

## Why I'm Choosing a Career in Journalism

As a child, my first attempt at writing a story took the form of a medieval tale about a mouse, which was loosely based off of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. In fact, it was a complete rip-off of the famous fable, except for a rodent in lieu of Jack. However, this did not prevent my family from fawning over my work to the point where one of my great aunts had the handwritten tale laminated and posted for all to see on the front of her fridge.

I was continually encouraged by my family and teachers to pursue my gift for the written word. I soon grew out of my fable rip-off phase, progressing to stories about talking vegetables, deadly jellyfish, and – my personal favorite – the ever-cherished teen romances. It was not only my knack for language, but also my passion for a well-woven tale that drove me to sit at my computer night after night, pounding out short stories and novellas as if I were a bona fide author.

Junior year, I entered for my high school's journalism program because it allowed me a school-sponsored outlet for my writing. I never expected to weave any creative tales, though; after all, the real-life events I would cover in my articles had already unfolded. There was no plotline to construct, no characters to develop, and no effective dialogue to insert at will. There was simply a cut-and-dry story to write, or so I thought.

Then came the Concert for Equality. Being an avid fan of independent music, I volunteered to cover the controversial event, which featured a lineup of local bands rallying against new immigration policies, in the August issue of the newspaper. As I began my research, it suddenly struck me that this story was far from writing itself. I interviewed concertgoers, performers, high school principals, and even other journalists,

fully discovering the thrill that newswriting brought me. I realized that journalism allowed me to craft the ultimate tale: a tale featuring real plotlines, characters, and dialogue. What had once been a mess of facts and opinions was now being shaped into an influential piece of writing that could inspire the masses just as profoundly as any bestselling novel. Yet it took an equal amount of skill to weave this true story, along with future stories I would write.

I have learned that journalism is, at root, storytelling. It allows me to perch on the windowsill of another person's mind, to adopt him or her as a character in my epic account of a real-life event. It is more thrilling of a process than creative writing ever has been, simply because I am continually astounded by the secrets revealed to me from my spot on the windowsill. I hope to discover even more of my passion for storytelling as I continue with my life as a journalist.