

Brainstorming for the College Application Essay

Answer the following questions:

1. What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments? (Do not limit yourself to accomplishments you have been formally recognized for since the most interesting essays often are based on accomplishments that may have been trite at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life).
2. Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
3. Consider your favorite books, movies, songs, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
4. What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?
5. Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded? What made you successful?

6. Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?
7. 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 or dead, would you most like to be with? (These questions can help you to realize what you love the most).
8. Have you experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were opened to something you were previously blind to? Describe.
9. 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 if they were writing your admissions essay for you?
10. What are your dreams for 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?