

2013 Personal Writing


Personal Essay: What Books Mean to Me

A person who
won't read has
NO advantage
over one who
can't read.

- Mark Twain

Possible Approach

- ✦ Trace the importance of books at various stages in your life
- ✦ Discuss books which have really made an impression on you



A reader lives a
thousand lives before
he dies,

The man who never
reads lives only one.

~ George R. R. Martin

Points to Consider

- ✦ The essay does not ask you to discuss the importance of books in a general sense.
- ✦ Focus on your own life.
- ✦ The examiner will be unimpressed if the only books you can think of are those you have read in school.

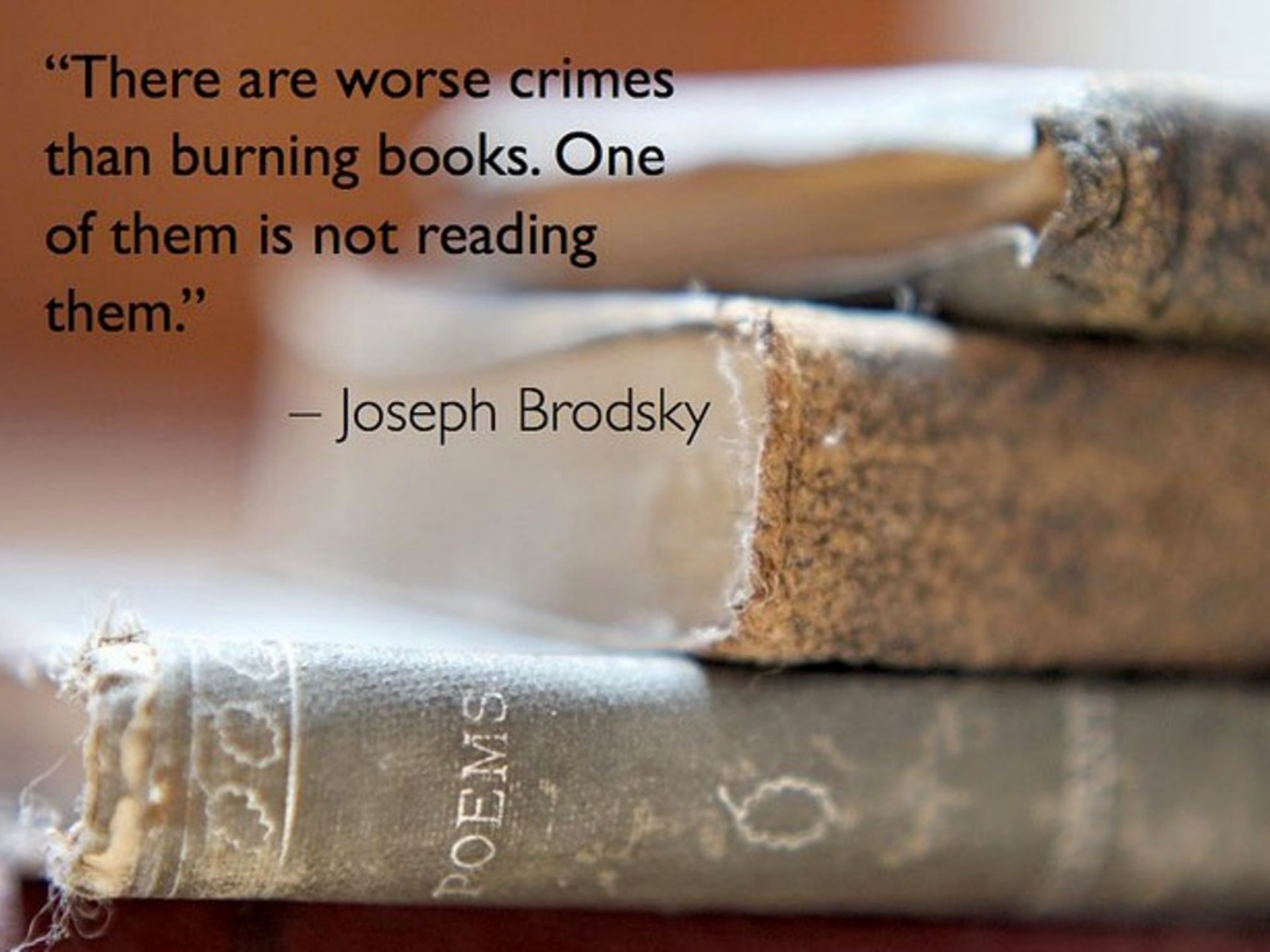
YOU DON'T HAVE TO
BURN THE BOOKS
TO DESTROY A CULTURE.
JUST GET PEOPLE TO
STOP READING THEM.

— Ray Bradbury

- ✦ You could mention times when being a reader has helped you: perhaps in Science or History or another subject.
- ✦ Remember, you don't have to focus only on fiction. Factual books and autobiographies are important too.

“There are worse crimes
than burning books. One
of them is not reading
them.”

– Joseph Brodsky



Suggestions

- ✦ Books bring people together: first memories are often of parents reading books to children. Specific example would help here.
- ✦ Books can be a great way to explore difficult issues. Maybe you learned coping skills from seeing how characters dealt with them in stories?
- ✦ Factual books provide a measured, reflective view of issues that are dealt with too hastily and have not been edited, checked or put into context in media reports for example.

Reading is to the mind

what

Exercise is to the body

- ✦ Books provide us with a way to escape the realities of life, even for a short while.
- ✦ Books allow us to travel to places and meet people - real or imaginary - that we would never otherwise meet
- ✦ Books help us to see other points of view.
- ✦ Reading allows us to use our imagination in a way films never can.
- ✦ Of course, books help us to improve our spoken and written English.



**No two persons ever
read the same book.**

– EDMUND WILSON –

- ✦ In each case, you should try to think of at least one example of a book that illustrates your point.
- ✦ Be accurate when giving the name of the book and the author. Use inverted commas and capital letters correctly.