

# 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

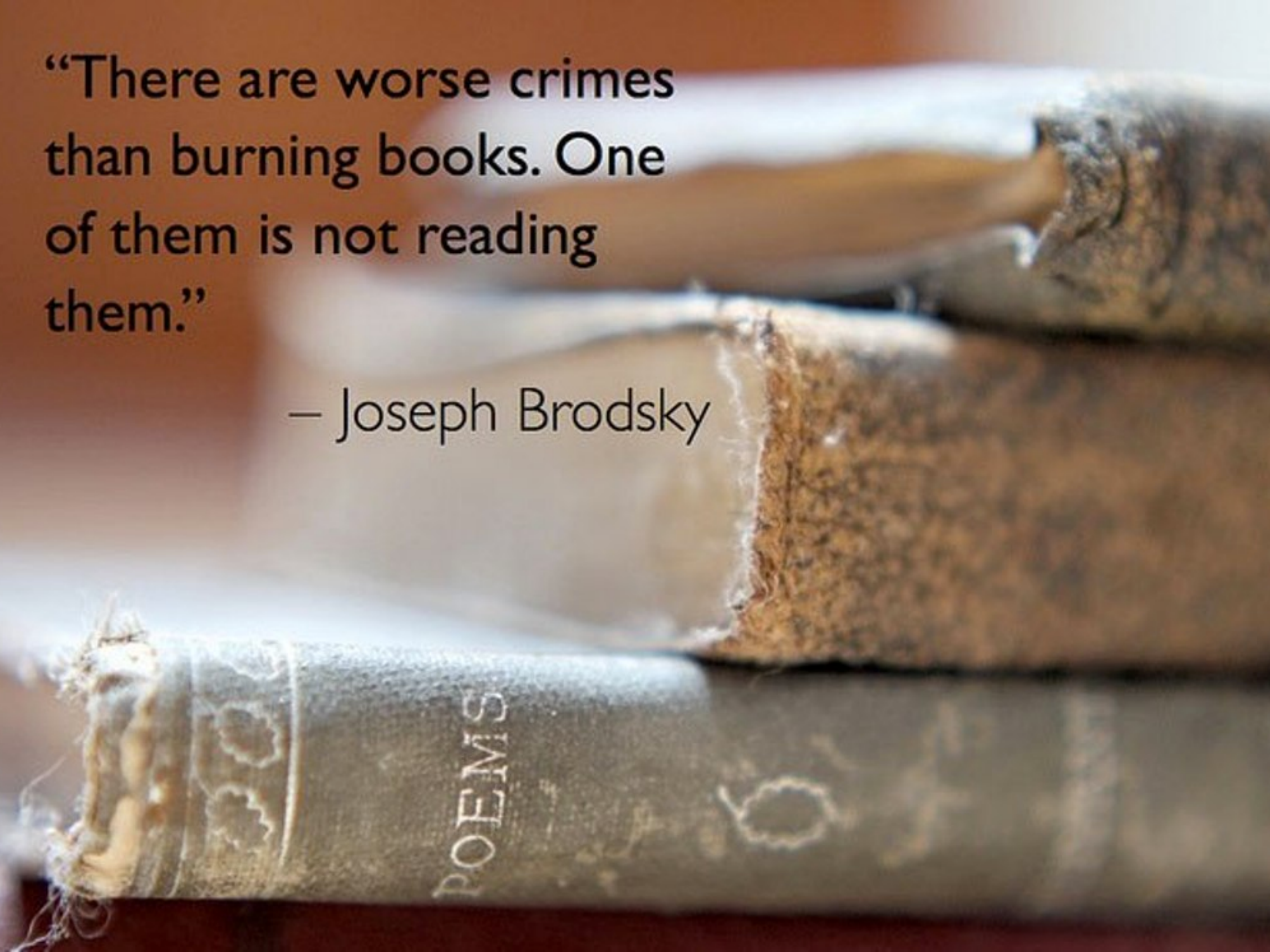


- ✦ You could mention times when being a reader has helped you: perhaps in Science or History or another subject.
- ✦ Remember, you don't have to focus only on fiction. Factual books and autobiographies are important too.



“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.