

## LOLA'S 1.7 PERSONAL RESPONSE ESSAY

In the poem "The Road Less Traveled," the poet Robert Frost wrote, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I/ I took the one less traveled by,/And that has made all the difference." Take a look here if you'd like to read the whole poem: <https://quick.adlc.ca/theroec781>. The speaker in this poem spent a long moment staring down each of the two paths, deciding which would be right for him. In the end, he chose a less popular path, and says that it has "made all the difference" in his life. Was he deciding, like me, between his own wants and desires and what someone else wanted him to do? When I was five, I used to pretend I was a conductor and I would conduct my stuffed animal orchestra. I'd like to do that forever and make that my career! However, my parents want me to go a different way, a "safer," more traditional way. While conforming to the expectations of family and society is easier, teenagers who pursue their own interests find happiness in life.



Even though teenagers may have intense desires to pursue certain interests, they often have to fight against parents' and society's expectations to do so. In the 1980's, before I was born, my parents immigrated to Canada. They settled into a small town called Fox Creek because they had heard that there was a paper mill there, and they had both worked at a paper mill back in China. They did not earn much money, but they worked hard, saved, and eventually were able to build a successful life there. It wasn't easy. They didn't know any English when they first arrived, and the culture was so different from Chinese culture. My parents want me to reach an even higher level of success than they did. They want me to go to college and get a job that pays well. It's not so important to them that it's a job I like. It's more important that I can pay the bills. My school counselor kind of agrees with them. She says I have great marks in my science and math courses and should consider one of those fields for college or university so I have a better chance of getting a job later on. Even my boyfriend agrees with them. He gets amazing marks and studies all the time. He wants to be an architect, and he keeps telling me I can make a lot of money in that field. Plus, I think he wants me to go to university with him. I feel a lot of pressure from these people in my life because they want me to choose a career path that I do not find interesting.

Making the decision to pursue one's passions can be difficult but necessary. I was surfing the Web one night and saw this inspirational video called "What's Your Purpose," by Eric Thomas, and something in me just changed. His words gave me the boost I needed to start going after what I wanted for my life.

He said, "Not only is it possible for you to have your dream, it's necessary." He made me realize I am not going to be happy if I let go of the things that I love, especially writing and making music.

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## LOLA'S 1.7 PERSONAL RESPONSE ESSAY (CONTINUED)

Here is the video. See if it makes you think about your life goals too:






<https://quick.adlc.ca/youtubc16b>. At one point he says, “When you know within yourself that there is something you wanna do, and I believe that all of us are born with a purpose, that all of us have something that we are supposed to do, that all of us have some goodness within us. That goodness gives us a responsibility to manifest our greatness.” I felt like he was talking to me about my life, about my love for music. The minute the video ended, I texted my boyfriend and said, “I hope you are not mad at me, but I want to study music, not architecture or science or math.” Then I went in to my parent’s bedroom and woke up my mother and father. I was scared, but I told them my plans. I said I was sorry to disappoint them, but I would work hard to make them proud in my own way. The next day at school I told my counselor the same thing. I’m not going to say everything was perfect after that. My boyfriend was not happy. My parents went from not talking to me to yelling sometimes, but I just kept thinking about something I heard in that video. “A lot of people go to work miserable. . . every day, but they don’t do anything about it.” I don’t want that to be me. I’d rather be poor and know I tried to reach my dreams.



Being able to pursue important interests helps teenagers achieve a happy, fulfilling life. Even though they were not happy, once I had told my family, my counsellor, and my boyfriend about my plan, I felt happier than I had in a long time. I was also afraid because I knew I was setting out on a risky path, but I also felt brave. One day I was feeling a little bit of doubt about my decision, but then I found this cartoon called “Jim Henson: A Puppeteer’s Advice.” Take a look at the cartoon here: <https://quick.adlc.ca/zenpef21c> I felt a bit like the kid in this cartoon—thinking that everyone else was making decisions about my life except for me—but then, as the Jim Henson quote says, “All of a sudden you realize that you are the person who has control of your life.” This cartoon gave me a boost of courage, and I decided to change my future plans. I signed up for some upgrading courses over the summer to meet the admissions requirements for the University of Calgary. In the fall I plan to submit an application to the music program at U of C. I told my parents I planned to study graphic design as well, so if my music career doesn’t work out, I have a good second option.

