

Candidate A evidence

Holiday to Blackpool

For months my dad had been saying to us that during the summer Holidays we would be going to Blackpool for a week. I didn't think we were going then one day my dad said that he had booked everything. This was a very exciting time for me and I was really looking forward to it.

On the morning of our holiday we had to wake up extremely early to get ready. We packed our bags a couple of nights before so all we had to do was get washed, get ready and go.

We took a bus to Airdrie and we had to take three trains before we got to Blackpool. After that it was a short walk to our holiday home. The woman who ran the house was very nice and very welcoming and she even showed us around our house. We had nothing planned for that night so we just went to the arcade and then stayed in for the rest of the night.

The next day we went to Madame Tussauds. We saw Cheryl Cole, Jeremy Kyle, Chris Tarrant and other celebrities. After that we went to McDonalds but just as my little sister was getting up she fell and dropped her burger. My youngest sister shared her burger with my eldest sister who had dropped hers. That was very kind of her as I ate my own without sharing. We then went back to the same arcade we went to the night before. Then we went back home and looked through my mum's camera at the photos that we took that day.

The next day we woke up early so as we were going to Blackpool Pleasure Beach. We woke up early to try and beat the lines but that didn't really work. I went on nearly every ride there, even the ones I was afraid of. We stayed until it was shut then after that we went to a local shop and got fish and chips and my mum and dad said that it was better than the one on the pier.

We then went to the two other piers and went on the arcades on them and I even won a stuffed teddy for my little sister. She was over the moon with her new toy. It got very late so we just went back home, watched some TV and went to bed.

The next day we went up Blackpool Tower. My mum was too scared to stand on the glass floor at the top and so was I at first but my littlest sister wasn't afraid at all. It was a very long way down and made you dizzy to look at the ground. There was even a 4D experience before you go up. After we got down my mum and little sisters went on a carriage ride whilst me and my dad went into Blackpool Dungeons. The dungeons consisted of eight live action shows and a ride at the end. The first room was a plague doctor explaining the plague and the second was a dungeon torturer. I can't remember the rest. It was still a good experience.

When we came out, we met back up with my sisters and my mum and we went to an arcade called Coral Island for a while before heading home for the night.

On the last day we went to one of the arcades to cash in all of our tickets so we could claim some prizes. After that we went to a shop that makes and sells rock. We all got a bag with big slabs of rock in them. After that we sat on bench for a while before getting our train and heading home once we got home, we unpacked everything, had some rock and discussed what our favourite part of the holiday was. Mine was going to the Pleasure Beach. After we had settled down it was time for bed. I really enjoyed my holiday to Blackpool and I hope I go back there again.

Word count 678

Candidate B evidence

School Uniforms: Good thing or a bad thing?

My essay is about school uniforms and if they are a good thing or a bad thing. I personally believe school uniforms are a good thing because this means people can't just walk into a school because they aren't wearing the schools uniform.

One reason school uniforms are a good thing is because it prevents bullying. Some people believe if children had to wear their own clothes they would be bullied for their choice of clothing. Another reason school uniforms are a good thing is because children spend less time trying to pick out clothes. If students wear uniforms, it limits how much time they have to spend getting ready for school. A third reason why school uniforms are a good thing is because some children might wear inappropriate clothing. If this were to happen, this could lead to bad things happening to these children. A fourth reason why school uniforms are a good thing is because some people might not have clothes that are the most popular or they might not have enough money to buy the best new clothing

One reason why School uniforms are a bad thing is because children can't have their own style. Children need to be able to express themselves with their style. Another reason why school uniforms are a bad thing is because it halts the creativity of students. Children and teenagers really enjoy finding a way to dress that expresses their personality. A school uniform stops this. A third reason why school uniforms are a bad thing is because children don't get to choose whether we want them or not. When it comes to choosing if we want school uniforms children don't even get a say. It's always adults or teachers who choose for us. A fourth reason why school uniforms are a bad thing is because they are a waste of cash. Some people believe uniforms don't help with bullying and they cost too much. People say that if kids are unique, why wear a uniform.

