First Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ID Number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ADVISORY TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Creating a Winning College Essay

Assignment

Select one of the following essay topics. Tip: If you know now at least one school that you KNOW you will apply to then check which essay topic they require. Remember, the goal of the College 101 assignments is to help you next year when applying for college. So pick either from the Common Application Essay or Apply Texas essay topics depending on where you think you will apply.

The Common Application Essays must be no more than 650 words. Apply Texas has you submit an essay in a text field online and it states that your essay cannot be over 120 lines. Therefore, stick to the 650 word MAX for either essay. There is no minimum length for either essay.

**Common Application Essay Topics**

*Select one of these essay topics if you plan to apply to an out- of- state college*.

Essay Choice 1:

Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Essay Choice 2:

Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure.  How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?

Essay Choice 3:

Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea.  What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?

Essay Choice 4:

Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content.  What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?

Essay Choice 5:

Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family

**Apply Texas Essay Topics**

*Select one of these essay topics if you plan to apply to a college in Texas*

Essay A:

Describe a setting in which you have collaborated or interacted with people whose experiences and/or

beliefs differ from yours. Address your initial feelings, and how those feelings were or were not changed

by this experience.

Essay B:

Describe a circumstance, obstacle or conflict in your life, and the skills and resources you used to resolve

it. Did it change you? If so, how?

Essay C:

Considering your lifetime goals, discuss how your current and future academic and extra-curricular

activities might help you achieve your goals.

**Brainstorming Worksheet**

One of the best methods of brainstorming is to begin with a grandest of potential topics and slowly the best rise to the top. In order to generate a laundry list of important people, events, accomplishments and activities in your life, fill in the worksheet below.

1. If you were writing your autobiography right now, what would be five to ten events or things that would have to be included? (think over your life chronologically)
2. Quickly write down three words that best describe you.
3. Ask your parents, siblings and best friends to write down three words to describe you. (Do not tell them what your three words were) Write down the person, their relationship to you and the words they picked to describe you.
4. List five accomplishments you have made since the summer before high school. Do not limit yourself to accomplishments for which you have been formally recognized since the most interesting essays are often based on accomplishments that may have seemed insignificant at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life.
5. List three to five things on which you consider yourself very knowledgeable.
6. What are your most important extracurricular or community activities?
7. List five people who you respect and admire. They can be real or fictional, dead or alive. Explain why they are on your list.
8. List two times in life when you failed miserably and two times when you were a fantastic success.
9. Ask your parents for five events in your life that they will always remember.
10. List four of your favorite things and four of your least favorite. These can include activities, places, objects, virtues, etc.