

Summer College Admissions Assignment

You will receive credit for this summer assignment for submitting a well-planned Essay. The due date is August 1st. 20% will be deducted if you turn in the essay within the first week of school.

Part 1: The Resume

Please go to Naviance and complete as much as you can under “About Me”, “Resume”.

- Remember use as many Entries as you need. (One Per Activity)
- Be specific in your descriptions and make sure you give examples of the activities you were involved in.
 - X - Instead of saying Blood drive 2010-present
 - ✓ Blood Drive 2010-present (We Planned, Recruited, and executed 3 blood drives each year. As a Junior I was president and worked directly with the Red Cross to make sure everything was in place for the canteen.
- Remember this will be reviewed by teachers who write your recommendations and you can upload it onto most college applications to make the easier.

Part 2: The College Essay

Please take a couple of minutes to read through the following pages of essay tips and then on a separate document write and submit through this form: <http://bit.ly/2018Essay>

- I will read the essay from the perspective of a college admissions officer and your English teacher will read the essay for standard revisions.
- Remember: The more people that read the essay, the better it becomes. This includes you.
- This is the prompt from the commonapp for 2017-2018. If you have an essay for a college that is not on the commonapp, please use it instead.

Instructions: The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. **Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal.** Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. (The application won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.)

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking?

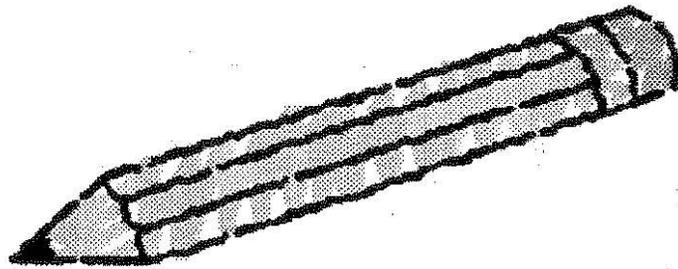
What was the outcome?

4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Remember to submit your essay before August 1st at: <http://bit.ly/2018Essay>

The Admissions Essay

A Help Packet



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Admissions Essay Writing Tips:

Step One: Brainstorming an Admissions Essay Topic

The most important part of your essay is the subject matter. You should expect to devote about one to two weeks simply to brainstorming ideas. To begin brainstorming a subject idea consider the following points. From brainstorming, you may find a subject you had not considered at first.

- What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments? 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 been trite at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life.
- Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
- What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded? What made you successful?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?
- Of everything in the world, what would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be? Who, of everyone living and dead, would you most like to be with? These questions should help you realize what you love most.
- Have you experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were opened to something to which you were previously blind?
- What is your strongest, most unwavering personality trait? Do you maintain strong beliefs or adhere to a philosophy? How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about if they were writing your admissions essay for you?
- What have you done outside of the classroom that demonstrates qualities sought after by universities? Of these, which means the most to you?
- What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities? What made you continue to contribute to them?
- What are your dreams of the future? When you look back on your life in thirty years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful? What people, things, and accomplishments do you need? How does this particular university fit into your plans for the future?

If these questions cannot cure your writer's block, consider the following exercises:

1. Ask for Help from Parents, Friends, Colleagues, etc.

Ask your friends to write a list of your five most salient personality traits until an image of your personality begins to emerge; consider life experiences that could illustrate the particular traits.

2. Consider Your Childhood

Interests that began in childhood may be the most defining parts of your life. Analyze the reasons for your interests and how they were shaped by your upbringing.

3. Consider Your Role Models

If you have role models, consider their admirable traits and how experiences from your life demonstrate those traits.

4. Read Sample Admissions Essays

Before you sat down to write a poem, you would certainly read past poets. In the same way, we recommend reading sample admissions essays to understand what topics other applicants chose. EssayEdge maintains an archive of over 100 free sample admissions essays.

