SELECTING A TOPIC FOR YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

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In last week’s newsletter, we started to explore the personal statement by brainstorming for possible topics. How’s your list? I bet you were able to come up with more than 25 strengths, influences, triumphs and goals! Now, you’ve got to figure out how to choose one story topic that exemplifies all of these qualities and will be interesting to the admissions committee, who will be reading hundreds, if not thousands of applications!

STEP 3. NARROW DOWN YOUR BRAINSTORMING LIST!

Of all of the qualities, people, and experiences on your list, choose about 5 that you could see developing into an essay by asking yourself:

• Is there an interesting story behind an event in your life?
• Is there a strength that makes you unique? When did you use it?
• Did you learn something from an obstacle you have overcome?
• Has a particular person challenged your views, or opened your eyes to something new?

STEP 4. SELECT YOUR TOPIC!

There’s a lot to consider when selecting a final topic. Try choosing a story that reflects all of the following:

• The topic is personal and meaningful to you.
• You have concrete examples to support your topic.
• Your story relates to the specific question being asked.
• The topic or story is interesting or unique, and will grab attention.
• You can be honest and genuine about the story.
• The topic does not focus on your weaknesses.
• Generally, the topic is not controversial, or opinion-based, like religion or politics, unless you can be objective.

In next week’s newsletter, we’ll explore the essay outline and rough draft!