For teenagers to be able to find happiness in life, they must be allowed to pursue their own interests, and not be forced to conform to their family’s or society’s expectations. I think back to my five-year-old self and how much I loved conducting my stuffed animal orchestra, and I never want to lose that passion. So despite the pressure I feel to choose a more traditional career, I am going to focus on music studies at university with the goal of someday conducting a real orchestra or composing my own music. I know that if I am courageous enough to “take the road less traveled by,” it will make “all the difference” in my life. I hope other teenagers find the same courage inside of themselves.

## 1.7 Personal Response Essay

Value	Ideas and Impressions	Presentation
 <p><b>Excellent</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your <b>ideas</b> are <i>insightful</i> and <i>complex</i> . <input type="checkbox"/> You provide <i>precise</i> and <i>detailed</i> <b>support</b> to reinforce ideas through the use of personal, and/or other stories.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You <i>skillfully</i> develop a <b>unifying effect</b> (organizational structure) through the thesis, topic sentences, and introduction and conclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> You use <b>word choice, grammar, spelling, and punctuation</b> <i>skillfully</i> and <i>fluently</i> .
 <p><b>Proficient</b></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your <b>ideas</b> are <i>thoughtful</i> and <i>clear</i> . <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You provide <i>relevant</i> <b>support</b> to reinforce ideas through the use of personal, and/or other stories.	<input type="checkbox"/> You <i>capably</i> develop a <b>unifying effect</b> (organizational structure) through the thesis, topic sentences, and introduction and conclusion. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You use <b>word choice, grammar, spelling, and punctuation</b> <i>confidently</i> and <i>effectively</i> .
 <p><b>Satisfactory</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your <b>ideas</b> are <i>appropriate</i> . <input type="checkbox"/> You provide <i>straightforward</i> <b>support</b> to reinforce ideas through the use of personal, and/or other stories.	<input type="checkbox"/> You <i>adequately</i> develop a <b>unifying effect</b> (organizational structure) through the thesis, topic sentences, and introduction and conclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> You use <b>word choice, grammar, spelling, and punctuation</b> <i>adequately</i> .
 <p><b>Limited</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your <b>ideas</b> are <i>incomplete</i> or <i>undeveloped</i> . <input type="checkbox"/> You provide <i>vague, limited, or repetitive</i> <b>support</b> that does not reinforce ideas through the use of personal, and/or other stories.	<input type="checkbox"/> You <i>inadequately</i> develop a <b>unifying effect</b> (organizational structure) through the thesis, topic sentences, and introduction and conclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> You use <b>word choice, grammar, spelling, and punctuation</b> <i>inaccurately</i> .
<b>Resubmission Needed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your attempt to respond is <i>insufficient</i> . <b>Contact your teacher</b> to discuss suggestions for improvement and resubmission of your work.	
<b>TOTAL: 84/100</b> = <b>84%</b>	<b>48/60</b>	<b>36/40</b>
 <p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Areas of strength:</b> Lola, one of your greatest strengths in the essay is your organization. You have an effective thesis, and your topic sentences clearly define what each body paragraph will discuss. Your choice to add multimedia, though not required, was superb. Not only does each text fit perfectly with the point you are arguing in your essay, but the mix of video, poetry, and cartoon make reading the essay even more interesting.</p> <p><b>Might I suggest:</b> Since you did include multimedia, I would have liked more discussion of how each multimedia text supports each body paragraph. You do include a few quotations from the text, which is excellent, but really using the texts to prove each topic sentence will allow you to analyze the topic more deeply. The same is true for your personal example. It was a perfect story to help prove your thesis, but just a bit more detail would have taken your argument to a deeper level. The writing itself is strong, though a little bit repetitive at times. Always strive to find new and powerful ways to express your ideas.</p>	