



College Essay Workshop 9-12 Syllabus

Course Goals

1 Writing for Audience

Students learn how to write for specific audiences depending on the task and expectations set before them.

2 Brainstorming/Drafting

Students learn how to utilize creative processes to come up with topics/ideas for their college admissions essays.

3 Peer Review/Editing

Students become active participants in the writing process, learning how to revise and edit their essays as well as their peers'.

4 Pair of College Admission Essays

Students create two college admission essays that are polished, substantive products demonstrating their unique personality that they can use for the Common Application.

Course Topics

1 Tone & Purpose

Students learn about the concepts of tone and author's purpose and write small introductory paragraphs for various types of audiences

2 Stereotypical Essay Topics

Students learn about the common "traps" of college admissions essays, including overly done essay types, and how to avoid them. Additionally, students learn how to make their essay stand out from others.

3 Creative Writing

Students participate in various creative writing activities and drills so that they can find their inner voice and unique perspectives to showcase on admission essays.

4 Precise Writing

Students learn how to shorten their sentences for clarity and precision, helping them avoid "fluff pieces" in their writing.

5 Revision/Editing

Students learn about the difference between revision and editing, and how the difference will help them in their construction of essays

6 Evaluation

Students evaluate college admission sample essays and act as college admissions counselors to make a determination on a student's entry to a fictitious university.

Course Schedule

Day 1

Icebreaker & Class Rules

Students participate in an icebreaker game and discussion of the class rules/expectations.

Pre-Assessment Essay

Students participate in a cold write of a common college application essay topic in order to demonstrate their individual strengths and weaknesses. This essay serves as a pre-assessment for the instructor to guide future activities and help differentiate instruction.

Crafting Introductions

Students learn how to write compelling introductory paragraphs and practice various writing techniques. The teacher models various techniques to help students get started before students move to individual work.

Critical Review & Revision

Students use the lessons learned from the previous activity on crafting introductions to revise and edit their previous practice essay's introduction. The teacher encourages students to share their revised intros and explain how they changed them based on what was taught.

Day 2

Warm-Up: What Makes you Unique

Students answer the warm-up question given to them and share aloud to the class.

Crafting the Essay

Students use the material learned from the lecture prior to this activity to work on body paragraphs for their college admissions essays.

Memorable Conclusions

Students learn about how to craft satisfactory conclusions to their college admissions essays through practicing with their sample essay.

Revising Practice Essay #1 & Share

Students finalize their revisions of their initial practice essay they wrote on Day 1 and share their new essays with the class. Additionally, students complete a modified KWL Chart so the instructor can see how the lessons in Day 1 and Day 2 helped their students.

Day 3

Ch. 1 & 2 Reading & Journal

Students read Ch. 1 & 2 from "On Writing the College Application Essay" by Harry Bauld and reflect on the content of the reading in their Reader Reflection Journals.

Know Your Audience

Students read and scan notes on both audience and tone. Then, they create writing scenarios that their classmates have to fill out appropriate to the task and tone.

Warm-Up: Stereotypes

Students participate in a regrouping warm-up after the break to discuss the nature of stereotypes and share them with the class. This prepares them for the reading and evaluation of college admission essay stereotypes.

Read Ch. 3 & 4 & Reflection Journal

Students read Ch. 3 & 4 using methods discussed earlier and write and share a reflection entry in their journals.

Scanning for Stereotypes

Students scan their revised practice essays for stereotypes and clichés with a partner and find ways to change them into more

original content.

Day 4

Reading Ch. 5 & Reflection Journal

Students read Ch. 5 using methods discussed earlier and write and share a reflection entry in their journals.

Obsession List & Journal

Students create an obsession list and write about their obsessions to better understand their passions and spark creativity.

Describing Breakfast

Students participate in a creative writing exercise in order to learn about diction, tone, imagery, and other figurative language concepts.

Free Association Writing

Students go throughout the building and free association write about objects and items in specific areas of the building in order to practice their creativity and spark ideas for their college admissions essays.

Day 5

Warm-Up: Reading Ch. 6

Students read Ch. 6 in class and reflect using their journals in order to prepare themselves for the day's lesson.

Absent Adjectives

Students create paragraphs without using adjectives in order to practice their writing skills in new and inventive ways.

Reading Ch. 7 & Journal Reflection

Students read Ch. 7 of their course text in order to understand key ideas related to the college application essay.

Metaphor Madness

Students participate in a creative exercise of inventing their own metaphors in order to enhance their abilities as a writer and demonstrate creativity in their college application essays.

Day 6

Midterm Assessment Essay

Students demonstrate their growth of college admission essay writing by answering another prompt with all the material they've learned so far.

Reading Ch. 8 & Reflection Journal

Students read their class text and share what they learned in their reflection journals in order to demonstrate understanding of core class concepts.

Reading Ch. 8 & Reflection Journal (Pt 2)

Students read their class text and share what they learned in their reflection journals in order to demonstrate understanding of core class concepts.

Trim the Fat

Students work individually and with a partner to identify wordy sentences and condense them in order to demonstrate proficiency with writing.

Day 7

Reading Ch. 9 & Reflection Journal

Students read Ch. 9 of their class text and react in their reflection journals in order to demonstrate and share their knowledge.

Evolving Your Essay

Students participate in the creative exercise of "Evolving Your Essay" in order to develop their brainstorming/creative thinking skills.

Reading Ch. 10 & Reflection Journal

Students read Ch. 10 of their class text and react in their reflection journals in order to demonstrate and share their knowledge.

Admissions Roleplay

Students roleplay as college admissions counselors and evaluate sample essays in order to synthesize the components of a good college admissions essay.

Day 8

Admissions Essay Pt. 2

Students roleplay as college admissions counselors and evaluate sample essays in order to synthesize the components of a good college admissions essay.

Letter to the Author

Students write a letter to Henry Bauld, author of the class text, in order to evaluate what they learned by reading his book.

Admission Essay #1

Students demonstrate all that they've learned in the class through writing their first college admissions essay for actual use when applying to colleges.

Day 9

Mad Stories

Students apply their creative writing skills with a "Mad-Libs" inspired game in order to demonstrate originality and uniqueness.

Teacher-Student Conferencing

Students meet one-on-one with the instructor to discuss the progress of their first college admissions essay from the prior day in order to facilitate sound writing and a quality essay.

Admission Essay #2

Students demonstrate all that they've learned in the class through writing their first college admissions essay for actual use when applying to colleges.

Day 10

Writer's Workshop

Students participate in a writer's workshop with their college admissions essays they completed over the past two days to identify any strengths and weakness in their writing before making a finalized product.

Grand Admissions Roleplay

Students participate in a final admissions roleplay in order to mimic all the conditions of the college application process.

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