

Demystifying the Common App Essays

Warm-up exercises

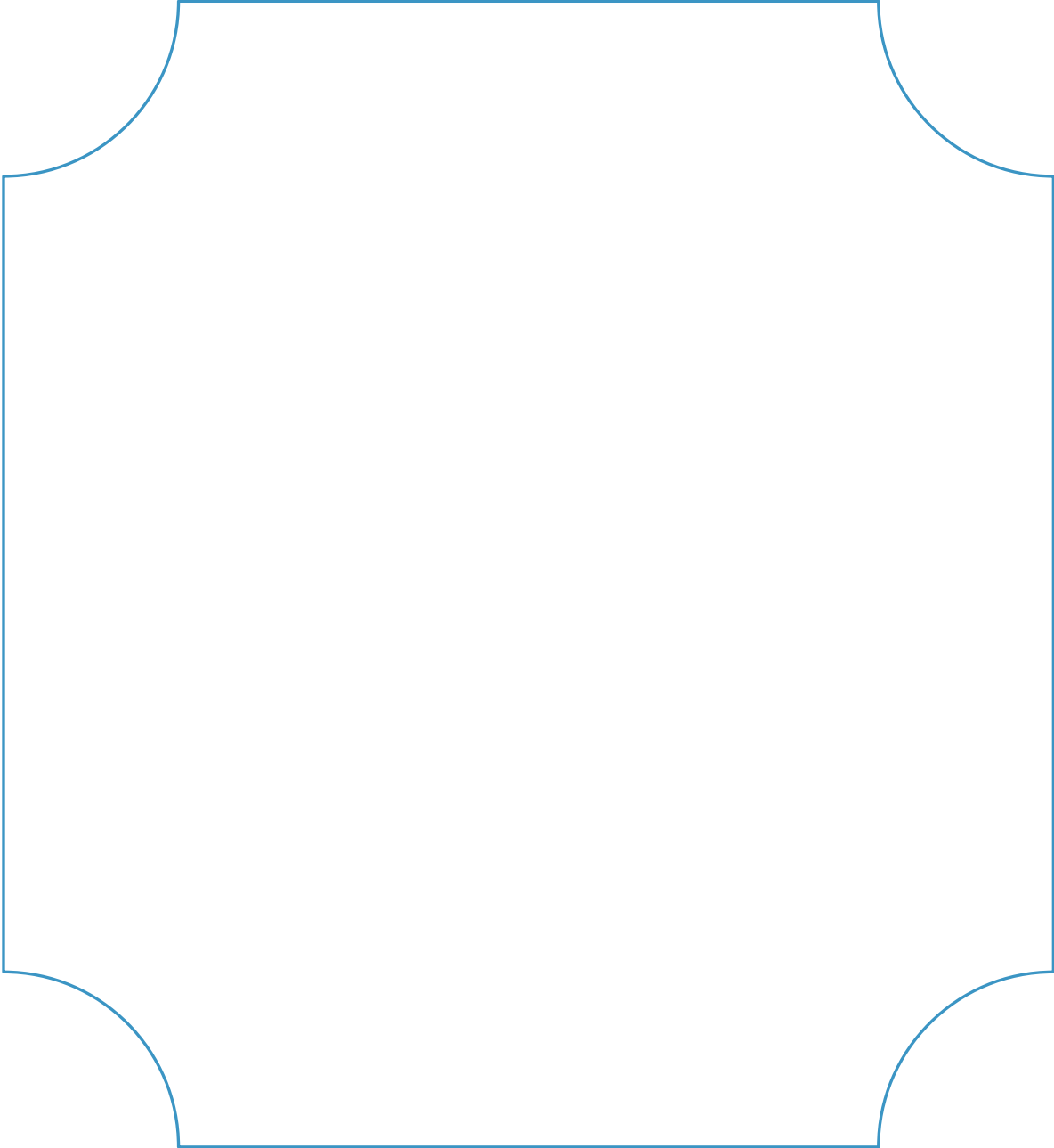
1. 5 things _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. 7 adjectives _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3.



4. My skills and values

Common Application Essay Questions

Essay 1:

Background	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Identity	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Interest	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Talent	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

Essay 2:

Challenge	
Physical Impact	
Mental Impact	
What did I do about it?	
Outcome?	
What did I learn?	

Essay 3:

Essay 4:

Essay 5:

Status quo	
Event	
What did I do?	
Outcome?	
How did I grow personally?	
Did I develop a new understanding of others?	
New status quo	

Essay 6:

What makes you lose track of time?

Why does it captivate you?

How do you learn more?

Essay 7:

Essay Editing Cheat Sheet

	Yes	Can improve	No
Content:			
• Have I answered each sub-question of the essay prompt?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Am I demonstrating at least 5-7 skills/values in my essay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are those skills/values unique (not emphasized elsewhere in the application)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Am I 'showing' my skill sets (through anecdotes) instead of just 'stating' them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Overall, is my essay an interesting read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure and Tone:			
• Do I have an interesting hook in place? (important for long essays)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do my paragraphs begin with good transition sentences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does my essay follow a logical sequence of events/ideas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Am I coming across authentically? (not forcing myself to be someone I'm not)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation:			
• Have I used specific details to bring my essay to life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are my ideas coming across clearly and succinctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is my essay grammatically correct?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Am I within my word limit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Have I proofread it at least 3 times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>