**What?**

One of my biggest passions in life is in the world of equestrians. I love absolutely everything about horses. I ride them, I clean up after them, I care for them, and I mourn them when they die. Ever since I was eight and a half years old, I have been taking riding lessons at least once a week. I’ve worked with six different trainers, and have ridden a variety of different horses. Some people have even paid me to train horses for them. The disciplines I have participated in include Hunt Seat, Dressage, Show Jumping, Cross Country, Eventing (the former three combined), Equitation, and Western Pleasure. My personal favorite is Eventing, but I currently am riding in Hunt Seat here at the University of Cincinnati. In order to pay for my very expensive passion, I have been working since I was twelve years old. My first job was cleaning stalls at the barn to pay for lessons. Eventually, I started helping with care-taking—such as feeding, watering, medical care, and grooming—and general barn up-keep, which allowed me to lease a horse. When I turned sixteen, I got my first real job at Steak n’ Shake, and I was able to buy my first horse all on my own. I later sold him because I was not able to follow my true passion, which lay in Eventing, with him, and bought another horse, tack, grooming supplies, and show clothes all with my own money. It’s been a lot of hard work, but I will never be able to give it up.

**So What?**

Horseback riding is important to me for several reasons. The first reason is because I downright adore horses. They are extraordinary creatures. One minute they can be extremely graceful and gentle, and the next they can be feisty and stubborn. Each horse has a completely different personality, and it is very exciting and rewarding to adapt to, form connections with, and be successful on a variety of horses. I also love horseback riding because I have dedicated so much time, effort, and money into it. I’ve been riding since I was eight and a half, working since I was twelve, competing since I was thirteen, training the animals since I was fifteen, and owning since I was sixteen. This sport is definitely one of the most expensive pastimes I have ever participated in, and I honestly spend more on it than I do on myself. Between my love of horses, the rewarding feelings of making connections and being successful, and spending so much time doing it, horseback riding has become a permanent passion in my life.

**Now What?**

Even though I have already done so much with horseback riding, I know I still have a lot to learn. I am not, by any means, a perfect rider in any of the disciplines. There are several more styles of riding—such as reining, fox-hunting, sidesaddle, and saddle seat—and cues for specific movements I have yet to learn. I would also love to study other training techniques. Several more horse breeds and movements exist than what I have had the opportunity to ride and learn about, and I would love to experience as many as I possibly can. Medical care, farrier work, and nutrition are other subjects involving horses that I want to expand my knowledge on. All in all, I want to become as well rounded as I can, with a little knowledge in all the subjects that relate to horses. I also want to become more advanced in my favorite disciplines, like Eventing, while also learning more about others because I could end up liking another discipline more. As long as I continue to learn about and work with horses, I will be happy participating in my passion!