

COLLEGE ESSAY: BRAINSTORMING WORKSHEET

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 five to 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. _____

2. Ask a few friends or family members to pick five adjectives or personality traits that characterize you. List them here:

Friend or Family Member #1

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | |

Friend or Family Member #2

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | |

Friend or Family Member #3

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | |

3. 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. _____ | |

4. List three to five things on which you consider yourself very knowledgeable

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____

5. What are your most important extracurricular or community activities?

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____

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

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____

7. What is your favorite movie or book? _____

8. Who is your favorite musician? _____

9. 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. _____

10. Ask your parents for five events in your life that they will always remember

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____

11. 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. _____