There was a statistics poll that a school had filled that said because of their school uniforms, they had a positive impact on peer pressure by 86 percent and bullying by 64 percent. This shows us that schools with a school uniform have lower bullying rates and lower peer pressure rates than schools without.

Six in ten parents (61 percent) believe that a uniform deters bullying while only a handful (11 percent) are disagreeing.

Seven in ten parents (68 percent) believe uniforms reduce the pressure of their children to wear the latest fashion trend which can be a factor in bullying.

School uniforms are needed by schools so children don't get bullied and the children might wear inappropriate clothing but also school uniforms could be abandoned as the facts have stated a school uniform halts creativity and also children don't get to choose whether we want them or not.

In conclusion, school uniforms are needed as they stop children from being bullied as stated by the facts which tells us that schools with school uniforms have lower bullying rates than any other school.

Word count 526

Candidate C evidence

Personal Essay

The Long and Winding Road

Ever since I was born, at least once a year, my family and friends take the long drive to Peninver on the west coast of Scotland where we stay in caravans on the beach. My mother grew up there and despite the cold temperatures and harsh winds, it's one of my favourite places to visit.

Before we set off, the house is a hive of activity as we chuck last minute essentials into a big IKEA bag: binoculars, firelighters, pillowcases, board games. I dash round the house with unbrushed hair and just one sock on, last as usual. When I'm finally ready, and they are as is tradition, impatiently waiting for me at the door, we hit the road.

On the way we seek out our favourite landmarks to keep us interested: the Clydesdale Horse, the 'Rest and be Thankful' I love that name, and we always stop at Loch Fyne for lunch. This is the point at which the road becomes winding and twisting and as we corkscrew up to Tarbert – my mother always reminds us that it is our grandmother's birthplace – we begin to feel the holiday has really begun. There is something quite special and about 'going north' in Scotland that fuels our souls and lifts our spirits, especially the latter part of the journey which takes us up the west coast of the Kintyre Peninsular past Islay and Jura, my namesake island and the signal that we are nearly at Peninver.

On arrival, I am always pleased to see pop up in front of us the pale green caravans with the black roofs. Mum knew Eddie, the owner of the park, because he once gave her a lift when she was hitchhiking to Inverness and he is always delighted to greet us. Daisy, my sister and I run down to the beach as fast as we can before we are asked to help unload the car. But we do give a hand when we return. The rooms are, as you can imagine, small but cosy. Our room has two of the skinniest beds you've ever seen in your life. It's as if one single bed has been cut down the middle. On many occasions my sister and I have woken up on the floor because we have fallen off. As soon as we've made the beds, we get into our pyjamas and the second our heads hit the pillow we're fast asleep. At this point, I have to admit, that much of this yearly experience, may seem rather routine. It is. And I love that part. These assigned activities, duties and habits are what make this holiday so special.

Which brings me to the hammocks. There used to be three hammocks at the end of the rows of caravans. One was a bit difficult to get in to and not as comfortable as the other two. On each visit, I am reminded of the time we were there with our friends from Glasgow and the oldest boy, Hector, had taken a friend with him. We would always race each other to the best hammock. Unfortunately, I was last every time as I was the youngest and slowest. On this occasion, Ryan, the friend, jumped in the nicest one and fell right through it ripping a hole in the bottom. We were all in hysterics laughing at him when Hector sat down in another one and did exactly the same. Those hammocks were never replaced – tradition again – and we laugh about the 'hammock splitting incident' every time.

The last time I was at the caravans, my aunt, uncle and cousins, Connor and Mara came too. It was Mara's second birthday and she was given a handbag and a pair of sunglasses that she loved so much she insisted on wearing both whilst riding around on her new tricycle.

