

Here I have the challenge of writing an essay. It is one of the things that I dread the most in life. Many times I have been asked to write an essay for English class, and each time I despise it. Yet it has proved to be an invaluable skill, as I am writing one now. Some of the many things that I have learned from writing essays and other projects are time management, open-mindedness, and taking time to relax.

"You should have done this weeks ago. You'll be sorry that you waited until the last minute to do this!" Mom's words prove true again and again. Time management is one of the most useful skills I learned from my twelve years in school. I used it in planning my Eagle Scout project by spreading the work over a few weekends so the workers would not be too tired to work effectively. I used it in completing my science fair projects so that I would have time to experiment and collect data. I have also used it in doing homework so that I would have time to be with my friends while maintaining good grades in school. Without it the world would be a disaster. What if instead of declaring war after the Pearl Harbor bombing Roosevelt decided to wait until the mainland was being bombed to declare war? I would be writing this from Virginia, Japan, and it definitely wouldn't be written in English. Effective time management is the key to success.

Being open to other people's ideas helps in writing essays as well as every other aspect of life. On many occasions I have asked my parents, teachers and peers for ideas to help me to write essays, and other complicated tasks. I used my Scoutmaster's advice to plan my Eagle project so that it could be done more efficiently. In this essay I asked my English teacher to review my draft so that it could make more sense to you. As they say, two heads are better than one. All around us, people use others' ideas. The President has a cabinet to help him run the country, and most businesses have a board of directors to run the company. The board of directors in turn use the department head's ideas, and the departments heads use the ideas of people in the department to make things easier to accomplish. Open-mindedness is the second key to success.

Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breath out. Taking time to relax helps to clear you mind of unnecessary thoughts and to focus on the job at hand. Whenever I get writer's block, a take a few minutes to do some deep breathing to clear my mind and think of what I want to say. Too often I see people that don't take time to relax, and they are always too frazzled to get any good work done. Those that never relax, workaholics, can have a complete mental breakdown and are out of commission for weeks. Last winter I went with my family skiing in Colorado. There I met some of the nicest people I have ever run into in my entire life. Why was everyone so nice and happy? Everyone there was on vacation. They were all relaxing. It was a big difference from the normal here, in the Washington D.C. area: everyone is working eight hours a day or more, running around in stressful traffic jams three hours to work and back, then spending the weekends cleaning house for the relatives coming into town for the holidays, or catching up on work that was past due. I wouldn't have been able to write this essay if I didn't take a small break in the middle. So relax, enjoy life before it passes you by.

These are the three most important things that I have learned from writing essays and other projects. Where would my life be without those skills? Probably, I would be much worse than I am now. Using time management to study for taking the SATs, taking advice from others as to where and how I want to spend the next four or five years of my life, and having some time to enjoy myself as a young adult have made my current life much easier. They have and will continue to be the most invaluable tools available to me.

