**12th grade Multicultural Literature**

**College Application Essay: Writer’s Workshop**

**Showing vs. Telling**

When readers look at a paragraph, they expect a writer not simply to TELL them what his (or her) idea is, but to also SHOW them a “picture” of the idea through the use of specific details, action words, and vocabulary. Showing such details helps make a piece of writing clearer to a reader, and, therefore, also more effective in conveying the writer’s point and purpose. Think: indirect characterization rather than direct characterization.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TELLING**  **(boring – insufficient details and unspecific vocabulary)** | **SHOWING**  **(better – specific details and vocabulary)** |
| people | accountants  college students  high-school students  teenagers |
| job/profession | tax accountant  supermarket manager  nurse  physician |
| class | Microbiology  Business Math  Adolescent Psychology  American History |
| My teacher is **nice.** | *My teacher* **knows that students have busy lives outside of school, including their work and family, so he allows us to turn in three assignments late if we submit them with a “late-homework ticket.”** |
| **Doctors** are always **busy doing a lot of things.** | During a typical day, *physicians* **start early, usually at around eight a.m., and see ten to 15 patients one after another throughout the morning and afternoon. If the doctor is also a surgeon, he may be in surgery two or three days per week. If they are behind schedule – something that happens on a regular basis – they might only have 15 minutes to spare for lunch or have to stay past 6 pm to be able to see all his patients.** |

**Station 1: First,** rewrite the following “telling” sentences (which are “vague” topic sentences) into “showing” sentences. Pay particular attention to changing the underlined words. **Next,** add more sentences with supporting details that further explain what the first sentence says. (Review the examples about **“nice”** and **“busy doing a lot of things”** on the first page of this handout to see what kinds of and how much supporting detail to add.)

1. **Telling:** Multitasking can be difficult for college students. (**Clue**: In what way is it “difficult”?)

**Showing:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Telling:** A supermarket manager has many things to do on a typical day.

**Showing:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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1. **Telling:** Employees must learn to juggle a lot of work.

**Showing:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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1. **Telling:** In this modern society, multitasking has become an absolute necessity.

**Showing:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Station 2: What the heck do I write about?**

One of the best methods of brainstorming is to begin with a grand list of potential topics and slowly let 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. As you go through this lesson, you will begin to separate the good ideas from the bad.

**1. If you were writing your autobiography right now, what would be ten events or things that would have to be included? It will be easiest to think over your life chronologically.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Station 3: Ask a few friends and/or the teacher to pick five adjectives or personality traits**

**that characterize you. List them here:**

Friend #1

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Friend #2

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Friend #3

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Station 4: List five accomplishments you have made over the last five years. (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.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**List three things about which you consider yourself very knowledgeable**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What are your most important extracurricular or community activities?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**List 5 people whom you respect and admire. They can be real or fictional, dead or alive.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What are your favorite movies or books?**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Who are your favorite musicians?**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Station 5: List two times in life when you failed miserably and two times when you were a**

**fantastic success.**

**Miserable failures**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Fantastic successes**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**List five events in your life that you and/or your family will always remember**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**List four of your favorite things and four of your least favorite. These can include activities, places, objects, virtues, etc.**

**Favorites**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Least Favorites**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Station 6: Brainstorming Worksheet—Additional Reflection**

**After Completing the Worksheet...** You should now have between 25 and 75 potential essay topics. The next step is to narrow this list down to the topics that are most suited to an admissions essay. For each item listed above, answer the following questions. Some of your ideas may reveal themselves as dull, while you will find plenty to discuss for others.

**For each of the *personal characteristics* or *skills* you have listed, ask:**

* Does it distinguish me from others I know?
* How did I develop this attribute?

**For each of the *activities* you have listed, ask:**

* What made me join this activity?
* What made me continue to contribute to it?

**For each *event* in your life you have listed, ask:**

* Why do I remember this particular event?
* Did it change me as a person?
* How did I react?
* Was the event a moment of epiphany, as if my eyes saw something to which they had previously been blind?

**For each *person* you have listed, ask:**

* Why have I named this person?
* Do I aspire to become like this person?
* Which of this person’s traits do I admire?
* Do I aspire to become like this person?
* Which of this person’s traits do I admire?
* Is there something that this person has said that I will always remember?
* Did he or she challenge my views?

**For each of your *favorites* and *least favorites*, ask:**

* Why is this a favorite or least favorite?
* Has this thing influenced my life in a meaningful way?

**For each *failure*, ask:**

* What if did I learn from this failure?
* What if good came out of this failure?