As Connor pushed her around she gave the impression of being a tiny film star. These small moments of sharing this lovely place with family seem somehow to burn into our memory. And we love to recall these when we are back in the stress of city living. Up north in Scotland it can be as if time hangs in the air and we can appreciate every little happening. Even our yearly campfire on the beach toasting and eating marshmallows – the same routine every year – brings us all much pleasure. That year Mara got sticky, melted marshmallow everywhere and she and we were loving it.

Another favourite yearly activity is horse riding. There are stables near the caravan park on a farm with chickens running about and old bits of machinery at the top of a hill. You can see rugged and dramatic scenery for miles around. The farmyard smell always hits us at first like a ripe French cheese, but we soon get used to it. I've always been given the same horse called Murphy. He is friendly and is brown with white patches. We are given our riding hats and adjust the stirrups. We mount the horses and trot down the hill. My favourite part of the ride is when we get onto the beach. The horses trot along the edge of the water splashing in and out for about an hour. I love the fact that we must look dashing and romantic as if in a period film. When we arrive back at the stables, we groom and feed the horses. It all seems so far removed from our usual city life.

Another tradition of going to the caravans is the Chinese takeaway from 'The Golden Ocean'. My favourite thing to order is the sweet and sour prawns. It's not the best and perhaps it's too kind to describe it as good. But traditions are hard to leave behind. When we pick it up, we always bump into Mum's friends from when she was younger and, as usual we have to stand there for an hour whilst they reminisce!

Looking back at my account of our times spent in our Scottish holiday spot, I am aware that it might not seem the most exciting of destinations. However, there's something that draws me back to it time and again. I like the feeling of knowing that my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother and many previous ancestors are rooted there.

Finally, as with all good trips the long journey home has to be made and every mile is painful. As usual, my way to combat this is to go to sleep and dream of going back again.

1096 words

Candidate D evidence

Why childhood beauty pageants should be banned

How would you feel if you were entered into a child beauty pageant in your early years? Beauty pageants give children a sense of accomplishment and pride as they work to achieve awards, so surely entering your loved one into a beauty pageant is a no-brainer. Right? Think again. Child beauty pageants have hit the headlines once again as China recently hosted a beauty pageant for three to twelve-year olds described as being “akin to the American lingerie brand Victoria’s Secret”. Young girls paraded in skimpy lingerie and bikinis for an audience of shocked adults. It is about time that we stopped exposing our children to the harsh realities of beauty pageants before it is too late. Beauty pageants are putting our young girls at risk.

Beauty pageants can lead to eating disorders and low self-esteem. A child beauty pageant is a beauty contest in which mostly girls under the age of 16 compete against one another judged on their looks and sometimes talent. Worryingly, with this heavy focus on appearance, more and more parents of contestants are putting their young ones on strict diets to supposedly help them rise above their competition. Some of the participants are forced to endure years of starvation. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, author Karen Kataline - once a young beauty pageant participant- was put on a five-hundred calorie a day diet by her mother at the age of 7. Not only was this extremely unhealthy, it was the catalyst for a weight problem that took years for her to understand; it led to her weighing 285 pounds at the age of 16. Whilst individuals focus on their “perfect” image, the pageants are being criticised for psychologically damaging the infant participants, which can lead to a miserable life of eating disorders and body image issues.

Beauty pageants can sometimes be beneficial for children as they teach children to be competitive and socially skilful. These attributes will be valuable for their future careers. These contests also give children a sense of accomplishment and pride as they work to

achieve goals. While some children may emerge unscathed by the gruelling competitions, the truth is undeniable that for many their self-confidence and sense of self is permanently harmed.

The reality is beauty pageants teach children to value looks above more valuable characteristics such as personality and intelligence. In what ways do extreme makeovers and exhausting routines benefit young children? If you heard someone talking about tanning, high heels, eye-brow threading, makeup and even manicuring, you'd think that they were talking about preparations for a wedding, right? But no, mothers glam their children up from head to toe all for a child beauty pageant. If a beauty pageant coach or a contestant's guardian isn't happy with the child's hair, then they are dressed in a wig or get their natural, beautiful hair highlighted and occasionally dyed. What does this teach the child about how they should view their natural hair? Pageants like these instil that if you are not "perfect", you are not good enough. Should we really be teaching little girls this message? Beauty pageants set impossible standards that can only lead to a loss of self-worth and self-esteem issues.

