

**Wednesday,  
August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

## **Do Now – Getting Started:**

1. Find a place to begin your English notes.
1. You can use your computer or a notebook; however it needs to be somewhere you will put all of our notes.
  - ✓ I will check your notes to make sure you are taking them periodically for credit.
2. Title this section: **College Essay Review and Grammar Notes** and put today's date.
1. Write down two questions that you have either about your essay or about the application process. I will do my best to answer these or will direct your questions to Mrs. Hopkins.

## **Today's Goals:**

- ✓ Review college essay topics and general trends/concerns
- ✓ Grammar 101 – Basic Concerns
- ✓ Answer questions from the start of class
- ✓ Pass back essays
- ✓ Writing conferences (if time allows)

## **Do Later – Homework:**

- ✓ Join our turnitin.com account by Friday. Class IDs and Enrollment Keys are on PlusPortals. (5 points)
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Period – Writing Assignment #1 due Friday – hard copy and turnitin.com

## **Quote of the Day:**

“Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write 'very;' your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.”

- Mark Twain

A collage of handwritten letters, quills, and a red pen on a light-colored surface. The letters are scattered around the central text, some showing cursive handwriting and others with printed text. A red pen is positioned diagonally across the center, and several quills of various colors (black, white, blue) are scattered around it. The background is a light, textured surface.

# College Essays:

Prompts, Grammar Mistakes and  
General Trends

# Common Application Essay Questions

Write 250 – 650 on **one** of the following prompts:

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.

# Prompt #1: Share your story.

- ✓ Answer this prompt by reflecting on a hobby, facet of your personality, or experience that is genuinely meaningful and unique to you.
- ✓ Admissions officers want to feel connected to you and an honest, personal statement about who you are draws them in.
- ✓ Your love of superheroes, artistic ability, musical talents or family history are all fair game if you can tie it back to who you are or what you believe in.
- ✓ Avoid a rehash of the accomplishments on your **high school resume** and choose something that the admissions committee will not discover when reading the rest of your application.

## Prompt #2: Lessons learned from obstacles

- ✓ You are trying to show colleges your best self, so it might seem counterintuitive to willingly acknowledge a time you struggled. However, overcoming challenges demonstrates courage, grit, and perseverance!
  - ✓ That's why the last piece of this prompt is essential.
  - ✓ The obstacle you write about can be large or small, but you must show the admissions committee how your perspective changed as a result.

## Prompt #3: Challenge a belief.

- ✓ Your answer to this question could focus on a time you stood up to others or an experience when your own preconceived view was challenged.
- ✓ Choose this prompt if you have a relevant—and specific—experience to recount and reflect on.
- ✓ A vague essay about a hot button issue does not tell the admissions committee anything useful about **YOU**.

## **Prompt #4: Solve a problem.**

- ✓ This essay is designed to get at the heart of how you think and what makes you tick.
- ✓ Present a situation or quandary and show steps toward the solution.
- ✓ Admissions officers want insight into your thought process and the issues you grapple with, so explain how you became aware of the dilemma and how you tackled solving it.
- ✓ Do not forget to explain why the problem is important to you!

## Prompt #5: Personal Growth

- ✓ Just like Prompt #2, the accomplishment or event you write about can be anything from a major milestone to a smaller "aha" moment.
- ✓ Describe the event or accomplishment that shaped you but take care to also show *what* you learned or *how* you changed.
- ✓ Colleges are looking for a sense of maturity and introspection—pinpoint the transformation and demonstrate your personal growth.



# Prompt #6: What captivates you?

- ✓ This prompt is an invitation to write about something you care about.
- ✓ Avoid the pitfall of writing about what you think will impress the admission office versus what truly matters to you.
- ✓ Colleges are looking for curious students, who are thoughtful about the world around them.
  - ✓ The "what or who do you turn to when you want to learn more" bit isn't an afterthought—it's a key piece of the prompt.
  - ✓ Make sure you explain *how* you pursue your interest, as well.