In answering these questions, you will probably find that you have a great deal to talk about, at least for five to seven topics. You must now confront the underlying problem of the admissions essay: find the one topic 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 the following guidelines should help you get started.

**Station 6: Writing the Introduction**

**General Tips**

1. **Don’t Say Too Much.** Just tell the story! Your introduction should not be so complex and so lengthy that it loses the reader before they even start. You have the rest of the essay to say what you want. There’s no need to pack it all into the first sentence. This leads to the next tip…
2. **Don't Start Your Essay with a Summary.** If you summarize, the admissions officer does not need to read the rest of your essay. You want to start your essay with something that makes the reader want to read until the very end. Once you have drawn the reader in through the first one to three sentences, the last sentence in your introductory paragraph should explain clearly and briefly what the point of the whole essay is. That is, why you are using this person, place, or thing. What does it say about you?
3. **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 senses and emotions to make them relate to your subject matter.

**Types of Introductions**

1. [Academic Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#academic)
2. [Creative Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#creative)
3. [Action Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#action)
4. [Dialogue Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#dialogue)
5. [Overarching Societal Statements](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#societal)
6. [Personal Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#personal)
7. [Question Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#question)
8. [Quotation Introduction](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/college-application-essays/lfi_introductions.html#quotation)

**Academic Introduction:** This is the type of introduction you would use for a standardized test or a history paper. A typical standard introduction answers one or more of the six basic questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. It gives the reader an idea of what to expect. You should try to stay away from simply restating the question unless you are limited by a word count and need to get to the point quickly. Your basic academic introduction or thesis statement is best used as the follow-up sentence to one of the more creative introductions described below.

**Examples:**

*One of the greatest challenges I've had to overcome was moving from Iran to the United States. Iran was in deep political turmoil when I left, as it is today.*

**Creative Introduction:** A creative introduction catches the reader off-guard with an opening statement that leaves the reader smiling or wondering what the rest of the essay contains.

**Examples:**

*Imagine yourself a freshman in high school, beginning your independence. As the oldest child, I was the first to begin exploring the worlds of dating, extra-curricular clubs and upperclassmen. However, one afternoon my parents sat my two sisters and me down. They said…*

*I am a dynamic figure, often seen scaling walls and crushing ice. I have been known to remodel train stations on my lunch breaks, making them more efficient in the area of heat retention. I translate ethnic slurs for Cuban refugees, I write award-winning operas, I manage time efficiently. Occasionally, I tread water for three days in a row.*

**Action Introduction:** An Action Introduction takes the reader into the middle of an action sequence. By not building up to the story, it forces the reader to read on to find out not only the significance of this moment in time, but what led up to and followed it. It is perfect for short essays where space must be conserved or for narrative essays that begin with a story.

**Examples:**

*I promised God I would eat all my peas, but He didn’t care. A confused eleven-year-old girl, I sat and listened to my father pace. With each heavy step echoing loudly throughout the silent house, my family’s anxiety and anticipation mounted while awaiting news of my grandfather's health. My heart racing, I watched the clock, amazed that time could crawl so slowly. Finally, the telephone interrupted the house’s solemn silence. I heard my father repeating the words "yes, yes, of course." He then hung up the receiver and announced my grandfather's death and cancer's victory.*

**Dialogue Introduction:** Like the action introduction, the dialogue introduction brings the reader directly into the action, only this time in the form of dialogue. If you are writing about an influential figure in your life, you can mention a quote from this person that exemplifies the importance that he or she had on your life.

**Examples:**

*"You must stop seeing that Russian girl, " I ordered my brother when he returned home last summer from the University of Indianapolis. Echoing the prejudiced, ignorant sentiment that I had grown up with, I believed it was wrong to become seriously involved with a person who does not follow the Hindu religion and is not a member of the Indian race.*

*On the verge of losing consciousness, I asked myself: "Why am I doing this?" Why was I punishing my body? I had no answer; my mind blanked out from exhaustion and terror. I had no time to second-guess myself with a terrifying man leaning over my shoulder yelling: "You can break six minutes!" As flecks of spit flew from his mouth and landed on the handle bar of the ergometer, I longed to be finished with my first Saturday rowing practice and my first fifteen-hundred-meter “erg test.”*

**Overarching Societal Statements:** Rather than using a traditional thesis statement you can put forth a societal observation that ties into the theme of your essay. This can be very effective if the statement is unique and gives a glimpse into how you view the world. It can be detrimental if your statement is debatable or unclear. Make sure that if you use this form of introduction that no admissions office will take offense to it.