What makes this worse is the fact that beauty pageant contestants often do not want to participate- they are forced to do so by their parents. As a result, 6% of the girls have suffered from depression. On the popular American beauty pageant TV show "Toddlers & Tiaras", plenty of children are shown throwing fits about having to compete. According to statistics, 40% of child beauty pageant contestants have suffered from psychological problems and the other 60% have been unhappy during the pageant itself. A participant's mother was filmed stating, "I'm injecting my eight-year-old with Botox and getting her body waxed so she'll be a superstar." This is deeply immoral and would never be prescribed by a GP. Botox is poison. The contestant's mother put her daughter through unnecessary pain when the girl was unable to fully consent as she was not of age to consent herself according to the law. It is distressing to think that children as young as 12 months old are forced to compete in competitions which can ultimately be extremely damaging to their physical and mental health.

Perhaps most worryingly, these cruel contests over-sexualise children. This forces them to grow up too quickly and leaves them vulnerable to sexual predators. No one can forget the case of JonBenét Ramsey. She was a 6-year-old beauty queen who was found murdered in her Boulder, Colorado home on December 26, 1996. On the morning of Boxing Day, the police were called by JonBenét's mother – Patsy Ramsey – after a long note was found including a demand of \$118,000 for JonBenét's safe return. However later that afternoon, the innocent girl's body was discovered in their basement. JonBenét's skull had been fractured, she had been sexually assaulted, and strangled. According to the coroner's report, "JonBenét's official cause of death was asphyxia by strangulation associated with craniocerebral trauma and her death was classified as a homicide." Imagine such a horrific ordeal happening to your daughter. How could you ever recover? It is widely believed that JonBenét was targeted due to her participation in beauty pageants. Dolled up in make-up and high heels, she was made to look far older than her mere six years, sexualised and advertised by her participation in these awful competitions. With China hosting child beauty pageants more like lingerie shows, it is only a matter of time before another such case occurs. How could we possibly let our children go through this trauma when it is so easy to prevent?

While lacing her 11-year-old daughter up into a tight corset, a "Toddlers & Tiaras" mother was captured on camera stating that "It doesn't matter if you can breathe or not! It only matters if you look beautiful!" While this may seem mildly amusing to a viewer, the damaging effects of such lessons on these young girls are life-long. These competitions are abusive and deeply damaging to our children who are left with shattered self-esteems and poor mental health. Not only this, but they are sexualised and made vulnerable to sexual predators. Parents should not be allowed to force their children to compete, altering and manipulating their child's appearance in order to achieve the "perfect" image to win. Child beauty pageants must be banned. Now.

Word count: 1070

Candidate E evidence

Personal/creative writing essay

My story.

It was a Monday morning; all I could see were flashing blue lights, shining through the window. I knew something bad was about to happen. I had that feeling inside, as if my life was about to be turned upside down. And it was. The lights didn't move along they came inside my house and took my dad away with them.

I remember going into school that day with so many thoughts. I needed to tell someone about what had occurred that morning but I just couldn't. I still didn't understand why this was happening to me and why it was all I could think about. I just stared at the clock, waiting for the minutes to go past and thinking about how slowly my day was going. I felt as if I was in my own bubble and nothing else mattered around me. I was dreading going home; I wished all of it was a bad dream. But in reality it wasn't. It honestly felt as if I was running away from something that I had to face. I never felt like this before. Getting off the bus after school and walking up the hill to my house, I wanted to run home but something was holding me back, the fear of knowing the unknown. I walked into my house, to find my brother Harry just standing there looking at his phone.