Coming up with an idea is difficult and requires time. Without a topic you feel passionate about, without one that brings out the defining aspects of your personality, you risk falling into the trap of sounding like the 90 percent of applicants who will write boring admissions essays. The only way to write a unique essay is to have experiences that support whatever topic you come up with. Have fun with the brainstorming process. You might discover something about yourself you never consciously realized. Good Luck!

Step Two: Selecting an Essay Topic

You must now confront the underlying problem of the admissions essay. You must now consider topics that will allow you to synthesize your important personal characteristics and experiences into a coherent whole while simultaneously addressing your desire to attend a specific institution. While most admissions essays allow great latitude in topic selection, you must also be sure to answer the questions that were asked of you. Leaving a lasting impression on someone who reads 50 to 100 essays a day will not be easy, but we have compiled some guidelines to help you get started. Consider the following questions before proceeding:

- Have you selected a topic that describes something of personal importance to your life, with which you can use **vivid personal experiences** as supporting details?
- Is your topic a gimmick? That is, do you plan to write your essay in iambic pentameter or make it funny? You should be very, very careful if you are planning to do this. We recommend strongly that you do not do this. Almost always, this is done poorly and is not appreciated by the admissions committee. Nothing is worse than not laughing or not being amused at something that was written to be funny or amusing.
- Will your topic only repeat information listed elsewhere on your application? If so, pick a new topic. Don't mention GPAs or standardized test scores in your essay.
- Can you offer vivid supporting paragraphs to your essay topic? If you cannot easily think of supporting paragraphs with concrete examples, you should probably choose a different essay topic.

- Can you fully answer the question asked of you? Can you address and elaborate on all points within the specified word limit, or will you end up writing a poor summary of something that might be interesting as a report or research paper? If you plan on writing something technical for college admissions, make sure you truly can back up your interest in a topic and are not merely throwing around big scientific words. Unless you convince the reader that you actually have the life experiences to back up your interest in neurobiology, the reader will assume that you are trying to impress him or her with shallow tactics. Also, be sure you can write to admissions officers and that you are not writing over their heads.
- Can you keep the reader's interest from the first word? The entire essay must be interesting, considering admissions officers will probably only spend a few minutes reading each essay.
- Is your topic overdone? To ascertain this, peruse through old essays. EssayEdge's 100 free essays can help you do this. However, most topics are overdone, and this is not a bad thing. A unique or convincing answer to a classic topic can pay off big.
- Will your topic turn off a large number of people? If you write on how everyone should worship your God, how wrong or right abortion is, or how you think the Republican or Democratic Party is evil, you will not get into the college of your choice. The only thing worse than not writing a memorable essay is writing an essay that will be remembered negatively. Stay away from specific religions, political doctrines, or controversial opinions. You can still write an essay about Nietzsche's influence on your life, but express understanding that not all intelligent people will agree with Nietzsche's claims. Emphasize instead Nietzsche's influence on your life, and not why you think he was wrong or right in his claims.
- In this vein, if you are presenting a topic that is controversial, you must acknowledge counter arguments without sounding arrogant.
- Will an admissions officer remember your topic after a day of reading hundreds of essays? What will the officer remember about your topic? What will the officer remember about you? What will your lasting impression be?

After evaluating your essay topics with the above criteria and asking for the free opinions of EssayEdge editors, of your teachers or colleagues, and of your friends, you should have at least 1 to 2 interesting essay topics. Consider the following guidelines below.

- If you are planning on writing an essay on how you survived poverty in Russia, your mother's suicide, your father's kidnapping, or your immigration to America from Asia, you should be careful that your main goal is to address your own personal qualities. Just because something sad or horrible has happened to you does not mean that you will be a good college or graduate school student. You don't want to be remembered as the pathetic applicant. You want to be remembered as the applicant who showed impressive qualities under difficult circumstances. It is for this reason that essays relating to this topic are considered

among the best. Unless you only use the horrible experience as a lens with which to magnify your own personal characteristics, you will not write a good essay. Graduate and professional school applicants should generally steer clear of this topic altogether unless you can argue that your experience will make you a better businessman, doctor, lawyer, or scholar.