**Examples:**

*High school is a strange time. After three years of trying to develop an identity and friends in middle school, students are expected to mature immediately on the first day of ninth grade.*

*To this day, the United States remains driven by the American Dream, and we often hear of immigrants who come to this country to search for opportunities that their native countries lack. In these tales, immigrants succeed through hard work, dedication, and a little luck. As idealistic as the story may seem, I have been fortunate enough to experience its reality in the life of one very important man. His example has had great impact on my personal expectations and goals, and the manner in which I approach my own life.*

*Art is a reflection of one's self-identity in the most unaffected manner. Because art is very personal, it has no right or wrong. The type of art that has influenced me most is music.*

**Personal Introduction:** The Personal Introduction takes the reader directly into your mind. It says, “This is what it is like to be me. Let me take you to my little world.” Since there is a little voyeur in even the most stern admissions officer, this type of introduction can be very effective. It is always in the first person and usually takes an informal, conversational tone:

**Examples:**

*At times, I think the world around me is crumbling to the ground, but it never does. Like most people, I face the crunches of deadlines and endless demands on my time, but I have never encountered the type of adversity that can crush people, that can drive people crazy, that can drive them to suicide.*

**Question Introduction:** Many admissions essays begin with a question. While this is an easy way to begin an essay, admissions officers may perceive it as a “lazy introduction.” No one wants to read an essay that begins with such tacky material as: “To be or not to be?” or “Are you looking for an applicant who has drive and determination? Well, I’m your guy.” If you are going to use a question, make sure that it is an extremely compelling one and that your experiences provide answers.

**Example:**

*Influence? Why is it that the people who influence us most influence us in ways that are not easily quantified? Through her work with abused children, my mother has shown me the heroism of selfless dedication to a worthy cause.*

**Quotation Introduction:** Many writers are tempted to start their essay with a quote. You should try to resist this temptation, as most quotes will look forced. Admissions officers will be turned off if it is apparent that you searched through a book of famous quotes and came up with a quote from some famous philosopher about whom you know nothing. The quotation introduction is most effective when the quote you choose is unusual, funny, or obscure, not too long, and from those to whom you are closest. Choose a quote with a meaning you plan to reveal to the reader as the essay progresses. The admissions committee is interested in how you respond to the quote and what that response says about you.

**Examples:**

*John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." I see academics as a similar two-way interaction: in the classroom, I will do much more than take up valuable space. Because of the broad range of experiences I have had, my knowledge of many subjects is thorough. These experiences will help me perform well in any class, as I have learned how to use my time efficiently.*

*"Experience is what you receive when you don’t get what you want." I remembered my father’s words as I tried to postpone the coming massacre. Just as during the fall of the Roman Empire, my allies became enemies and my foes turned into partners. In fast and furious action with property changing hands again and again, I rested my fate on the words of one man, hoping he would rescue me from this dangerous tailspin. Do these experts realize the heartbreak they are inflicting on my young life? While the uncertainty of tomorrow’s attire is the most pressing concern for many seventeen-year-olds, I must worry about much greater issues! It is August 31, the market is down over 300 points and the value of my stock portfolio is falling fast.*

**TASK:** Now it’s your turn. Select one of the above styles (or make up your own) and try to write an introduction to your essay. Spend some time picking the right style and choosing the best words possible.

**Station 7: Writing Conclusions**

The conclusion is your last chance to persuade the reader or impress upon them your qualifications. Endings are the last experience an admissions officer has with your essay, so you need to make those words and thoughts count. You should not feel obligated to tie everything up into a neat bow. The essay can conclude with some ambiguity, if appropriate, as long as it offers insights. The aim is for the admissions officer to leave your essay thinking, “That was a satisfying read.” Here are some Do’s and Don’ts as you develop your conclusion.

**DOs**

**Expand upon the broader implications of your discussion.** This could include the following strategies:

* 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.

**Tie the conclusion back to your introduction.** A nice conclusion makes use of the creativity you used in your introduction. If you used an anecdote in your intro, use the conclusion to finish telling that story.

**Try to end on a positive note.** You may want to restate your goals in terms of how they will be fulfilled at the institution to which you are applying.

**DON'Ts**

**DON’T Summarize.** Since the essay is rather short to begin with, the reader should not need to be reminded of what you wrote 300 words beforehand. You do not need to wrap up your essay in a nice little package. It should be an ending, not a summary.

**DON’T Use stock phrases** such as, “in conclusion,” “in summary,” “to conclude;” these belong only in dry, scientific writing. Don’t use them.

**DON’T Try to Explain the Unexplainable.** Your essay need not be so tidy that you can answer why people die or why starvation exists -- you are not writing a sitcom --

**TASK:** Write a sample conclusion on the topic of your choice.