

# ***Your Essay is a Personal Statement!***

The personal statement gives you the opportunity to discuss attributes, experiences or challenges that may not be evident on your college application. Utilize the essay to tell your own story and let the College or University know **WHO YOU ARE!**

## **Directions:**

Write an essay on one of the four topics listed below. Use no more than two sheets of 8.5" x 11" white paper, one side only. Be sure to write your name and the words "Personal Statement" in the top right hand corner of each page.

## **Choose from one of these two topics:**

1. Reflecting on your family's experiences and personal circumstances, what would you like to tell us that is not already revealed or explained sufficiently in your application?
2. What you do in the classroom defines only a part of who you are. How do you spend your time when you are not in class or studying? Focus on one activity, two at the most, and discuss what you have gained from your involvement.

## **Or - Choose from one of these topics, if applicable:**

1. If you participated in special program such as MESA, YEOP, Upward Bounds, etc, describe your involvement in the program and discuss how you have benefited from the experience.
2. If there are any circumstances not evident in your application that may have affected your academic performance, explain the circumstances and discuss how you responded to them.



# Writing Your Essay

## A Few Tips:

- Start outlining/writing early and plan to re-write several times!
- Rely on quality over quantity.
- Have several people read your essay.
- Write it YOURSELF!
- PROOFREAD IT!

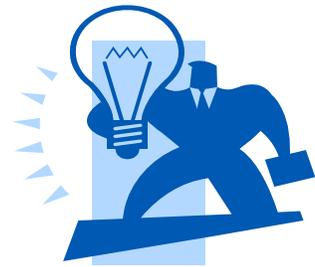
## Good Essays:

- Have a catchy introduction.
- Focus on one or two main themes.
- Conform to the guidelines.
- Answer the question.
- Are focused, thoughtful and well written.
- Support your ideas with specific examples.
- Provide insight about you, as an individual.

## Avoid These:

- Repeating the information outline in your college application.
- Listing your achievements etc. Rather than writing in an essay form.
- Complaining about issues rather explaining them.
- Using money as a motive for seeking higher education.
- Using college ranking as motive for wanting to attend that school.
- Using gimmicks/jokes that may be in poor taste or misunderstood by an admission counselor.
- Sounding pretentious - BE YOURSELF!

# Brainstorming Part One



**Not sure how to start writing you essay? Create a brainstorm sheet and be totally honest! Ask yourself the following questions and write out your responses.**

1. What are my strengths and what is special about me?


2. What is unique about my family or family life?


3. What am I passionate about outside of school and why?


4. What is one achievement that I'm really proud of?


5. What is something I have struggled to change about my life?


# Choose Your Favorite Response

## Part Two

**Choose one or two of your favorite responses from Part One and answer the following questions.**

1. What were the key moments and details of the event/situations?


2. What did I learn?


3. What aspect of this has stayed with me the most?




## Defining Your Essay Theme

### Part Three

**Decide on a theme for your essay. Taking the experience you wrote about in Part Two, answer the following questions.**

1. What does this reveal about me?


2. Why is it special or significant to me?


3. How does this make me special or stand out?


**From these answers, the theme of my essay is .....**