

INSTRUCTIONS: COMPLETE BOTH OF THE ASSIGNMENTS BELOW.**ASSIGNMENT #1: PERSONAL/COLLEGE ESSAY**

An essential part of our success in the future is learning to express ourselves effectively through writing. ALL seniors will write their Common Application essays prior to the start of the school year. These essays will be evaluated and revised at the start of the school year. Please write an essay of 450 –650 words on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below (650 words is the maximum length on the Common App). This personal essay helps college admissions personnel become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself. *NOTE: Your Common Application essay should be the same for all colleges. Do not customize it in any way for individual colleges. Colleges that want customized essay responses will ask for them on a supplemental form.*

2019-2020 Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

FOR THIS SUMMER ASSIGNMENT, YOU MAY NOT CHOOSE #7.

** 8. Non-Common App schools. While over 500 colleges and universities accept the Common App, many of the more competitive schools do not. If you have identified a school to which you are certain you will be applying, and they are not on the Common App, you may write an essay responding to their essay prompt. If they do not require an essay (like Penn State), then you must do one of the Common App prompts above.

Steps to Success:

1. Brainstorm
2. Write at least one draft of the essay
3. PROOFREAD – your grade for your draft will be based on your command of standard written English language
4. Type a final, polished draft

Helpful Resources for Writing Your Essay:

- <https://blog.collegevine.com/how-to-write-the-common-application-essays-2019-2020/>
- <http://inlikeme.com/19-common-application-essay-mistakes-and-how-to-avoid-them/>
- <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/applications/essay>
- <http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/articles/Pages/Writing-a-College-Essay-Top-Ten.aspx>
- <https://www.collegeessayadvisors.com/portfolio-items/common-application-essay-tips/>

ASSIGNMENT #2: ASSIGNED NOVELLA: *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway

You are all to read the novella *The Old Man and the Sea*. You may obtain a copy of this book from an area bookstore, by purchasing one online, or by reading an electronic copy if you so wish.

Read the book carefully. You might want to take a few notes as you read.

When you return to school, we will begin with a discussion and some writing activities on this novel. Expect a short test on the novella.

We will also be writing about this book. You will be assigned one of the following essays when you return:

1. *The Old Man and the Sea* is, essentially, the story of a single character. Indeed, other than the old man, only one human being receives any kind of prolonged attention. Discuss the role of Manolin in the novella. Is he necessary to the book?
2. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated," says the old man after the first shark attack. Explain the meaning of the quote. At the end of the story, is the old man defeated? Why or why not?
3. Discuss religious symbolism in *The Old Man and the Sea*. To what effect does Hemingway employ such images? You can use a historical figure instead of a religious symbol.
4. Santiago is considered by many readers to be a tragic hero, in that his greatest strength—his pride— leads to his eventual downfall. Is Santiago a tragic hero according to your understanding of the term and the story? In addition, discuss the role of pride in Santiago's plight.
5. What is the role of the sea in *The Old Man and the Sea*? Furthermore, how is the universal theme of Man versus Nature revealed throughout the novel?

**** Please note: If you have already studied or read this novella for an English class, you must contact Mrs. Mato for an alternative assignment. Her email is smato@stjoecad.org DO NOT READ THIS FOR YOUR SUMMER ASSIGNMENT IF YOU HAVE ALREADY READ IT FOR ANY CLASS ASSIGNMENT. Doing so will result in a 0 for this assignment. I will be checking with the other teachers.**