

Dear Mrs. lafrate,

It's unbelievable how a few words can set the course of a journey.

Before I stepped into your classroom freshman year, I had no faith in my writing abilities. I viewed myself as a horrible writer due to a history of grammar struggles and mediocre English scores. I thought nothing I wrote held any value of merit, but your class changed that.

I remember you passing back the first paper I wrote in your class. I had compared the hero's journey faced by Odysseus to overcoming the struggles of schoolwork, and you wrote in the margin "wonderful metaphor." I know you do not remember what you wrote at the end, on the rubric, in bright red ink, but I do. The words have replayed in my head Unique ID 1379015 Store Num 2992 Area 204 Teacher Full Name Janet lafrate Teacher School St. Basil Academy Teacher Subject English Student Full Name Isabella Canals Student Grade 11 Student Consent year after year, the driving force helping me submit each paper and project. You wrote, "very advanced writing Bella!" I'm pretty sure I almost cried as I put that essay back in my folder. I had spent hours writing that essay, rereading it over and over, trying to correct my flaws. I took it out that night and showed it to my parents, showing them that my writing was not as bad as everyone thought. Those four words gave me the confidence to take honors English as a sophomore, and while I struggled, I kept in mind the faith you had in me.

I was in your third-period English class as a freshman, coming in after your Advanced Placement Language and Composition students. I remember thinking that I could never be them as they walked out of class day after day.

This year, I am in your class again, sitting in the same seat I did as a Freshman, but now, I am in your third-period Advanced Placement Language and Composition class. I have become a person I never thought I could be, because you had faith in my writing and motivated me to try and push myself.

You taught me how to do MLA citations and compose a thesis. You took time to answer all my emails asking random questions about symbolism and were willing to meet with me at lunch to help proofread my papers.

So, Thank you, Mrs. lafrate, for spending time helping me write a good research paper, for taking the time to draw smiley faces in the margins of my papers, and for writing on my first paper "very advanced writing Bella!" Those four words gave me hope, they gave me the motivation to work hard and improve my writing, and the courage to move on to more challenging courses.

Although my journey in your class is coming to a close, and next year I will be starting a new journey, walking down new halls filled with unknown faces, I will never forget what you have done to help my writing grow.

Your student,

Isabella Canals