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Commentary on "Speculation on the Nature of Religion"

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Olivia Cox's "Speculating on the Nature of Religion" is an excellent example of a personal essay. Most first-year students are put to the difficult task of writing a personal essay, and it may be especially daunting when many high school English teachers demand that students never use "I" in their papers. Thus, writing about oneself can be hard, and to add to that, Olivia's prompt asked her to explore the nature of religion, which is certainly not an easy task either. But Olivia, exhibiting an impressive vocabulary, does an excellent job tackling a very personal and complex subject. Her work is clearly written, well organized, full of useful examples, and most importantly, it brings up many thought-provoking ideas about the nature of religion. However, as Olivia explained to me, her polished and well-crafted essay did not appear from thin air; she actually visited the Writing Center twice before turning in her final draft. At the Writing Center, Olivia said she received advice on how to write a personal essay that also made an argument. Hannah, a Writing Center Consultant, helped her gather her thoughts and ideas into a cohesive thesis. Olivia expressed that she was very appreciative of the help she received, and her essay goes to prove that even skilled writers, as Olivia most definitely is, can benefit from an extra set of eyes.