- Essays should fit in well with the rest of a candidate's application, explaining the unexplained and steering clear of what is already obvious. For example, if you have a 4.0 GPA and a 1500 SAT, no one doubts your ability to do the academic work and addressing this topic would be ridiculous. However, if you have an 850 SAT and a 3.9 GPA or a 1450 SAT and a 2.5 GPA, you would be wise to incorporate into your essay an explanation for the apparent contradiction. For example, perhaps you were hospitalized or family concerns prevented your dedication to academics; you would want to mention this in your essay. However, do not make your essay one giant excuse. Simply give a quick, convincing explanation within the framework of your larger essay.

Step Three: Writing the Essay

Even seemingly boring topics can be made into exceptional admissions essays with an innovative approach. In writing the essay you must bear in mind your two goals: to persuade the admissions officer that you are extremely worthy of admission and to make the admissions officer aware that you are more than a GPA and a standardized score, that you are a real-life, intriguing personality.

Unfortunately, there is no surefire step-by-step method to writing a good essay. Every topic requires a different treatment since no two essays are alike. However, we have compiled the following list of tips that you should find useful while writing your admissions essay.

1. Answer the Question

You can follow the next 10 steps, but if you miss the question, you will not be admitted to any institution.

2. Be Original

Even seemingly boring essay topics can sound interesting if creatively approached. If writing about a gymnastics competition you trained for, do not start your essay: "I worked long hours for many weeks to train for XXX competition." Consider an opening like, "Every morning I awoke at 5:00 to sweat, tears, and blood as I trained on the uneven bars hoping to bring the state gymnastics trophy to my hometown."

3. Be Yourself

Admissions officers want to learn about you and your writing ability. Write about something meaningful and describe your feelings, not necessarily your actions. If you do this, your essay will be unique. Many people travel to foreign countries or win competitions, but your feelings during these events are unique to you. Unless

a philosophy or societal problem has interested you intensely for years, stay away from grand themes with which you have little personal experience.

4. Don't Thesaurize Your Composition

For some reason, students continue to think big words make good essays. Big words are fine, but only if they are used in the appropriate context. Think Hemingway.

5. Use Imagery and Clear, Vivid Prose

If you are not adept with imagery, you can write an excellent essay without it, but it's not easy. The application essay lends itself to imagery since the entire essay requires your experiences as supporting details. Appeal to the five senses of the admissions officers.

6. Spend the Most Time on Your Introduction

Expect admissions officers to spend 1 to 2 minutes reading your essay. You must use your introduction to grab their interest from the beginning. You might even consider completely changing your introduction after writing your body paragraphs.

- **Don't Summarize in your Introduction.** Ask yourself why a reader would want to read your entire essay after reading your introduction. If you summarize, the admissions officer need not read the rest of your essay.
- **Create Mystery or Intrigue in your Introduction.** It is not necessary or recommended that your first sentence give away the subject matter. Raise questions in the minds of the admissions officers to force them to read on. Appeal to their emotions to make them relate to your subject matter.

7. Use Transition

Applicants continue to ignore transition to their own detriment. You must use transition within paragraphs and especially between paragraphs to preserve the logical flow of your essay. Transition is not limited to phrases like "as a result, in addition, while . . . , since . . . , etc." but includes repeating key words and progressing the idea. Transition provides the intellectual architecture to argument building.

8. Conclusions are Critical

The conclusion is your last chance to persuade the reader or impress upon them your qualifications. In the conclusion, avoid summary since the essay is rather short to begin with; the reader should not need to be reminded of what you wrote 300 words beforehand. Also do not use stock phrases like "in conclusion, in summary, to conclude, etc." You should consider the following conclusions:

- Expand upon the broader implications of your discussion.

