first asked if my portfolio had a theme, I could not begin to understand how I was going to throw a paper on the Kings of Leon, the death penalty, and Michael Jordan under one thematic umbrella. Although on the surface there are no common denominators between any of my submissions, it became obvious to me only after further inspection and analysis that I was not trying to express any profound message in my papers. Instead, I came to the realization that through my essays I unknowingly kept a record of what I considered major events in my first semester out on my own. Therefore, I would like my portfolio to be experienced as an unconventional narrative of the fall of my freshman year.

If I am going to go in order of succession, I guess I need to start with my wild card submission, "MJ is My Man." Right around the time we received the writing prompt for our first essay, the National Basketball Association was inducting its newest members into the elite and prestigious Basketball Hall of Fame. Michael Jordan had finally "retired" long enough from basketball to be punching his ticket into the club. ESPN made a big shindig out of it since the greatest basketball player of the last fifty years had finally made it to the proverbial Promised Land. However, things did not go as smoothly as the television executives would have hoped, or maybe it did (everyone loves to watch a train wreck). Unfortunately for MJ during his acceptance speech, he put his size thirteen straight into his mouth and demolished some toes on his way there. His irreverent jabs and egotistical jabs were all the news in the sporting community for a few days. So naturally, I decided to write about how and why Michael Jordan was a hero and a major influence in my life up to this point. In this essay, I really work on not just showing, but telling in my own voice how he was a role model for me.

Growing up, I had a pretty close group of friends. Because everyone had known each other for so long, it was kind of difficult leaving the sense of a secure safe haven that we had built with each other over the years. We decided that the first time we would meet back up with each other would be at Austin City Limits in October. ACL is a three day music festival that mixes big name acts like Pearl Jam and Dave Matthews with relatively unknown artists like Bob Schneider. As school dragged on through August and September, all I could think about was this music festival. Even though there were so many bands playing, I was looking forward to the Kings of Leon the most. Therefore, when asked to write about the influence of a band, television show, or a movie, I chose to write about the Kings of Leon. This essay, "The Kings of Leon Could Care Less," is my first revised essay. Although writing this essay was a challenge because I had to write using interviews as evidence instead of facts from books like I was taught to, I believe that I was able to create what I had gathered into an interesting argument. In this paper, I write about the nonchalant, apathetic attitude towards critics' opinions that the Kings possess and how it is seemingly reflective of today's young people.

Right around the time the third and final essay was assigned my mom had emailed me an article about a death penalty case in the state of Texas. In this case, the man that was convicted of committing a gruesome murder thirty years ago was found innocent with new forensic evidence. This article was big news around Austin, and it got me thinking about the

disagreements on the death penalty. In my second revised essay, I present both sides of the controversial issue of capital punishment. This paper was harder to write than I thought it would be because controlling my personal bias on the issue was oddly difficult. However, overall it was worth writing because it forced me to understand both sides of the argument.

My peer review exhibit and my own revision exhibit show the skills that I have developed throughout this semester. In both of these exhibits, I focus on sentence structure, diction, and grammar. I feel as if both of these exhibits display the writing skills I have developed throughout this course.