# Prompt #7: Topic of your choice.

- ✓ This question might be for you if you have a fantastic personal essay from English class to share or were really inspired by a question from another college's application.
  - ✓ You can even write your own question!
- ✓ Whatever topic you land on, the essentials of a standout college essay still stand:
  - 1.) Show the admissions committee who you are beyond **grades and test scores**
  - 2.) Dig into your topic by asking yourself *how* and *why*. There isn't a prompt to guide you, so you must ask yourself the questions that will get at the heart of the story you want to tell.



# Grammar Concerns

# Flow of Your Essay

- Believe it or not, most of you did NOT format your essay with paragraphs.
  - Hint: You **MUST** have paragraphs.
- You need an introduction paragraph, body and conclusion paragraph.
- At the end of your introduction you need a thesis statement that states what you will be addressing.
- You also need a hook to start your introduction.

# Active vs. Passive Voice

✓ Active Voice: The subject of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb

Ex: The dog bit the boy

✓ Passive Voice: The subject of the sentence is not performing the action expressed in the verb.

Ex: The boy was bit by the dog.

# Active vs. Passive Voice

The following sentences are in **passive** voice. Change them to being **active** sentences.

“ We were invited to attend the party by our neighbors.”

“The football was kicked by Nick.”

“Macbeth was told by the three witches that there was a prophecy he would fulfill.”

“The students are taught by the teacher.”

“The seniors were told they would get senior privileges.”



# Do NOT use the word “very”

very bad = awful

very boring = dull

very annoying = exasperating

very confused = perplexed

very depressed = despondent

very excited = thrilled

very easy = effortless

very good = exceptional

very nervous = apprehensive

very accurate = exact

very often = frequently

very long = extensive

very interesting = captivating

very slow = sluggish

very intelligent = brilliant

very important = crucial

very quick = rapid

very shy = timid

very unhappy = miserable

very upset = distraught

very serious = grave

very willing = eager

very worried = distressed

very lazy = indolent

very necessary = essential

very mean = cruel

very weak = frail

# Affect vs. Effect

Usually...

Affect is a verb meaning to **influence** or **change**.

- ✓ The tornado affected citizens within forty miles of Topeka.
- ✓ The medicine will affect your eyesight for at least an hour.
- ✓ Losing last week's game affected Nick's school performance.

Effect is a noun meaning a **result** or **outcome**.

- ✓ The effect of the tornado was devastating.
- ✓ You'll feel the effect of the medication in the next twenty minutes.
- ✓ Nick's big loss had an effect on his overall confidence.

Don't forget:

“Affect” starts with A for Action—meaning it's a verb—and with “Effect,” you can jump straight from “Cause” to “Effect” over that convenient E.



# Other General Trends

- ✓ Some essays lacked focus, jumping through too many topics instead of one.
- ✓ Some essays did not focus on the individual.
- ✓ Do not use contractions in your writing when when composing a formal essay.
- ✓ Know when to use semi colons and dashes.
- ✓ Misplaced or dangling modifiers are present.
  - *Incorrect:* After finally setting off on the trail, the morning felt more exciting.
  - *Correct:* After finally setting off on the trail, he felt the morning was more exciting.
- ✓ Eliminate run-on sentences or fragments.
- ✓ Comma splices
  - *Incorrect:* My intention was to take her out to dinner, however I decided not to invite her after all.
  - *Correct:* My intention was to take her out to dinner; however, I decided not to invite her after all.
- ✓ Colon Mistakes
  - *Incorrect:* People move to Florida for: the warmer weather, the beach, and the theme parks.
  - *Correct:* People move to Florida for three reasons: the warmer weather, the beach, and the theme parks.
- ✓ Keep your verb tense consistent.
- ✓ Improve vocabulary across the board.
  - ✓ WC = Word Choice, WW = Wrong Word
- ✓ Some lacked a final thought or take away.



# **Your Questions:**

**What comments do you have?  
What concerns do you have moving  
forward?**

A collage of vintage writing tools and documents. It features several quills of various colors (black, brown, white, blue), a red fountain pen, and several pieces of aged paper with handwritten text in cursive. The background is a light, textured surface.

# Pass Back Essays

# **Writing Conferences:**

- 1. Come up to Mrs. Rozman's desk in an orderly fashion.**
- 2. Have direct concerns or questions you want addressed.**
- 3. Do not just say, "please proof read this." Point out a key part of your essay.**