- Consider linking your conclusion to your introduction to establish a sense of balance by reiterating introductory phrases.
- Redefine a term used previously in your body paragraphs.
- End with a famous quote that is relevant to your argument. Do not TRY to do this, as this approach is overdone. This should come naturally.
- Frame your discussion within a larger context or show that your topic has widespread appeal.
- Remember, your essay need not be so tidy that you can answer why your little sister died or why people starve in Africa—you are not writing a "sit-com"—but should forge some attempt at closure.

9. Give Your Draft to Others

Ask editors to read with these questions in mind:

- What is the essay about?
- Have I used active voice verbs wherever possible?
- Is my sentence structure varied or do I use all long or all short sentences?
- Do you detect any clichés?
- Do I use transition appropriately?
- Do I use imagery often and does this make the essay clearer and more vivid?
- What's the best part of the essay?
- What about the essay is memorable?
- What's the worst part of the essay?
- What parts of the essay need elaboration or are unclear?
- What parts of the essay do not support your main argument or are immaterial to your case?
- Is every single sentence crucial to the essay? This MUST be the case.
- What does the essay reveal about your personality?
- Could anyone else have written this essay?
- How would you fill in the following blank based on the essay: "I want to accept you to this college because our college needs more _____."

10. Revise, Revise, Revise

Revise, Revise, Revise. You are only allowed so many words; use them wisely. If H.D. Thoreau couldn't write a good essay without revision, neither will you. Delete anything in the essay that does not relate to your main argument. Do you use transition? Are your introduction and conclusion more than summaries? Did you find every single grammatical error?

Have your Essay Professionally Edited. You take SAT Prep courses and spend hours with college counselors. Consider showing the same care with your admissions essay by submitting your essay to a professional editor.

Sample Successful Essay:

Accepted by Harvard, Princeton, Stanford & Dartmouth

Hiking to Understanding

Surrounded by thousands of stars, complete silence, and spectacular mountains, I stood atop New Hampshire's Presidential Range awestruck by nature's beauty. Immediately, I realized that I must dedicate my life to understanding the causes of the universe's beauty. In addition, the hike taught me several valuable lessons that will allow me to increase my understanding through scientific research.

Although the first few miles of the hike up Mt. Madison did not offer fantastic views, the vistas became spectacular once I climbed above tree line. Immediately, I sensed that understanding the natural world parallels climbing a mountain. To reach my goal of total comprehension of natural phenomena, I realized that I must begin with knowledge that may be uninteresting by itself. However, this knowledge will form the foundation of an accurate view of the universe. Much like every step while hiking leads the hiker nearer the mountain peak, all knowledge leads the scientist nearer total understanding.

Above tree line, the barrenness and silence of the hike taught me that individuals must have their own direction. All hikers know that they must carry complete maps to reach their destinations; they do not allow others to hold their maps for them. Similarly, surrounded only by mountaintops, sky, and silence, I recognized the need to remain individually focused on my life's goal of understanding the physical universe.

At the summit, the view of the surrounding mountain range is spectacular. The panorama offers a view of hills and smaller mountains. Some people during their lives climb many small hills. However, to have the most accurate view of the world, I must be dedicated to climbing the biggest mountains I can find. Too often people simply hike across a flat valley without ascending because they content themselves with the scenery. The mountain showed me that I cannot content myself with the scenery. When night fell upon the summit, I stared at the slowly appearing stars until they completely filled the night sky. Despite the windy conditions and below freezing temperatures, I could not tear myself away from the awe-inspiring beauty of the cosmos. Similarly, despite the frustration and difficulties inherent in scientific study, I cannot retreat from my goal of universal understanding.

When observing Saturn's rising, the Milky Way Cloud, and the Perseid meteor shower, I simultaneously felt a great sense of insignificance and purpose. Obviously, earthly concerns are insignificant to the rest of the universe. However, I experienced the overriding need to understand the origins and causes of these phenomena. The hike also strengthened my resolve to climb the mountain of knowledge while still taking time to gaze at the wondrous scenery. Only then can the beauty of the universe and the study of science be purposefully united. Attaining this union is my lifelong goal.

