

AP English Literature and Composition

Personal Essay Topics

Directions: Choose one topic (or use a topic from one of your own college or scholarship applications) about which to write personal essays of approximately 500 to 1000 words. Your meticulously proofread composition is due on Friday 5 December 2008.

1. Imagine that you have the opportunity to travel back through time. At what point in history would you like to stop and why?
2. What is the best advice you ever received? Why? And, did you follow it?
3. Andy Warhol said that "in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes." Describe your fifteen minutes.
4. What single adjective do you think would be most frequently used to describe you by those who know you best? Explain why this adjective is most often used and discuss whether or not it is an accurate reflection of who you truly are.
5. Describe the neighborhood that you grew up in and explain how it helped shape you into the kind of person you are today.
6. If you could be a "fly on the wall" to observe any situation—historical, personal, or otherwise—describe what you would choose to observe and why. What would you hope to learn, and how would it benefit you?
7. If you could spend a year with any real or fictional person in the past, present, or future, whom would you choose? Why?
8. What invention would the world be better off without, and why?
9. If you had the gift of telepathy, the ability to read other people's minds, would you use this gift or not? Explain.
10. Who is the teacher who has had the greatest positive impact on your development? Please describe the ways in which this teacher has influenced you.
11. Discuss some creative work that has been meaningful to you or has changed or affected the way you view the world and how it has done so. The creative work may be a novel, film, poem, scientific theory, painting, or other form of art.
12. According to Stephen Carter, we can admire those with integrity even though we disagree with them. Are there people you admire even though you deeply disagree with them? What do you admire about them? How do you reconcile this apparent contradiction?
13. Twenty years after you graduate from college you receive national and international recognition for your work. Describe this work and your hope for its effects on society.
14. Is there any situation in which you believe it is acceptable to lie, cheat, or steal?