

Summer Reading English 12

2024

The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch

Randy Pausch was born in Baltimore and grew up in Columbia, Maryland, with his older sister Tammy, his mother, an English teacher, and his father, who ran a small auto insurance company. Pausch received a bachelor's degree in computer science from Brown University in 1982 and went on to earn a Ph.D. in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University in 1988. While in school, Pausch briefly worked for Xerox and Adobe Systems, but after graduating from grad school he spent most of his career as a professor. First, he worked at the University of Virginia in the Department of Computer Science from 1988 until 1997. During this time Pausch took sabbaticals to work at the video game company Electronic Arts (EA) and also at Walt Disney Imagineering, which was one of his childhood dreams. In 1997, Pausch went to work at Carnegie Mellon University as an associate professor, and in 1998 he co-founded Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center. He also started the Building Virtual Worlds course, which he oversaw for 10 years. During this time, Pausch consulted with Google, and founded the software project Alice designed to teach kids computer programming skills while they make stop-motion movies or create video games. In 2000, Pausch got married to Jai Glasgow, and they had three children, Dylan, Logan, and Chloe. In 2006, Pausch was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and underwent a Whipple procedure in an unsuccessful attempt to stymie the disease. In August of 2007 he found out the cancer was terminal. On September 18th, 2007, Pausch gave his last lecture at Carnegie Mellon entitled 'Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams,' which became a viral hit on YouTube and led to Randy appearing on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in October of 2007. The popularity of his lecture led Pausch to receive a book deal for \$6.7 million, and, with the help of his co-author Jeffrey Zaslow, the book *The Last Lecture* was published and became a *New York Times* best-seller in April of 2008, remaining on the best-seller list for 112 weeks. Pausch died of complications relating to pancreatic cancer on July 25th, 2008. (LitCharts.com)

Summer assignment requirements based on the Expressive Writing style:

1. MLA formatted
2. Minimum of 750 words
3. Give an overview of the purpose and the audience for this memoir
4. Explain at minimum 4 of the chapters which gave you the most 'food for thought' and why
5. Give a detailed explanation about why this memoir became such a hit in pop culture

Responses will be due the first day of Senior English class in August. Expressive essays MUST be printed out in advance of due date.

