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English Composition II

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### Initial Research Proposal: League of Legends

#### **Background**

I chose to research League of Legends (hereinafter League) because I want to figure out how the game encourages players to read and write. In order to accomplish this, I will be looking at the features of the in-game chat, the lore of the game, and how players interact with each other. This topic suits me because I've been playing League for most of my life, and I'm excited to get the opportunity to look deeper into the game for an academic purpose. One thing I've noticed throughout my time playing the game is that communication (and by extension, literacy) is very important. Even from the beginning of a match, players are verbally coordinating with their team or joking around with their opponents. In the heat of battle, players must be able to understand and respond to commands quickly, which encourages them to learn and use a variety of abbreviations and shorthand. Beyond the in-game chat, players can also visit the game's official website to read about the story or to hear about news related to the game. On third-party websites, there are comprehensive wikis that cover almost every aspect of the game, from item descriptions to in-depth character information. I hope to both learn for myself and tell others about how League can teach literacy, along with what elements of literacy are used in the game. By encouraging players to read and write, League creates a community of engaged and literate players who are able to effectively communicate with each other.

## Analysis

Thus far, I've looked into the in-game chat features, the lore of the game, and how players interact with one another. It's evident that communication is key in League. Players often utilize the chat to coordinate with their team, joke around with their opponents, or even chat with friends. Furthermore, players can explore the game's rich lore by reading stories and narratives about the game's characters. For instance, every character has an extensive backstory that is set in the game's overarching world. Some characters even appear in other, unrelated stories, which helps tie all the characters together. Although it isn't necessary, many players choose to read these stories to heighten their enjoyment of the game by expanding their knowledge of the characters and where they come from.

The sources I selected go in detail about a couple different interesting literacy-related topics pertaining to League. In order, they discuss how the game retains players, how teamwork can form bonds between strangers, the differences between unranked and ranked play, how one player being negative can ruin games, and how professional League works differently from the average game. Out of all the sources I found, I picked these because they related to my research the most. They seem helpful in providing a well-rounded perspective on the game and its community.

In particular, one aspect of my research that I find interesting is toxic players. I mentioned this in the last paragraph as "one player being negative," but the term really encompasses anyone who is aiming to bring other players down through their words or actions. As put in one source, "Toxic behavior significantly worsened the multivariate vector of team and individual performance..." (Monge 2). I would wager that nearly any League player has come into contact with a toxic player before, and been worse off because of it. I'd like to further look

into the literary elements of toxicity, including both why players are toxic and how their toxicity affects other players. This interests me because it's something that I've dealt with firsthand, and I'd like to see if there's anything more I can learn about it.

### **Research Plan**

I think observation, textual analysis, and maybe a survey would be the best research options for this topic. Thus, I plan to observe players of the game in order to understand their behaviors and motivations. I will also analyze the other game texts mentioned above. Additionally, I may survey players to ask them directly about their experiences with the game. Qualitative data will be the main focus of my research, but quantitative data in the form of statistics may also be helpful. Ultimately, any players of the game or employees of the company who makes it, Riot Games, are potential stakeholders in this research.

## Works Cited

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