Sample Essay: Swimming

The sun sleeps as the desolate city streets await the morning rush hour. Driven by an inexplicable compulsion, I enter the building along with ten other swimmers, inching my way toward the cold, dark locker room of the Esplanada Park Pool. One by one, we slip into our still-damp drag suits and make a mad dash through the chill of the morning air, stopping only to grab pull-buoys and kickboards on our way to the pool. Nighttime temperatures in coastal California dip into the high forties, but our pool is artificially warmed to seventy-nine degrees; the temperature differential propels an eerie column of steam up from the water's surface, producing the spooky ambience of a werewolf movie. Next comes the shock. Headfirst immersion into the tepid water sends our hearts racing, and we respond with a quick set of warm-up laps. As we finish, our coach emerges from the fog. He offers no friendly accolades, just a rigid regimen of sets, intervals, and exhortations.

Thus starts another workout. 4,500 yards to go, then a quick shower and a five-minute drive to school. Then it's back to the pool; the afternoon training schedule features an additional 5,500 yards. Tomorrow, we start over again. The objective is to cut our times by another tenth of a second. The end goal is to achieve that tiny, unexplainable difference at the end of a race that separates success from failure, greatness from mediocrity. Somehow we accept the pitch--otherwise, we'd still be deep in our mattresses, slumbering beneath our blankets. In this sport, the antagonist is time. Coaches spend hours in specialized clinics, analyze the latest research on training technique, and experiment with workout schedules in an attempt to defeat time. Yet there are no shortcuts to winning, and workouts are agonizing.

I took part in my first swimming race when I was ten years old. My parents, fearing injury, directed my athletic interests away from ice hockey and into the pool. Three weeks into my new swimming endeavor, I somehow persuaded my coach to let me enter the annual age group meet. To his surprise (and mine), I pulled out an "A" time. I furthered my achievements by winning "Top 16" awards for various age groups, setting club records, and being named National First Team All-American in the 100-Butterfly and Second Team All-American in the 200-Medley. I have since been elevated to the Senior Championship level, which means the competition now includes world-class swimmers. I am aware that making finals will not be easy from here--at this level, success is measured by mere tenths of a second. In addition, each new level brings extra requirements such as elevated weight training, longer weekend training sessions, and more travel from home. Time with friends is increasingly spent in the pursuit of the next swimming objective.

Sometimes, in the solitude of the laps, my thoughts transition to events in my personal life. This year, my grandmother suffered a reoccurrence of cancer, which has spread to her lungs. She had always been driven by good spirits and independence, but suddenly my family had to accept the fact that she now faces a limited timeline. A few weeks later, on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, my grandfather--who lives in Japan--learned he had stomach cancer. He has since undergone successful surgery, but we are aware that a full recovery is not guaranteed. When I first learned that they were both struck with cancer, I felt as if my own objective, to cut my times by fractions of a second, seemed irrelevant, even ironic, given the urgency of their mutual goals: to prolong life itself. Yet we have learned to draw on each other's strengths for support--their fortitude helps me overcome my struggles while my swimming achievements provide them with a vicarious sense of victory. When I share my latest award or triumph story, they smile with pride, as if they themselves had stood on the award stand. I have the impression that I would have to be a grandparent to understand what my medals mean to them.

My grandparents' strength has also shored up my determination to succeed. I have learned that, as in swimming, life's successes often come in small increments. Sometimes even the act of showing up at a workout when your body and psyche are worn out separates a great result from a failure. The difference between success and failure is defined by the ability to overcome strong internal resistance. I know that, by consistently working towards my goals--however small they may seem--I can accomplish what I set for myself, both in and beyond the swimming pool.

Sample Essay: Overcoming a Setback

Like many other boys, I love to swim. Since the age of five, I have spent many summer days in the YMCA pool. When I was 13 years old, I desired something more challenging than casual swimming, so I joined the high school development team for the Badger Swim Club.

