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April 24th 2023

Creative Nonfiction: AirPods

Music is enjoyed by many people in many different ways. For me, music is a part of my everyday life. If I had to guess, I would say that I listen to music on my AirPods about 90% of the time. These small plastic devices have become a big part of my life and the world. But how did these come to be? In 2016, Apple introduced their wireless earbuds to the public. After 5 years of submitting for a patent, Apple had finally made the AirPods a reality. By taking this step, Apple was able to change the music listening experience of millions of people. The small earbuds solved the issue many seemed to have with wired headphones. Fumbling with annoying cords, getting caught on things, and other issues were now part of the past! They also paired well with Apple’s 2015 release, Apple Music. However, it wasn’t until the year 2020 that Apple AirPods came into my life.

In 2016, Apple removed the headphone jack from their newly released phones. This choice did not seem smart to me because I used to own a few pairs of wired earbuds and if I were to upgrade I wouldn’t be able to use them anymore. Thankfully, I didn’t upgrade until 2018. During this time, Apple still included earbuds with every phone so I received a pair of wired earbuds with a lightning connector. Sadly, I lost that special pair very early on. After this, I would only listen to music in the car or when I was alone and could play it out loud. For a whole year and a half of my life, I would listen to music only when I had very specific opportunities which seemed to be very limited. For a period of time, I was rarely listening to music. I never noticed this was a problem, but now I can’t comprehend how I was able to do that. Looking back, the lack of background music in my life is probably why it felt so dull. Now, any moment can be more entertaining by listening to beautiful melodies in my ears.

In 2020, Apple began a promotion where with the purchase of a computer or iPad, students could receive a free pair of AirPods. As someone who never saw the point of wireless earbuds, this wasn’t a huge selling point for me. But, when I purchased my iPad, who was I to say no to something free? Little did I know, these earbuds would completely change the way I listened to music. After I became the proud owner of a pair of AirPods, I started listening to music all day. My mom also got me a case that allowed me to attach them to my keys, so I wasn’t scared of losing them the way I was with my old headphones. My life was a lot simpler now that I didn’t have to deal with tangled headphones, and I even got to go on many adventures with my new AirPods.

In fall of 2022, I was given the opportunity to study abroad! I was traveling overseas for the first time, and a big mission of mine was to see as much of Europe as I could. When I started traveling, I had to take many solo trips. This was because I wanted to see as much as I could, and many of my friends did not have the time for this. Similarly, this provided me with the time needed for self reflection and to indulge in my own pleasures without worrying of what others think. On these trips, I would simply pop in my AirPods and walk around new and exciting cities while listening to my favorite songs. Although to many it may seem a bit silly, being able to take my AirPods everywhere while I was abroad was very special to me. Thanks to this, many of my trips will now havea. sountrack in my memories. A good example of this is one of my favorite artists, Taylor Swift. On October 21st, Taylor Swift released her 11th studio album, *Midnights.* On the day this album was released I was starting my longest trip where I’d be visiting London and Paris. In London I was completely alone, so the entire time I was listening to Swift’s new album. Walking around the streets of London listening to songs such as *Maroon,* or *Midnight Rain* made me feel like I was a main character in a TV show. Then, when I got to Paris I was able to listen to the song *Paris* off the album, which was a really surreal moment. I remember what it felt like seeing the Eiffel Tower sparkle for the first time. I was awe strucken, and the only thing I could hear in my mind was Taylor Swift’s voice saying “*I was taken by the view, like we were in Paris.”* I was no longer a main character in a TV show, I was now starring in a Hollywood movie.Similarly, another one of my favorite artists, SZA released a new album on December 9th, 2022. On this day, I was traveling to Switzerland and I listened to the album the entire bus ride there. These two albums now remind me of my adventures in Europe when I listen to them, and they bring back a lot of memories. For reasons such as this, I am thankful Apple invented the AirPods.