Title: Scrabble Makes My Life Clear

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Presenter: Phoebe Roache

You will need to carefully read the selection below and complete various activities using the essay as your basis.

Using the highlight function on your computer, you will need to mark the essay below. It will be necessary for you to read the essay several times to fully understand the essay and complete the markings in such a way that demonstrates a close reading of the essay. You will need to use the following chart to correctly mark the essay.

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| Highlight Color | Item to be identified | Use an X to indicate you have accomplished this task. Use NA if this task did not apply to this essay. |
| PINK | Mark the main idea of the essay. |  |
| AQUA | Mark key examples/ support for the main idea/ theme of the essay. |  |
| GREEN | Mark statements that you agree with . |  |
| YELLOW | Mark statements that are new to you or make you think in a new way. |  |
| RED | Mark statements in the essay that you disagree with. |  |
| GRAY | Mark terms/ concepts that you found difficult to understand. |  |

The time I began reading and marking this assignment was:

When I was younger, my mother made me see a child psychologist to figure out what was wrong with me. To this day I argue my problems were not serious, but my mom and Dr. Diane thought I was too stubborn and narrow-minded for a seven year old boy. In order for me to express my emotions and open up without knowing it, Dr. Diane taught me to play Scrabble (she believed the words I formed would possess some deeper meaning). Soon going to Dr. Diane was not a chore; I could sit down and play Scrabble with her—a game I was beginning to love above Pokémon and Legos. Scrabble was straight forward, intellectual, and strategic: all characteristic I valued in myself. I started playing and have never stopped.

The best Hannukah I can remember is the year I turned ten and received a Deluxe Scrabble set as a present. By then I considered myself a pro at Scrabble. I knew all the strange two letter words, the most important being “Za” and “Qi” because they accumulate the most points. Mastering the Scrabble craft was not easy; I had to learn to see the board from every angle, learn when to use my esses, and never give my opponent an opportunity at the triple word score. Some called me a Scrabble savant. I responded by looking up “savant” in the dictionary and adding it to ever growing Scrabble vocabulary.

I believe in Scrabble—Scrabble a game, as a way to look at life, the values that Scrabble teaches. Scrabble requires both a command of language and enough creativity to make words out of any set of letters. There is a reason why some people will never be good Scrabble players; they break under the time pressure or give up when all they receive is seven vowels. Scrabble taught me to be a quick thinker and because I learned to think one move ahead of my opponent, I never seem to cave when dealt a bad hand or given one minute to make a word. Scrabble is a ruthless game; it can break confidence, demoralize its victims, and swallow up its competitors, yet it was Scrabble that ultimately provided me the best therapy.

One of my problems when seeing Dr. Diane was by rigidness and inability to change. My mom thought I had OCD because I sat in the same chair at the table for every meal and yelled at my siblings when they tried to sit in it. In Scrabble I couldn’t follow this cookie-cutter philosophy. Scrabble required me to learn strange new words and take risks that could potentially cost me the game. There is an untraditional strategy in Scrabble called “pack-ratting” in which players clog up the board by placing small words close to another. I became the king of this strategy, but it forced me to forget everything I knew about conformity and conventionality. I pushed myself to incorporate my Scrabble personality into my real one and soon I was even letting my sister sit in my seat at the dinner table.

The importance of Scrabble to me remains tied to my family. Our world is so over stimulated with television, email, and facebook that many times we forget the tranquility of old-fashioned fun. Therefore my family treasures our annual Scrabble game on Thanksgiving Day near a warm, cozy fire. I believe the best moments in life are often the simplest. And for me, Scrabble represents my goals to keep my life simple and centered on my family. Life itself is just a game and when I play Scrabble I am reminded to view life as an empty playing board.

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| Your response should be self-contained. When someone reads your responses, they should be able to tell which question you are responding to.  In marking the essay you should be clear in what idea and item you are reacting to. The markings should indicate a close and personal reading of the essay. Excessive markings or lack of markings may indicate a failure to have closely read and comprehended the essay. |  |
| Based on your reading and marking of the essay identify the main idea of the essay as well as support including direct quotations and evidence from the essay. Your response should be limited to no more than one (1) well written and adequately edited paragraph. |  |
| Using at least two (2) of the writing prompts below and in no more than three (3) well written and adequately edited paragraphs create a response to the essay:   * The part (s) of the essay I agreed with were * The part (s) of the essay I disagreed with were * This essay reminded me of/ made me think of * This essay made me think in a new way * This essay was similar to another essay |  |
| What question (s) would you like to ask the author of this essay? Explain your reasoning for wanting to have the answer to this question. |  |
| Having now read this essay I… |  |
| **Presenters Only:** You will need to have three (3) questions that you would like to present to your classmates during your seminar. |  |

The time I completed reading and marking this assignment was: