Writing Tips: Brainstorming your Admissions Essay Topic!

- What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments? (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 been trite at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life).

- Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?

- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are these your favorites?

- What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?

- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded? What made you successful?

- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?

- Of everything in the world, what would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be? Who, of everyone living and dead, would you most like to be with? These questions should help you realize what you love most.

- Have you experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were opened to something to which you were previously blind?

- What is your strongest, most unwavering personality trait? Do you maintain strong beliefs or adhere to a philosophy? How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about if they were writing your admissions essay for you?

- What have you done outside of the classroom that demonstrates qualities sought after by universities? Of these, which means the most to you?

- What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities? What made you continue to contribute to them?

- What are your dreams of the future? When you look back on your life in thirty years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful? What people, things, and accomplishments do you need? How does this particular university fit into your plans for the future?

Works Cited: EssayEdge's Harvard-Educated Admissions Essay Editors.