The house was so cold and still. I was so scared to find out what was wrong with my dad. My brother Harry came up to me and showed me his phone. It was all the signs that my dad had for months, the signs of leukaemia. I couldn't believe it my dad had cancer! Despite all those marathons he ran and how healthy and fit he was, this couldn't be true. I didn't know what to do with myself. I couldn't believe this was happening. I wanted to tell him I loved him and that everything was going to be okay. I just remember walking into that hospital with my mum and two brothers and starting to cry. Looking at my dad lying there in that hospital bed made me realise what actually was happening. The first words my dad said to all of us were 'I am going to fight this, and won't stop fighting until it's the last thing I do'. The next few hours went by as if it was many days.

Going home was the worst part the car was silent. None of us knew what to say or do. It felt as if we were driving for hours, wishing it was one big dream. I was looking out the window, looking at people outside the car walking about, completely oblivious as to what was going on in my life at this very moment. When we arrived home, my brother Harry just started crying. He kept saying, 'Why is this happening to our family?'. No one knew the answer. The next few days were the worst days of my life. Constantly crying and wanting my dad home. I found out in those days that my dad only had had a few days to live thank goodness he went to hospital when he did. Those words broke me into two.

The next few months at school, I found it very difficult to concentrate. I couldn't just sit there acting like everything was okay; when it really wasn't. Everyone kept saying to me it was going to be okay they were always there if you need to talk, he would get better. All these messages meant a lot but what I had in my head was completely different. Every day my dad had cancer I put on this smile, the kind of smile you put on when your pretending everything is okay. As the next six months went by everything slowly got better. My dad was getting stronger each day and every time I went to see him he always cracked a smile. It broke my heart but his words gave me strength to believe in him and to be strong with him and for him.

January 11th 2016 has been the happiest day of my life so far. This was the day my dad went into remission and got told that his cancer cells were clear from his body. Just seeing his face light up when he was told, seeing my mum's face light up and thinking that she had got her husband back. I couldn't believe that these words were coming out the doctor's mouth. They felt so unreal. Having my dad home felt amazing, I felt as if I got my dad back. We still had a long way to go but we knew my dad wasn't going to stop fighting and to this day he still hasn't.

2016/2017 have been the hardest years of my life so far; they couldn't have been any worse. I just wanted to run away from it all. Looking back at it now, I cannot

believe what has happened to my family. However it has showed me that it's so important to live each day as it comes since you don't know what's around the corner.

Word count=875

Candidate F evidence

New Punishments for Hacking?

We've made significant advances in technology over the last 50 years, which has led to the creation of computers, phones and the internet. They can be used to speak to friends, buy almost anything and store your personal data such as credit card details and passwords. Most people will think that all of this data is secure but, is it really secure? With the creation of the computer a new type of criminal arrived, the hacker. Using their knowledge of technology they bypass security and can steal, destroy or even change data and information. This new crime can be used to topple huge businesses or gain withheld information that people don't want to be seen. Cybercrime itself can be considered as a small crime, a serious crime or in some cases a terrorist attack. The crime can affect just one person or an entire country. So should all hackers be treated the same? Or should there be new punishments for hacking?

While hacking only became well known throughout the world in the 1950s, the first hack actually happened in 1878! Though this's difficult to believe it's actually true although it wasn't taken seriously and the hackers were called "practical jokers". When a company called Bell Telephone was started a group of teenage boys were hired to run the switchboards and they would disconnect or misdirect calls.

The first proper computer hackers came in the 1960s. During those times, computers were huge and locked away in sealed rooms. It cost a lot of money to run these machines, so programmers had limited access to them. This led to the smartest students creating "hacks", programming shortcuts, to complete computing tasks more quickly. In some cases the shortcuts were better than the original program.