On the first day, all the team members dived into the water as soon as the coach gave the order. I was the only one who jumped in. After a few laps, I was far behind all the others. Although I was trying to catch up, I was out of breath. To make things worse, the coach was constantly correcting my technique. From my stroke to my flip turn to my dive, nothing I did seemed right to him.

The entire first week, I was stuck with the coach to work on my diving. He kept repeating that I should dive with my head instead of my whole body. While my body and my mind told me, "Quit! Quit!" in my heart, I felt that quitting was not the right response. I wanted to become as good a swimmer as my teammates.

So I continued to practice. Many times I felt as though I had pushed myself to my limit and could not continue. My goal of becoming a good swimmer was what kept me repeating, "Practice! Practice! Practice!" Finally, I conquered the physical and mental challenge of the sport. After just a couple of months, I swam as well as the other team members. When facing a challenge, it is easy to quit. But in order to achieve something, persistence and commitment are essential. By being consistent in my efforts, I know success will be likely.

Since this is my senior year, I have a heavy workload consisting of taking classes, leading clubs, working, and volunteering. When I feel overwhelmed, I remember my struggles in the swimming pool. For example, last week I had an AP chemistry and a humanities AC test on the same day. As I was deciding which subject to approach, my phone rang. My boss asked me to update some information immediately for a conference coming up in the following week. I wanted to say, "No, I have too many things to do!" Then I asked myself why I took the job in the first place. I believe it is important to be responsible as an employee, so I decided to postpone my homework for a bit and finish updating the website. One hour later, I had reviewed all of the chapters of chemistry for the exam and taken a practice quiz. Because I was too sleepy to study, I went to bed. However, I cannot stand the thought of a bad grade, so I set my alarm clock to 5:00 a.m. and woke up to finish reviewing humanities.

Weaknesses, setbacks and failures are a part of life. However, due to my experience swimming, I now know how to overcome these imperfections, not be dictated by them.

Sample Essay: Stanford University, Class of 2006

As you reflect on life thus far, what has someone said, written, or expressed in some fashion that is especially meaningful to you. Why?

According to Mother Teresa, "If you judge someone, you have no time to love them." I first saw this quote when it was posted on my sixth-grade classroom wall, and I hated it. Rather, I hated Mother Teresa's intention, but I knew that the quote's veracity was inarguable. I felt that it was better to judge people so as not to have to love them, because some people don't deserve a chance. Judgments are shields, and mine was impenetrable.

Laura was my dad's first girlfriend after my parents' divorce. The first three years of our relationship were characterized solely by my hatred toward her, manifested in my hurting her, each moment hurting myself twice as much. From the moment I laid eyes on her, she was the object of my unabated hatred, not because of anything she had ever done, but because of everything she represented. I judged her to be a heartless, soulless, two-dimensional figure: she was a representation of my loneliness and pain. I left whenever she entered a room, I slammed car doors in her face. Over those three years, I took pride in the fact that I had not spoken a word to her or made eye contact with her. I treated Laura with such resentment and anger because my hate was my protection, my shield. I, accustomed to viewing her as the embodiment of my pain, was afraid to let go of the anger and hate, afraid to love the person who allowed me to hold onto my anger, afraid that if I gave her a chance, I might love her.

For those three years, Laura didn't hate me; she understood me. She understood my anger and my confusion, and Laura put her faith in me, although she had every reason not to. To her, I was essentially a good person, just confused and scared; trying to do her best, but just not able to get a hold of herself. She saw me as I wished I could see myself.

None of this became clear to me overnight. Instead, over the next two years, the one-dimensional image of her in my mind began to take the shape of a person. As I let go of my hatred, I gave her a chance. She became a woman who, like me, loves Ally McBeal and drinks a lot of coffee; who, unlike me, buys things advertised on infomercials.

Three weeks ago, I saw that same Mother Teresa quote again, but this time I smiled. Laura never gave up on me, and the chance she gave me to like her was a chance that changed my life. Because of this, I know the value of a chance, of having faith in a person, of seeing others as they wish they could see themselves. I'm glad I have a lot of time left, because I definitely have a lot of chances left to give, a lot of people left to love.

