

COLLEGE ESSAY OUTLINE

Goal: Start your college essay and show your true self when you apply

1

Start by watching this video. Before you start writing, you can ease into this process by watching a video that will help guide you.

“AXS Companion - Completing the Writing Section:
Additional Tips on Writing the Personal Essay”



2

UNDERSTANDING THE PROMPT

- Check for key words
- What will you write about in your essay? (the anchor)
- What does this story say about you? (positive characteristics)

3

CHOOSE YOUR ESSAY PROMPT (JUST ONE):

- 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.
- 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?
- Reflect on a time when you *questioned* or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the *outcome*?
- Reflect on something that someone has *done* for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude *affected* or *motivated* you?
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of *personal growth* and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you *lose track of time*. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- 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.



4

OUTLINE: BEGIN THE OUTLINE FOR YOUR ANCHOR STORY BELOW

5

POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS: WHAT DOES THIS STORY SAY ABOUT YOU?

Look through the adjectives below and highlight at least 5 words that describe you in the outline of your anchor story you wrote above. Feel free to add other adjectives if they aren't on the list.

Achiever	Diplomatic	Innovative	Responsible	Adaptable	Dynamic
Joyful	Resourceful	Adventurous	Efficient	Learner	Restorative
Ambitious	Empathetic	Loyal	Confident	Analytical	Energetic
Non-judgmental	Self-disciplined	Artistic	Enthusiastic	Observant	Sensitive
Brave	Focused	Optimistic	Sincere	Calm	Friendly
Open-minded	Straight-forward	Communicative	Futuristic	Organized	Strategic
Compassionate	Generous	Passionate	Supportive	Competitive	Gentle
Patient	Sympathetic	Connected	Giving	Persistent	Thorough
Consistent	Grounded	Philosophical	Thoughtful	Creative	Hardworking
Positive	Trustworthy	Curious	Helpful	Practical	Unique
Decisive	Honest	Proactive	Versatile	Deliberate	Imaginative
Rational	Warmhearted	Dependable	Inclusive	Relaxed	Wise
Determined	Independent	Reliable	Witty	Diligent	Resilient

Do you want to go back and add or change any details in your outline to highlight more strengths?



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