The main threat that people face from hackers is the variety of things they can do. A hacker could break into your computer and steal private information then post it online where it can be seen by everyone. A hacker could destroy all of your data so that you couldn't access your bank accounts, email or phone. A hacker could change your data so that in a worst case scenario you'd be blamed for their crimes, while they walked away innocent! Hackers can help other criminals. For example if hackers attacked police computers they could cause disruption which would let criminals perform crimes freely for a short time or the hacker could erase someone's criminal record. Hackers could even change someone's criminal record to some else's information! This proves that hacking can cause serious, lasting damage.

We now know what hackers can do to people and society but we don't know what effect it has on them. Hacking can be used as a deadly tool and because of this it can be used to destroy. Destroy relationships, destroy lives but mostly, destroy people. Victims of hacking can be left with nothing, no home, no friends, no money and though sometimes they can get it back because hacking is almost always anonymous it can take a long time to find the culprit, if at all. This has mostly made hacking feel morally wrong to most people but hacking can be used for justice in some cases. For example anti-hackers are people who hack hackers to stop them from causing anymore cybercrime. Most anti-hackers are former hackers themselves who are hired by the government to help them tackle the growing rate of hackers. Another way in which anti-hacking can be used is when it is used to gain information to solve cases such as a murder, rape or drug dealing. The hackers that do this call themselves 'Freedom Fighters' and feel like what they're doing is right though it's a very controversial topic because what their doing is technically illegal and the 'Freedom Fighters' are sometimes arrested and sent to jail themselves. This has hopefully explained how hacking has an awful effect on people but it can also be used positively.

While hackers can cause serious crimes, they are almost always caught and punished but this causes another problem which is the punishment they receive. An example of this is when a freedom fighter hacked two school pupils' phones and found evidence of them raping and killing another pupil. The hacker sent the evidence to the police and the pupils were arrested but the hacker was also arrested and sent to jail. The problem though was that the hacker got a longer jail time! Two teenagers were proved to have raped and killed somebody and got two-three years but the hacker who was only charged with accessing data without permission was given ten years. What is supposed to happen is that the bigger the hack the bigger the punishment but what's happening now is a mix of small crimes getting ten years and large crimes getting barely any jail time. The maximum penalty for cyber terrorism in the UK is ten years and in the US hacks that cause serious economic or environmental damage get a penalty of fourteen years. Comparing these crimes to a hack on a phone doesn't make sense.

The countries around the world are either treating all hacks similarly or they're handing out punishments wrongly. The solution to this is really simple, new punishments for hacking. What should happen is the bigger the crime, the bigger the time instead of punishments that gives teenagers ten years in prison.

Hacking has changed the world. While the way people are catching them is fine the way they deal with them afterwards isn't. People are treated unfairly and criminals aren't getting the punishment they deserve. So why aren't people doing something about this? Is it a simple problem that no one can be bothered fixing or a global issue that is causing problems for everyone? So should there be new punishments for hacking? I think the new punishment should be harsher jail sentences for bigger hacks.

Candidate G evidence

The Loft

Reaching up, I slot the hook into place. I hesitate for a moment. It has been several years since I have been up there. After all the stories my sister told me of the old woman living up in the loft, I dread the thought of climbing up. Ughhh... why is it so hard to unlock? It's stiff, so stiff that I can't unlock it with only one hand. Suddenly the hatch bursts open, bringing with it a cloud of dust. Ughh... now my allergies will flare up and I'll have to return to the party with streaming eyes and a red nose. Great.

Pegging my nose, I begin the ascent.

The air seems colder up here. Goose bumps ripple down my arms as I fumble for the light, desperate to illuminate the darkness. The foreign world is suddenly exposed for what it is—nothing like the stories my sister used to tell me. From what I can see, there is nothing but mountains of dust-covered boxes littering every surface.

Monopoly is not going to be easy to find.

I hate it when my family order me around. No one other than Uncle Alan even wants to play the game, but I guess it will get the family to all sit down in one room together, allowing me to get away from them for a while.

Christmas decorations. Christmas tree. Skis. Too-small rollerblades. Winter boots. Suitcases of old clothes. The empty cardboard box for our T.V. Cases of Mum's old records.

