

Looking up to Ms. 8: A Sample Assignment Response for ENGL 062 at DeVry University

Geoffrey B. Elliott

DeVry University

## Looking up to Ms. 8: A Sample Assignment Response for ENGL 062 at DeVry University

I have been fortunate enough to have met and worked with a number of extraordinary people as a student, as a teacher, and in my life outside the classroom. I have been even more fortunate in that many of those people have been members of my family. One of them is my beloved daughter, whom I refer to in my public writings as Ms. 8. She inspires because she is as young and untouched by sorrow as she is; her present purity pushes me to be the kind of person who does not sully it.

My daughter was born while I was working as a visiting assistant professor. The job was not good for me; I did not fit in well, partly because I was obstinate about things I ought not to have been. When Ms. 8 joined the family, though, I found myself obliged to change due to the added responsibility. Years of teaching taught me that the best thing I can do in the classroom is model behavior I want to see; I was aware from the years of study that preceded my teaching taught me that the same is true, and more so, for children in the home. My teaching schedule had me home with Ms. 8 more than most fathers get to be; I was her primary caregiver for two and joint caregiver on the other two. I knew at the time that, because I was around my daughter more than most fathers are around their children, the burden of acting the right way around her and for her fell upon me more heavily than on most other fathers. Even now, when I am not around her as much, I am still aware of it, more than is common. Consequently, I work harder than many to show my daughter through my actions both the way she should act and the way others should act toward her. Most fathers who are engaged in their children's lives try to be better people for their children; I, having had greater early experience with her, and occupying a position that offers me fewer challenges than many others face, have to try harder yet.

In effect, Ms. 8 inspires from her youth and happiness. That she does not have the problems many others have drives me to be the kind of person who does not introduce them to her, or her to them. I know problems will present themselves to her as she continues to grow and to learn; the nature of the world is such that they can hardly not. But that does not mean I have to add to them, and I can hope that, in working to be the kind of person who does not make things worse for her, I can help Ms. 8 develop the strength of character that will help her face her challenges and conquer them.