Sample Essay: Duke University, Class of 2005

Topic of your choice. Me(s): A One-Act Play

(Several of me occupy themselves around my bedroom. Logical me sits attentively in my desk chair. Lighthearted me hangs upside-down, off the back of my recliner. Existentialist me leans against my door, eyebrows raised. Stressed me, Independent me, and Artistic me are also present.)

Stressed: So, come on, what's this meeting about?

Logical: (Taking a deep breath) Well, it's time we come together. It's time we create "Jeremy."

Lighthearted: (Furrowing his brow, but smiling) What? Is this "Captain Planet," where all the characters join fists and out bursts the superhero?

Logical: No, this meeting is an opportunity to evaluate where we are in life, like a State of the Union Address.

Existentialist: Speaking of which, I've been meaning to ask all of you: college? Honestly, is it worth it? You . . . (gestures toward Logical) you're writing that philosophy book, which should do well. And look at Artsy over there! He's composing music, making beautiful art; why don't we see where we can get with that? Not to mention the endless possibilities if Lighthearted aims for Saturday Night Live. Think about the number of successful people in this world who didn't go to college! (Logical shakes his head) I mean, let's be realistic: if we go to college, eventually we'll be required to declare a major. Once we earn a degree, it might be harder to pursue our true passions—comedy, music, art . . .

Logical: Not true. First of all, you failed to mention my fascinations with neurology and psychology, which are potential majors at every university. Furthermore, opportunities to study comedy, music, and art are available at all colleges too; we just have to go after them. (Sends a reassuring nod toward Artistic) In fact, if anything, college will facilitate our involvement in activities like drawing, improvisational comedy, piano, psychological experiments, Japanese, ping-pong . . .

Artistic: Yeah—imagine how much better I'd be at writing music if I took a music-composition course.

Logical: Exactly. And what about our other educational goals such as becoming fluent in Japanese, learning the use of every TI-89 calculator button . . .

Independent: I agree. Plus, I was thinking of college as a social clean slate. I am looking forward to living on my own—away from our overprotective, over-scrutinizing family. No more hesitating to ask girls out!

Lighthearted: (He has not been paying attention to the discussion) What ever happened to Captain Planet? He was like, really popular in 1987 and then . . .

Stressed: Enough out of you. (Lighthearted makes a mocking face at Stressed) You're giving me a headache. By the way, everyone, we're not making much progress here, and I'm beginning to feel a stress-pimple coming on. (All except Existential gather around Stressed and comfort him)

Existential: There's really no reason to be stressed about anything. If you think about how trivial—how meaningless—all this worry is, it's kind of pathetic that your anxiety is about to get us all stuck with a pimple.

Independent: I don't know what you're talking about, Mr. I-Know-Everything-And-It-All-Means-Nothing, but mightn't we as well calm down Stressed?

Existential: If you consider that your top priority right now. I thought we came here to do something else.

Stressed: He's right, I'm fine. Let's just get back to work, and the problem will heal itself. Where were we?

Lighthearted: We were searching through the late 80s for Captain Planet's mysterious disapp . . . (Stressed plugs his ears and momentarily steps out of the room; Independent shoves Lighthearted; Logic buries his face in his hands; Artistic begins doodling; Existential laughs)

Existential: We're a bunch of fools. It amazes me that we all squeezed into the same person. You know, if you think about the conversation we just had, it does reveal a lot about "Jeremy."

Artistic: (Chewing his pencil) He's got a point. And I thought of a cool song. So we were productive, after all. We should congregate like this more often. We can go places if we stick together.

All: Yeah, we can. (They all put their right fists together, and there is a sudden burst of light and thunderous sound, as in the old "Captain Planet" cartoons, followed by a knocking on the door)

Parents: Jeremy, are you OK? What's all that noise?

Jeremy: Yeah, I'm fine. Just puttin' myself together. I think I've got a good idea for a college application essay . . .