Huh.

"Rose – 2002".

What's this? A box with my name on? Why haven't I been shown this before? It is taped shut, but the tape comes off easily. My name is on the box so surely I have the right to open it. "Congratulations on your baby girl". My baby cards! My rattle! My toy rattle which I remember being given on my 3rd birthday. I dig further into the box and see a clear pouch. "First trim – 3 years old". A lock of my hair! You could call it light brown, it's nothing like I

would've imagined. I move to the next box which has a large "2" marked on it, also taped up. There it is, my game, my toy, the thing which I stared at for two and a half years- the mobile which hung above my crib. Curiously, I wind it up, imagining the batteries had died long ago. Miraculously, they have not. My favourite lullaby starts to play. A tear escapes down the side of my cheek.

I dig deeper to see if any other memorable items were kept by Mum. A brown envelope. Rather more square than the typical envelopes that fall on our doormat. It is sealed. What's this? Why is it sealed? And why is everything else marked but not this? Well... there is only one way to figure it out.

Huh.

A photo. "08-05-02" printed at the back in a fading black ink. My birthday. About time I found a baby picture. I flip it over. It's mum holding me in the hospital bed the day I was born. Look at my chubby cheeks and curly locks!

Hold on a second.

That's... That's not Mum... that's... Lucy. Why's my sister in a hospital bed? Why is she the one holding me? Wait. Let me get this right. I *must* be looking at the wrong picture. Maybe this is... emm... hmm... my Auntie holding her daughter, or mum's friend who just happens to look exactly like my sister... But no, that's *definitely* me – the baby has the same birth mark as me, and that's *definitely* my sister. This can't be possible!

The silence of the loft is suddenly deafeningly loud and all sounds of the party below have disappeared.

Is my "mother" really Lucy? Who's this woman that I have been calling "mum" to then? Why have I been lied to? Why did they do it? Who else knows? What other lies have I been believing?

Why wouldn't they just tell me that Lucy was my mum? And if she's my "mum" then who's my dad? Have I met him before? Who else knows? Ohhhh.... But... but... isn't Lucy too young

to be my mum? She's only twenty-nine. That would make her only fourteen when I was born... Wait... could she have been... raped? Nooooo... oh my god. Does that mean I'm...?

The loft begins to sway.

Hot tears begin to stream down my cheeks.

I need answers.

"Rose, what's taking you so long?" the sound of Lucy's voice makes me jump. "Everything alright up there? Careful the old woman doesn't kidnap you!" She laughs.

How can she laugh? I want to swear back at her, but stop myself. Who even is she? Do I even know her at all? All she has ever done is lie to me- for fifteen and a half years.

"Yeah, fine," I grunt back, making sure to remain hidden from the loft opening.

"Hmmm, okay, then be down quickly," she replies.

She was right, I was going to be down quickly, so quick that she wouldn't see me ruining her life. If she was going to make my life a living hell, then I could surely play that game too.

I pack the evidence away where I found it, I grab the monopoly and I'm about to switch off the light and descend the ladder to confront her when something makes me stop.

If I confront her, nothing will be the same...

What about Mum? - the woman I have been calling mum for all these years? The woman I love more than anyone else on this planet. Would she still be my mum if I confront Lucy and expose the truth? And what about Lucy? She wouldn't be my sister anymore... It would all be mixed up. Our family as I know it would be over. Sure, they annoy me, but the thought of losing them, losing the relationship we have...

I can't do it.

I descend the ladder slowly. Each step confirming what I now know, but burying it deeper and deeper inside me.

I slam the hatch. I lock up the loft and all the secrets held inside it.

Perhaps I will play Monopoly after all.

Approx. 1000 words

Candidate H evidence

Discursive Piece - Biography

The Life of Robert So Far

In the early hours of the morning on the 28th of August a new life was coming into the world. So peaceful and cute then but little did his parents know he was going to turn into a cheeky young lad always getting up to mischief. This baby later went on to prove his teachers wrong and become a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy at the same time as being a chef. This is the life so far of Robert [REDACTED]!

Robert [REDACTED], a 48 year old man now living in [REDACTED] with his wife and three kids had a joyous start to life, when he entered this world on the 28th of August 1969 in [REDACTED] Hospital, [REDACTED]. His earliest memory of his childhood was when he blamed Judy, his Jack Russell, for eating all of the bananas. As a child Rob was always cheeky and getting up to mischief, trying to push the limits to see what he could get away with. If he was to describe his childhood it would always be adventurous because he could go and play with no limits on his grandparent's farm, where he spent most of his summer and holidays. If it wasn't on the farm with his grandparents he would be out playing his favourite game British bulldog. As a child if he was to get into trouble he would always fear what the village officer would say to his dad in the pub on Friday night, although that wouldn't be as bad as when his grandma lost him between about 100 cows whilst emptying the milking shed. Might I add he was only two years of age at that point. She eventually found him when she looked over the top of the cows and saw a crook carried by Rob, acting as if he was herding the cows out.

High school, what a time! [REDACTED] Comprehensive was a great school but it did have its flaws, one being his home economics teacher Miss [REDACTED]. Miss [REDACTED] was a lovely teacher but back then for a boy to take Home Economics it was unheard of and not usually seen, but defying the odds Rob took the subject and, to the surprise of his teacher he was very good at it. Whilst at school Rob participated in the Rugby team as well as also being a scout out of school. If you were to have seen Rob at school compared to how he is now you wouldn't recognise him. He was reserved and flew under the radar. He never did anything to make himself stand out, he had long shoulder length hair and listened to Marillion and other Progressive rock music. As a teen he often found himself looking up to his teen idol Mark Hughes a chef in the navy which was exactly what Rob wanted to do.

After High school Rob went straight into the navy as his second ever job following his paper round when he was younger. He made great achievements regarding his rank in the Navy, making it up to a Chief Petty Officer and chef which he then spent 25 years doing. Whilst speaking to Rob he expressed how he doesn't have any regrets regarding his career path and although his worst job was being the operations manager, it still wasn't bad enough to have regrets. The best possible work environment for Rob would have to be a friendly area working on classical vehicles.

Whilst being in the Navy he met the women of his dreams who he later went on to marry and have three children with, they have been married for 25 years and are still growing strong to this day. Elaine [REDACTED] 44 and their three children Cougar (18), Caleece (15) and Aspen (12) are living a good life with Rob's goals to always be there for them and bring them up to be responsible and respectful. Family has always had a big part in Rob's life with his own belief stated as follows:

'Family is a strong unit that is always there for one another and never give up, no matter how tough things get'.

Inspirational coming from a man that likes to think he is supportive, firm but fair, annoying and biggest of all embarrassing but never the less he is the boss in the family but his children wouldn't change a thing.

Being in love with Elaine for 25 years has been a blast since the moment he met her at a night out in the pub. She walked over to talk to her sister and asked what she was having to drink which is when he said "Mines a pint". Ever since then he knew she was the one. Their wedding was very low key but still sophisticated and the reception after was amazing, just like a special party. It was very much like love at first sight and they wouldn't change a thing.

Being happy is one of the key things for Rob and his family, he wants everything to be joyful and exhilarating. He felt this when he was traveling round the world but especially when he went to Kenya with the navy and worked with the locals to improve their living standards. Marrying Elaine made him the happiest man in the world, even when other things were bringing him down. His children bring so much to his life and he couldn't wish for anyone else. When Rob dies he wants to be remembered as a guy who wasn't perfect but was always there to help with anything.

A life lived to the max, full of memories never to be forgotten, Rob really has done a lot to help other people making sure they have everything that he could only wish for when he was younger. Travelling the world with a family of friends and making everyone smile was one of his dreams and he made it. I'm so glad that that I have Rob as my dad to lead me through life with all the experience and kindness he has to offer.

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