

## A Reflective Essay: Is Identity Shaped by Taste?

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It is a common tendency to define ourselves through our hobbies and personal preferences. These interests often serve as a source of comfort, offering a framework through which we construct our sense of identity. When posed with the question, “What kind of person are you?” our immediate response is frequently shaped by the things we enjoy, be it the films we watch, the music we listen to, or the art we admire. Such preferences become symbolic representations of who we believe ourselves to be, as though our identity is inherently reflected in our cultural and aesthetic choices.

From a young age, I’ve been captivated by the world of books. My literary journey began at age seven with the *Harry Potter* series, and since then, reading has become an inseparable part of my life. Despite my parents’ suggestion to switch to a Kindle, I resisted—drawn instead to the tactile pleasure of turning crisp pages and the comforting scent of a hardcover book. Recently, I’ve begun annotating my reads with vibrant sticky notes, marking passages that resonate with me and recording my reflections. For a long time, I believed that my love for literature was a defining trait. But I’ve come to understand that it’s not merely about the genres I enjoy or the stories I consume—it’s about how those narratives shape my identity and influence the way I engage with the world.

As I’ve matured, I’ve realized that my passion for reading stems not just from compelling plots, but from the emotional depth and insight these stories offer. Literature has taught me more than just storytelling—it has illuminated the intricacies of life, emotion, and human connection. The characters I’ve encountered have become mirrors and mentors, shaping my worldview and sense of self. Through them, I discovered humour—particularly the dry wit and subtle irony that now colour my own personality. The clever repartee and nuanced wordplay I admired in fictional dialogues have become part of how I express myself and find joy in everyday moments.

Yet, literature is only one facet of my intellectual and emotional growth. Film, television, and visual art have also played pivotal roles in expanding my understanding of human experience. Cinematic narratives have deepened my empathy. Watching characters navigate adversity, evolve, and sometimes falter has helped me better comprehend both myself and those around me. Art, too, has taught me to notice and appreciate the subtleties—the quiet beauty in overlooked details, the emotion behind a brushstroke, the story within a frame.

Ultimately, my interests are more than mere pastimes—they are reflections of my inner world. Books, films, and art have not only enriched my imagination but have also shaped my values, my perspective, and my capacity for empathy. They have helped me become a more introspective and compassionate individual, attuned to both the complexity of others and the evolving contours of my own identity.