

# Personal Statements

Oakland Technical High School College Night

September 24th, 2019



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# Agenda

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What is the Personal Statement?

Where Do I Start?

Getting Ready To Write

DOs and DON'Ts

Words of the Wise



# What is the Personal Statement?

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- Holistic Review
- Common Application (*and perhaps some scholarships*)
- Your chance to share information in **YOUR OWN WORDS** with colleges you are interested in
- Gives the admissions committee insight into your personality, interests and experiences



# Where Do I Start?

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# Where Do I Start?

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- [Common App Prompts](#) (*650 words max*)
- Individual College Essays (*word limit depends on college/prompt*)
- Some have very specific topics, while others are more open-ended



# Where Do I Start?

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- Choose the essay topic that appeals to *you* the most and lets you tell your ***authentic*** story.
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- It's not about what you *think* an admission officer wants to hear, but ***what is most important for them to know about you!***



# Where Do I Start?

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- While there is no right or wrong, some essay topics that are overused and you want to be careful about:
  - Winning or losing the big game
  - Death of a pet
  - Friendship problems
  - Religious, political or philosophical epiphanies
  - Simple solutions to world problems
  - Essays in poor taste, employing bad language
  - Parent-bashing - cynicism almost never plans well





# Getting Ready to Write

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- Narrow your topic and try to be as specific as possible
- Brainstorm + Outline
- Draft, read, review. Draft, read, review. Draft....
- Ask yourself: Have I focused on the topic? Have I answered the question? Is it specific and detailed? Have I written in my own voice? Have I reflected on why this is important to me?



# Essay DOs and DON'Ts

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## DO

- ▷ Keep essays positive and upbeat
- ▷ Answer the question
- ▷ “Show” more than “tell”
- ▷ Watch writing style
- ▷ Adapt essays
- ▷ Follow all the directions
- ▷ Proofread essays

## DON'T

- ▷ Talk GPA or SAT's
- ▷ Be afraid to write about your identity/experience
- ▷ Write essays with simple solutions to world issues
- ▷ Be too opinionated
- ▷ Sound like you consulted a thesaurus for every other word.



# Words of the Wise

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- Be sure your essay is about something you care strongly enough about to elaborate and wax eloquent or passionate about.
- Think of your essay as a camera lens.
- Use details to draw the reader in.
- Employ all the senses to convey your ideas to the reader: sight, sound, taste, touch, and hearing.



# Words of the Wise

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- If you can get 2-3 ideas or drafts for essay, then you should have enough content to be able to answer most college essays or scholarship prompts
- Authenticity is key



# Feel free to reach out with questions:

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