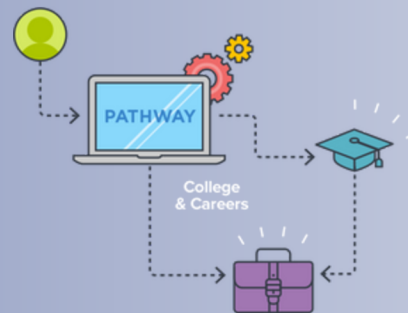


Writing a Personal Essay



Grade Level:

 11, 12

Domain:

 College & Career Exploration

TIME:

 30 Minutes

This lesson is designed to help students gather information and construct a personal essay that is organized in a professional way.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Review the Common App essay prompts.
2. Review and reflect on sample essays.
3. Compose a draft essay for college admissions.

MEFA Pathway Activities

- My Digital Portfolio
- My Journal

Materials Needed

- Internet connection
- *Personal Essay Organizer* (attached)
- Common App Essay Prompts
- College Essay Guy's Outstanding College Essay Examples

Vocabulary

- Prompt
- Personal essay

Future Ready Skills

- Creativity
- Evaluating
- Persuasion

PART 1

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE



Explain to students the components of the college application and the importance of the personal essay. When applying for college, most schools will require the submission of a personal essay. Colleges and universities use this essay to get to know potential students. The main goal of a student's personal essay is to give colleges information about them in an interesting and engaging way and to share with the college any information not found elsewhere in the application.

Many colleges use the Common App as their application for admission, and the Common App has seven essay prompts. Have students review the [Common App essay prompts](#).

Before students start their college essay, share with them [Outstanding College Essay Examples](#). Divide students into groups and assign each group a sample essay to read and discuss. Have students answer the following questions:

1. What did they like and dislike about the essay?
2. How was the essay organized?
3. What can they take from this essay and apply to their own essay?

PART 2

APPLYING INFORMATION

Students should click on **My Digital Portfolio** under the *About Me* tab in MEFA Pathway and remind themselves of their interests, skills, activities, honors, and awards. Then, have students complete the *Personal Essay Organizer* (attached) to start thinking about what they might include in their own college essay.

PART 3

EVALUATING INFORMATION

Have students click on **My Journal** under the *About Me* tab in MEFA Pathway and write a journal entry reflecting on the following prompts:

1. Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution, or life experience that has significantly impacted your life.
2. Tell us why you wish to attend a certain college and why you would be a good fit as a student at that school.
3. Write about yourself and help us get to know the real you.

Ask volunteers to share and discuss what they wrote about in their journal entry. Have students answer the following questions:

1. Which prompt was the easiest to respond to and which was the most difficult? Why?
2. Do you think these prompts will help colleges get to know you? Why?

Personal Essay Organizer

Interests, Values, & Skills

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Strengths & Weaknesses

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Academic Successes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Life-Changing Experiences

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Extracurricular Activites

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

GRADING RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES

CATEGORY	EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
	4	3	2	1
Description	Offers a vivid, detailed, and insightful description of the experience, setting the stage for deeper reflection.	Provides a clear and detailed account of the experience, including relevant details.	Clearly describes the experience, event, or learning.	Offers a limited description of the experience.
Analysis	Engages in critical thinking, questioning assumptions, and demonstrating a thorough understanding of the learning.	Connects the experience to personal learning and raises some insightful questions.	Attempts to analyze the experience but may lack depth or clarity.	Superficial analysis, lacking deeper thought.
Future Application	Formulates clear, actionable plans for utilizing new insights and knowledge in future learning and experiences	Identifies specific ways to apply the learning to future situations or goals.	Suggests some possible connections to future learning or practice.	Makes no clear connection to future learning/action.