College Essay

Personal Narrative Writing

Ms. Shipp

**Objective:** To compose a personal narrative developed from a college application prompt, using elements of effective narration and explanation.

You will choose a prompt from one of your personal college applications. This prompt should be the primary essay for the application (minimum of 500 word limit). Consider choosing a prompt with which you are having difficulty engaging. You will receive feedback from peers as well as from me, the instructor, before the looming deadline for most early applications on November 1st.

**Format:**

Your prompt does not have to be from the Common Application, but it may be if you so choose. Make sure to include the following in your drafts:

* Proper MLA format (typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font)
* The prompt
* The word limitations for the prompt
* The intended school of interest

**Process** (subject to change):

* Rough Draft with Peer Review (due on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
* Second Draft with Conference (due on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
* Final Draft with reflection and revision (due on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

**Ideas** are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the details that enrich and develop that theme.

50 pts.

* The topic and message are clear
* Details are deep and creative, yet succinct
* The reader gains insight into the writer’s values/interest/priorities

10 pts.

**Voice** is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking and cares about the message.

* The writer is engaged personally with the topic
* It is clear that the writer cares about his/her message
* The writer is reflective and meditative

**Word Choice** is the use of **rich, colorful, *precise* language** that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary that impresses the reader, but by the ability to use everyday words effectively.

10 pts.

* Is the word choice rich, colorful, and precise?
* Are everyday words used effectively?
* Is there evidence of thoughtful word choice meant to engage the reader?

20 pts.

**Sentence Fluency** is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye.

* The essay is free of awkward word patterns
* Sentences vary in length and style

**Conventions and Presentation**

10 pts.

* The piece is typed and double-spaced and around 500 words
* The piece follows the format of its model

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ / 100 points