

ESSAY BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS

(Developed from Story Finders, Collegewise, 2011)

DIRECTIONS

Please provide written responses to the following 19 questions. The more time you spend trying to provide thoughtful, revealing answers, the stronger your college essays will be. Please remember there are absolutely no right or wrong answers to these questions. Don't second-guess yourself. Just think carefully and answer honestly.

And here's a reminder about being detailed. Great essays are very rarely developed as a result of one-word answers to the Essay Brainstorming Questions. It is not necessary to write a novel for each question, but the more time you put into this, the better your essays will be.

1. What are your favorite activities and hobbies? Why do you enjoy them?
2. Do you have any special talents or skills? These might be significant things – like playing piano or acting – or they might be more trivial things like juggling, doing a back-flip, etc. Describe.
3. Which of your high school activities (sports, drama, clubs, etc.) has had the most meaning for you and why? Be sure to answer the second part of this question in detail – your response will likely end up in at least one of your essays!
4. Describe your family in one or two sentences. What is your “role” in your family? (For example, are you the comedian? The responsible older sibling? The performer or athlete?)
5. Who in your life has been particularly influential or memorable?
6. What have you done during your high school summers that has been particularly meaningful, memorable, or difficult?
7. Have you worked any summer or after-school jobs? Describe.
8. What was your best day or experience? The worst?
9. Is there anything you've done that, knowing what you know now, you would like to have done differently? Explain.
10. What was the most memorable experience you have had with a member of your family? How about a memorable experience with a friend?

11. Is there a particular class you've taken (even if it wasn't at school) that you really enjoyed? Explain.
12. Describe your greatest success. Remember, this may not be something impressive to others, but rather, something of which you were very proud.
13. What makes you special or unique (tough question...just think about how you are different from other people)?
14. What do you think is your best quality?
15. What is something you can't do that you wish you could?
16. What part about going to college are you most excited about?
17. Describe a place you've visited that you enjoyed.
18. What is something, no matter how trivial, that you really enjoy doing?
19. What are some interesting or funny stories that your parents remember about you? Ask them ahead of time to think about this question.