

EXAMPLE LONG NONFICTION STORY BASED ON RESEARCH

Prompt: Write a long journalistic story about a real person who is still alive and who has changed the trajectory or path of his/her life in some way. Show the challenges that this person faced and how those challenges were overcome. Make sure that the story contains at least eight paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Provide at least three references in a reference list and in-text citations as needed. Use the APA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: King James

King James
Beverly Colombo
Central High School

Mr, Yellowbird
Civics & Government
6 January 2018

King James

Many sportscasters and fans believe LeBron James is the best National Basketball Association (NBA) player of his time. They compare him to other basketball “greats” including Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and Shaquille O’Neal. Even in high school, he was an exceptionally talented player. He set records and won individual awards from his freshman year to senior year in his state of Ohio and nationally. As a high school student, he was selected Ohio’s Mr. Basketball, Gatorade Player of the Year, and All USA First Team. He was on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. His friends gave him the nickname “King James.” Because of his talent, his team won three state championships in three years. They also were chosen as the best high school team in the nation. Not surprisingly, immediately after completing high school, LeBron was drafted into the NBA as the number-one draft pick by the Cleveland Cavaliers. People in his home state looked forward to watching him play basketball for the rest of his career.

During his rookie professional year (2003-2004), James lived up to the hype. In his first game, he scored 25 points, a record for a player drafted right out of high school (“LeBron James,” 2018a). For the whole year, he averaged at least 20 points, 5 rebounds, and 5 assists per game (“LeBron James,” 2018a). He matched the records of two other great rookie players, Michael Jordan and Oscar Robertson (“LeBron James,” 2018b). Furthermore, he was named “Rookie of the Year.” At 20 years old, he was the youngest player to ever win this award. In the summer of his rookie year, he played for the U.S. Olympic Team. They won the bronze medal.

During the following seasons, James continued to win awards. In his second year, he was the youngest player to score at least 50 points in one game (“LeBron James,” 2018a).

He also was selected for the NBA All-Star Game. Later, he was the youngest player to score a triple/double, average 30 points a game, and be chosen for the All-NBA team. As a result of his leadership and hard work, he led the Cavaliers to the playoffs each year from 2006 to 2010. However, he was disappointed each year because they did not win the NBA Championship, which was his goal.

In 2010, James became a free agent; his contract with the Cavaliers had expired (“LeBron James,” 2018b). Not surprisingly, he was recruited by many teams, but the Cavaliers fans hoped he would remain a Cavalier. On an ESPN special TV program called “The Decision,” he announced that he would sign with the Miami Heat, joining two other free agents Chris Bosh and Dwayne Wade, on the Miami Heat team (“LeBron James,” 2018a). He explained that he wanted to win the NBA Championship, which was more likely with Bosh and Wade as his teammates. Not surprisingly, his decision created an uproar in Cleveland. It also drew widespread criticism from sportscasters and others nationally. As a result, he became one of the most disliked athletes in the U.S. He was called a “villain.” Soon, after all the negative attention, he began to play the role of a villain. He acted angry as he played games, said some outlandish things, and always seemed to be trying to prove a point. In fact, he stopped smiling, and he stopped enjoying the game of basketball.

Eventually, James got tired of playing the role of a bad guy. After his first season with the Miami Heat when his team did not win the NBA Championship, he went into a room and stayed there, by himself, for two weeks. He thought about how he had acted and how he wanted to act in the future. As a result, he decided to change his attitude and his behavior. He decided to have fun when he plays basketball. He decided to go back to playing jokes and skipping around on the court. He decided to bring back joy into his life. In

the next two seasons, his decisions paid off. The Miami Heat won the NBA Championship in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 seasons. LeBron had achieved his goal twice!

Nonetheless, LeBron missed his home in Cleveland and the Cleveland fans. In essence, he missed being part of a state and a community that he loved. He realized that his relationship with the people of Ohio was bigger than his relationship with basketball. As a consequence, he started to look for an opportunity to move back to Ohio. He wanted to return to the Cleveland Cavaliers. After the Miami Heat did not win the NBA Championship during the 2013-2014 season, LeBron was done. He chose to become a free agent instead of renewing his contract.

During the next summer, he worked out a new contract with the Cleveland Cavaliers worth \$42 million ("LeBron James," 2018a). He announced his decision to return to Cleveland in a well-received *Sports Illustrated* article entitled "I'm coming home" (James & Jenkins, 2014). Happily, he joined Kevin Love and Kyrie Irving, two other All-Star Players, to create the nucleus of the team for the 2014-2015 season. Other players included James Jones and Shaun Marion. Not surprisingly, the team was very successful in their first year together. They earned their way to the finals for the NBA Championship. In the 2015-2016 season, they performed even better. They won the first NBA Championship for the Cleveland fans.

Thus, LeBron learned that there can be "several ways to skin a cat" or meet one's goals. He had the goal of becoming an NBA Champion, and he figured out how to do that on two different teams. However, he also learned that "There's no place like home" and that he felt most comfortable in his home state. He learned that the feeling of "home" was more important to him than the game of basketball. He also learned that acting like a villain or a

jerk did not make him happy or suit his true nature. He decided that he could live his life with joy in his true home and still meet his goals. With determination and a lot of effort, he pursued those goals and he met them with flair while achieving several personal and team victories. His reputation has been saved, and his nickname “King James” remains.

References

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