

"Write About What You Know"



English teachers can be heard saying this all the time, but what exactly does it mean?!

Year 10 student, Kade, recently achieved 14/15 in his English narrative task. Kade is a passionate collector of Apple Mac computers in his free time.

'FIFTY SHADES OF BEIGE'

Each phone call or knock on the door was more bad news. His palms started to feel numb and clammy. Shaking, he turned over the letter from the landlord. In bold, red ink spelt, 'Lease Termination Notice'. He jams the notice between two piles of yellowed and dog-eared MacWorld magazines from the 90's. An ignorant Tony squeezes through the tight, cramped hallway passing through old clothes, books, mail and into the damp smelling beige, grime covered kitchen and plopped into a hard wood chair. Observing the pile of clutter, rubbish and junk, he sighs in relief. Tony tries to extend his legs under the table and closes his eyes.

He suddenly thought of what once filled this space; a new, spacious kitchen, with kids running around the house arguing, but most of all, a lovely wife. Tony remembers her quiet manner, nights together at this table when she would read her book and roll her eyes at him highlighting the Apple product catalogue. "you know you won't be able to afford all those!" Lisa groaned. "you do know we have two kids", gesturing at their photo on the fridge.

Knock! The harsh, wooden sound of the doors fills the house. Tony jolts into the present and opens his eyes, shaking his head knowing exactly who's at the door. Tony presses his hands on his knees and stands up. Shuffling to the door stepping softly so as not to cause an avalanche of the hundreds of broken Macintoshes that wrap around the walls. Tony grasps the tarnished brass doorknob, unlocks the door chain and creaks the door open slowly. He locks eyes with the well-dressed man standing in front of him. Slim, freshly shaved cheeks, pin-striped jacket and bore a startling resemblance to a younger Tony. "Dad, seriously! After all the help I've offered you and you act like this," Linton declares, waving a copy of the notice in Tony's poor, unaware face. "What do you do with the money I give you?" questions Linton, barging through the doorway. Linton twitching his nose and swallowing bile rising in his throat, Shakes his head in disappointment as he looks around at his dad's 'collectables'. "Dad, you are ill. Mentally ill" he states.

No wonder Mum left". Linton, out of intrigue, picks up a flat plastic beige box of the ground that has what looks to be a keyboard on the front of it with a metallic 'Apple II' badge. He knocks on the front of it. Tony's eyes widen, and abruptly he swipes it out of Linton's hands. "You have no respect for me, do you? Tears well up in Tony's eyes as he pets the Apple II badge on the computer. He stared at Linton and cried, "Get out!". Linton shook his head and crept backwards out of his father's home, tripping over jungles of wires and cables laced all over the ground. Slam!

Tony peeks out of the living room window, eyes following Linton's car reversing out of the cracked concrete driveway. Tony took a deep breath and stood up and walked over to the door and stared down at the pile of MacWorld magazines. He moved a pile to the side and fished around for the letter he received earlier. The paper brushed against his fingers and he grips it, Shakily. Rapidly, he rips the seal off the envelope and

pinches the enclosed letter out. Fumbling, he struggles to grasp the corner of the document to unfold it. Tony reads the letter, brushing his fingers through his hair. In bold: 'Due: \$6,500'. Tony stares at the number, crumpling the document with his left palm, forehead filling with sweat, cheeks burning and vision narrowing. Tony looks around the room for some sort of answer, but nothing appears. Pacing around the house looking for a solution, his eyes fall on the Apple II computer that his insensitive son disrespected.

Tony picked up the Apple II, admiring its beautiful body, feeling the smooth under body, and matte beige plastics on the upper case. Tony brings the computer to his face and smells it through its aged keys. A beautiful old plastic musk fills his lungs. "This computer could be worth thousands," Tony murmured. It dawned on him that his old computer might be his only ticket out of this situation. Tony sighs as he realises what he has to do. Clasp the computer, he holds it to his chest, "I'm sorry."

Tony leaves the house, still holding onto the Apple II he gently places it on the back seat of his sedan. He anxiously drives to the pawn shop on George Street. Approaching the shop the flickering pink neon 'Open' sign filled him with both dread and relief. Tony paraded the 'Apple II' into the shop, heart beating and blood rushing in his ears, he places it onto the counter. "I'd like to sell please."

The shopkeeper, David's, eyes widened, as he examined it closely rubbing his tobacco-stained fingers up and down the clean plastics. Tony's eye twitching. "I'll do \$7,000 right now," David offered. In shock, Tony shook David's hand. Seventy green notes are stacked in his palm. Tony walked out looking back wistfully one last time at the first Macintosh he'd ever received. Tony sits back into his car, hands at ten and two on the wheel as he starts boldly driving to the Real Estate Agency. Tony walks up the stairs of the firm and unfolds the notice from his pocket, seeing only the bold letters: 'Due: \$6,500'.