

# **ESSAY BRAINSTORMING**

The first thing you need to do if you're going to have a great essay is spend 30-40 minutes brainstorming using these two exercises. When you have your meeting with Anna or Heidi, you will work on generating a topic.

Do some quick jots (words or phrases are fine; no need for complete sentences) to respond below these prompts. If you can't think of anything, skip that prompt and don't stress. This is meant to be fun and help you think outside the box.

- Last book you read that you couldn't put down and why
- A family tradition
- Family pet
- Do you have a collection of something?
- Person who has made the biggest impact on you
- Is there something you have done or experienced that has changed your opinion or perspective?
- Coolest trip, experience, exhibit or concert
- Best gift you have given or received
- What is unconditional love?
- What gets you fired up (excited or angry)?
- Something you're glad you tried but never want to do again

- Something you like to do the “old fashioned” way
- What is an experience you regret saying yes to?
- What is an experience you regret saying no to?
- What is your superpower in life?
- The kindest thing anyone has ever done for you
- One of my favorite places is \_\_\_\_\_
- Did you ever feel like you didn’t fit in with a group of people?
- Fill in the blank: “When I was a kid, I wanted to be \_\_\_\_\_ when I grew up.”
- What do you think you were put on this earth to do?
- Is there a day from your life or a bliss moment that you think about often?
- A failure or success that has shaped you
- What is a life lesson you’ve learned the hard way?
- If I asked your friends what you are really good (or bad!) at, what would they say?
- What is something a person has to know about you in order to “get” you?
- What is something you love to do?

Values Exercise - Identify and highlight your top five values from the list below and think about how these values relate to your experiences or goals.

Accountability	Ethical Behavior	Joy	Resilience
Achievement	Fairness	Justice	Respect
Adaptability	Faith	Kindness	Responsibility
Ambition	Family	Leadership	Risk-Taking
Beauty	Flexibility	Learning	Sacrifice
Boldness	Forgiveness	Listening	Safety
Caring	Freedom	Love	Self-Discipline
Civility	Friendship	Loyalty	Self-Esteem
Collaboration	Fun	Mercy	Self-Reliance
Commitment	Generosity	Nature	Simplicity
Community	Harmony	Openness	Spirituality
Compassion	Health	Optimism	Success
Competitiveness	Honesty	Orderliness	Teamwork
Confidence	Hope	Patience	Tradition
Conflict Resolution	Humility	Patriotism	Trust
Cooperation	Humor	Perseverance	Truth
Courage	Independence	Personal Growth	Volunteering
Creativity	Initiative	Productivity	Well-being
Curiosity	Inspiration	Reliability	Winning
Dependence	Integrity	Religion	Wisdom
Enthusiasm	Intuition	Reputation	