

## **THE COLLEGE ESSAY**

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### **Assignment**

Prior to the start of school in August, all incoming seniors must:

- purchase and read *Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps* by Alan Gelb;
- write one complete college essay (NOT a supplement).

This assignment is for YOUR benefit. You are encouraged to select an essay prompt from the Common Application, or, if you intend to apply to a non-common application school, you may respond to a prompt from that school. **All seniors** (including those taking AP Literature) must complete this assignment, which will be assessed by your senior English teacher.

Please note the following:

- Your essay should be in second-draft form. In other words, the essay should be proofread and free of the kinds of small errors and mistakes that characterize first drafts.
- Your essay should include the following four elements as discussed in the Gelb text:
  - The “Once” - basic problem in one particular situation;
  - Extraordinary vs. Ordinary - something unusual happens within a seemingly ordinary experience;
  - Tension and Conflict - presents a struggle between opposing forces and clear resolution;
  - The Point - the “reason to be,” or response to the conflict, such as a personal turnaround or growth.
- Your essay will be assessed using the included rubric.
- If you are taking the summer college essay writing workshop, you will not be required to write a new essay (although you are welcome to do so if you would like). If you choose to use your summer workshop essay, simply submit that essay to your teacher on the first day of class.

### **Text**

- *Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps* by Alan Gelb  
(This text is available on Amazon in both print and Kindle editions.)

### **Format and Length**

Your essay should:

- be typed, double-spaced, and formatted according to MLA standards (1” margins, proper heading and header);
- include the word count at the end;
- be submitted in hard copy;
- be no longer than 650 words.

### **Due Date**

Your essay is due on the **first full day** of class.